

Read the text from 2017 about the speech habits of men and women. Then choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each question (1-8). Put a cross (☒) in the correct box on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.

Taking turns at talking

It is widely thought in the West that women talk more than men. One popular-science book called “The Female Brain” said they use three times as many words per day as men. Maybe that is why senators kept interrupting Kamala Harris, a Californian senator, during her questioning of Jeff Sessions, America’s attorney-general, at a hearing on June 13th. Or why Jim Holt, hosting a panel on cosmology at a science festival in New York, repeatedly talked over Veronika Hubeny, the one woman in the group. Women will talk forever if you don’t stop them.

Except that there is not a whit of evidence that they do. Abby Kaplan, a linguist at the University of Utah, rounded up the facts in “Women Talk More Than Men...And Other Myths About Language Explained”, published last year. Researchers have given men and women in groups a task to complete, observed classroom interactions, required mixed-sex groups to reach a joint political agreement, and recorded romantic partners in their homes. No study has shown women talking more, and some (like the romantic-couples study) found them talking rather less.

In the best study of a large sample of natural speech, researchers recorded six groups of university students (five in America, one in Mexico) wearing devices that would randomly switch on and record them over the course of several days. The result? Members of both sexes spoke a statistically indistinguishable average of around 16,000 words daily. This average was dwarfed by differences within each sex, with some taciturn types speaking just a few thousand words, and a few motor-mouths as many as 50,000.

Yet people hear women talking more—and clever researchers have proved that too. When they played scripted conversations in which male and female speakers took perfectly balanced speaking times, respondents heard the woman taking 55% of the

speaking time (even when the male and female actors swapped scripts).

Why do people hear women talking more? Perhaps because women and men speak differently. For this, there is some evidence. In some studies, women take more speaking turns, but men take longer ones. In one study, women were more likely to offer reactions (“yeah” or “that’s right”) and men more likely to offer answers.

Some linguists, like Deborah Tannen of Georgetown University, argue that women and men tend to have different goals when talking: men are more likely to seek status and exchange information, whereas women are more likely to seek connection and exchange affirmation. This view has its detractors, but even its proponents insist that this generality hardly applies to all men and women.

If true, this would help explain events such as Mr. Holt’s interruptions of Professor Hubeny, often derided as “mansplaining”. If one partner in a conversation is seeking dominance and the other is seeking co-operation, the status-seeker will wind up hearing co-operative conversational turns as submissive. That may explain why people think women talk more: in the stereotype, it seems they are nattering on with no clear purpose.

Speakers of both sexes need the full suite of skills: explaining, problem-solving, interrupting, supporting and more. Some people think that women are just biologically better at one kind, and men at another. Culture, though, explains plenty, too. It’s not everywhere that men are expected to be the blunt, competitive, problem-solving sex and women the comforters. In rural Madagascar, men are prized for *kabary*: flowery, indirect speech that avoids putting other people on the spot, a mode that is thought to be beyond women’s abilities.

0 According to the first publication mentioned, women

- A have a biological advantage when it comes to speech.
- B talk a lot in comparison to men.**
- C speak less than men in public.
- D are very good at expressing themselves.

- 1 **Scientific studies show that, in general,**
 - A women speak more than men.
 - B women speak more than men in political debates.
 - C men speak less than their partners in a relationship.
 - D men speak just as much as women.

- 2 **How much men and women speak depends on**
 - A the kind of person they are.
 - B the way they judge other people.
 - C how intelligent they are.
 - D where they receive their education.

- 3 **Participants in one study believed that the**
 - A male speakers were given little opportunity to speak.
 - B male speakers were more difficult to hear clearly.
 - C female speakers were more likely than men to be recorded.
 - D female speakers were speaking more than they actually were.

- 4 **Research has shown that when men and women are in conversation,**
 - A they find it hard to talk about the same topic.
 - B they both want to find solutions to problems.
 - C women speak less frequently.
 - D men spend more time speaking at one go.

- 5 **There are language experts who believe that, when in conversation,**
 - A both genders mainly want to be accepted by others.
 - B both genders mainly want to make others feel comfortable.
 - C a man's aim is often to appear important.
 - D a woman's aim is often to share knowledge.

- 6 **People who want to take control of a discussion are**
 - A likely to misunderstand less forceful speakers.
 - B always keen to make others like them.
 - C often better at explaining things in detail.
 - D sometimes annoyed when women speak a lot.

- 7 **The author comes to the conclusion that**
 - A people have lost the ability to communicate successfully.
 - B a range of conversational techniques is a must for everybody.
 - C it is easier for females to learn how to converse successfully.
 - D males and females need to discuss how to communicate effectively.

- 8 **The way males and females express themselves also depends on**
 - A how respected women are in their country.
 - B technological advancement.
 - C the society they are part of.
 - D the quality of education in their country.

Taking turns at talking

0	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
1	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
2	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
3	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
4	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
5	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
6	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
7	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
8	A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>

*Von der
Lehrperson
auszufüllen*

richtig falsch

☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐