

### 3 READING & SPEAKING

a In pairs, look at the list of subjects below. Who do you think talks about them more, men or women? Write M or W.

sport \_\_\_ work \_\_\_ clothes \_\_\_ health \_\_\_  
family \_\_\_ films \_\_\_ politics \_\_\_ cars \_\_\_  
their house \_\_\_ the opposite sex \_\_\_

b Read the first paragraph of *A gossip with the girls?* Does the writer agree with you? Who talks about most topics?

## A gossip with the girls?

Women are experts at gossiping, and they always talk about trivial things, or at least that's what men have always thought. However, some new research suggests that when women talk to women, their conversations are far from frivolous, and cover many more topics (up to 40 subjects) than when men talk to other men. Women's conversations range from health to their houses, from politics to fashion, from films to family, from education to relationship problems. Football is notably absent. Men tend to have a more limited range of subjects, the most popular being work, sport, jokes, cars, and women.



According to Professor Petra Boynton, a psychologist at University College London, who interviewed over 1000 women, women also tend to move quickly from one subject to another in conversation, whereas men usually stick to one subject for longer periods of time.

At work, this difference can be an advantage for men, where they can put other matters aside and concentrate fully on the topic being discussed. On the other hand, it also means that they sometimes find it hard to concentrate when several things have to be discussed at the same time in a meeting.

Professor Boynton also says that men and women chat for different reasons. In social situations, women use conversation to solve problems and reduce stress while men chat with each other to have a laugh or to swap opinions.



c Now read the whole article. What does the writer say? Choose a, b, or c.

- 1 When women talk to each other they generally talk about \_\_\_\_\_.  
a unimportant things  
b very serious things  
c many different things
- 2 Men \_\_\_\_\_ as women.  
a don't talk as much  
b don't talk about as many things  
c don't work as much
- 3 In conversation women \_\_\_\_\_ than men.  
a talk more quickly  
b change the subject more often  
c talk more about work
- 4 At work, if there is a meeting which focuses on one subject, \_\_\_\_\_.  
a men will probably concentrate better than women  
b women will probably concentrate better than men  
c men and women will both concentrate well
- 5 One of the reasons why women talk to each other is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a to relax  
b to exchange ideas  
c to tell jokes

d Now prove that the article is wrong! Work in pairs or small groups.

If you're a woman, try to talk for two minutes about:

**football cars computers**

If you're a man, try to talk for two minutes about:

**fashion shopping losing weight / dieting**

### HOW WORDS WORK...

- 1 Look at the highlighted words and phrases in *A gossip with the girls?* Which one(s) do we use...?  
1 to compare and contrast two facts or opinions *whereas*  
2 to introduce an opposite point of view \_\_\_\_\_  
3 to introduce some extra information \_\_\_\_\_  
4 to explain who says or believes something \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Complete the sentences with one of the words or phrases. Sometimes there are two possibilities.  
1 My sister plays tennis and she \_\_\_\_\_ goes swimming once a week.  
2 Travelling by yourself can be fun. \_\_\_\_\_, it is often more dangerous.  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ doctors, we shouldn't drink too much coffee.  
4 Dogs are very affectionate, \_\_\_\_\_ cats are more independent.  
5 New technology makes our lives easier. \_\_\_\_\_, it can be difficult to learn to use.