

NEWS BREAK

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, April 2, 2017 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

***Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

Article: EQUAL PAY FOR MEN AND WOMEN? (BUSINESS, D1)

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. advocate	1. rough and noisy; noisily jolly or rowdy; clamorous; unrestrained
B. boisterous	2. pertaining to or characterized by energy or effective action; vigorously active or forceful; energetic
C. change	3. to startle into sudden activity; stimulate
D. dynamic	4. to speak or write in favor of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly
E. galvanized	5. the act of including or the state of being included
F. inclusion	6. to make the form, nature, content, future course, etc., of (something) different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone

Comprehension

1. Iceland this past week became the first country to introduce legislation requiring employers to do what?
2. Iceland has had equal-pay laws for half a century, pushing companies and the government to gradually reduce the pay gap. What is the thinking behind the new legislation?
3. Iceland, with a population of _____, is a forerunner in promoting gender equality. Nordic countries lead most other nations in equality policies that include gender quotas on boards and generous parental leave, and Iceland consistently appears at or near the top of international rankings for fairness.

4. Yet equality in pay and inclusion in the upper ranks of the workplace have lagged. Women in Iceland still earn _____ percent to _____ percent less than men, according to the government.
5. Iceland wants to bridge the gap within _____ years, a move the government argues may speed progress in other areas. The global gender pay gap will not close for 70 years unless such efforts accelerate, according to the International Labor Organization.
6. The proposed legislation follows an equal-pay pilot program in which government bodies and companies identified chronic hurdles that block women from higher-paying jobs. What are the hurdles for women?
7. What are some business groups saying about the new policy?
8. What happened in 1974 in Iceland that created change for women?
9. What are the statistics of women in the workplace and in government positions in Iceland currently?
10. Yet many women still have less economic power than men. Where do they see the largest pay gaps?
11. What would the new rules require?

Discussion Questions, Extension Essay Questions or Journal Prompts:

U.S. gender pay gap

In the U.S., April 4 this year has been designated Equal Pay Day. The pay gap between genders in the U.S. differs considerably by occupation.

Selected occupational groups	% of women in occupational group	Women's earnings as % of men's earnings
Total workforce	42.9	79.9
Management, business, and finance	43.3	74.9
Computer, engineering, and science	23.9	84.1
Community and social service	64.1	91.8
Health-care practitioners and technical	72.5	70.7
Health-care support	85.8	87.9
Construction and extraction	2.5	88.5
Transportation	10.0	74.7

Sources: American Community Survey 2015, U.S. Census

- ❖ What surprised you the most about this chart?
- ❖ Do you agree that equal pay for men and women is important? Why or why not?

Iceland wants to bridge the gap within five years, a move the government argues may speed progress in other areas. The global gender pay gap will not close for 70 years unless such efforts accelerate, according to the International Labor Organization.

- ❖ Does the government need to intervene and oversee this change in order for equal pay to exist in our society? Why or why not?

“There’s a tendency to look at work usually done by men as more valuable,” he said. “This is technically a discussion of equal pay, but it’s really a question about equality in our society.”

- ❖ Why is men’s work seen as more valuable?
- ❖ Is this true in all cultures?
- ❖ Do we have gender equality in our society?

Equally disturbing to Kristjansdottir was that women negotiated lower salaries than men. Generally, men are four times as likely to ask for a raise, and when women ask, they seek 30 percent less on average.

- ❖ Why do you think women negotiate lower salaries than men?
- ❖ When asking for a raise, why do they generally seek 30% less than men?

“When it comes to the workplace, men have enjoyed a certain level of privilege for a long time,” he said. “But if you look at the vested interests for society of eliminating discrimination against women, that far outweighs any regulatory burden.”

“We want to break down the last of the gender barriers in the workplace. History has shown that if you want progress, you need to enforce it.”

- ❖ Do you agree that men in the workplace have enjoyed a certain level of privilege for a long time? Why or why not?
- ❖ Do you agree that investing in equality now and eliminating discrimination against women, far outweighs the regulatory burden? Why or why not?
- ❖ Do you agree that history has shown that if you want progress, you need to enforce it?

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