

FUMC ESL 4-10-2014 **Advanced Lesson**

Using “strain”

1-to require great effort. *The child strained to reach the cookies on the top shelf. The government is under strain to reduce unemployment.*

2-to stretch beyond the normal limit. *The woman strained her ankle when she slipped on the stairs. The horse strained his muscles in the race. The children strained to see over the adults.*

Choose a topic and talk for two minutes. Then ask others in the group to offer an opinion on this topic.

- 1.It is a great strain for me to...
- 2.Having children can be a strain on a marriage because...
- 3.What items that you purchase strain your budget?
- 4.Have you ever strained a body part? How did you do it?
- 5.Living in a foreign country can be a strain because...

No Kids the Secret to a Happy Marriage

A new study has found that having a child can make a couple less happy with each other. Researchers in psychology from the University of Denver conducted an eight-year study of 218 sets of parents. The psychologists examined how happy couples were in the eight years after the birth of their first child. They concluded that the first baby put a lot of stress and pressure on a marriage. Ninety percent of couples experienced a decrease in marital bliss immediately following the birth of their first child. Unmarried couples experienced bigger problems.

It's not all bad news for would-be parents. Some couples in the research said their relationship was stronger after their baby was born. Parents who were married for a long time before starting a family were happier. Couples on higher incomes also seemed to have fewer problems. Researcher Scott Stanley said his team's findings did not mean children bring unhappiness in life. He said that parents may be happier as part of a family than as a childless couple. He noted that “this type of happiness can be powerful and positive”. Stanley also pointed out that couples who did not have children also became unhappier with each other over time. However, he said parenthood accelerated levels of unhappiness.

- 1.Which of these statements are true according to the article.
- 2.Researchers say having a child will negatively affect a marriage.
- 3.The researchers spent eight years studying 218 different parents.
- 4.The study looked at the impact of a couple having two children.
- 5.Parents who weren't married had more problems than married couples.
- 6.The article said there was some good news for future parents.
- 7.Richer parents were unhappier after the birth of their first baby.
- 8.The researchers said parents could be happier than childless couples.
- 9.Couples who did not have children stayed happy together forever.

Discuss in groups

1-Which of the items below are most necessary for a happy marriage:

- say “I love you” frequently
- have children
- share the housework
- let the man drive
- let the woman control finances
- buy lots of presents for each other
- be honest about your feelings
- laugh a lot

2-What words come to mind when you hear the word “marriage”?

3-Do you think your marriage will be strengthened after having a baby?

- 4-Are fewer people wanting to get married these days in your country?
5-Besides children, what are the biggest strains on a marriage?

You can be “on the verge of”, “on the brink of” to mean something will happen soon. Read these examples:

People in Denmark were on the verge of starvation after living under German occupation for three years..
Scientists are on the brink of major advances in the treatment of cancer.

Write a sentence using “on the verge of” and “on the brink of”. Read them to the class.

Brinksmanship is the practice of pushing dangerous events to the brink of disaster in order to achieve the most advantageous outcome.

This maneuver of pushing a situation with the opponent to the brink succeeds by forcing the opponent to back down and make concessions. This might be achieved through [diplomatic](#) maneuvers by creating the impression that one is willing to use extreme methods rather than concede. During the [Cold War](#), the threat of [nuclear force](#) was often used as such an escalating measure.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an example of brinksmanship. Krushchev (leader of Russia) sent nuclear missiles to Cuba. John F. Kennedy, president of the U.S., sent warships to block those missiles. Things were very tense for a few days, but Russia ultimately backed down. People held their breath worrying that war was about to break out.

Has your country ever been on the brink of war?
Do you think diplomatic efforts can prevent wars?