





# WOMEN & GADGETS

Language Function: discussing issues; reading comprehension

Vocabulary/Topic: gadgets; men and women; skills, talent and ability

 advanced  
 upper-intermediate  
 intermediate  
 pre-intermediate

## focus on talking

**Activity 1. Make a list of ten most important innovations of the last 10 years. Compare your lists in pairs. Explain your choice.**

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....



**Activity 2. Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.**

- ▶ What was the latest gadget you bought? Why did you buy it? Are you happy with it?
- ▶ Who is “the master of technology” in your home? Who does most of the technological chores in your household?
- ▶ Do men and women differ in their attitudes to technological novelties? If yes, how?

## focus on reading

**Activity 3. Read the text below and find out what changes are in progress in English homes.**



## GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE ... GADGETS

Traditionally, men have taken charge of gadgets and gizmos. Technological household chores, such as tuning a TV set, setting up a computer or surround sound system are often considered beyond the realm of expertise of women, whose “natural talent” for washing up, cleaning bathrooms or picking up dirty socks from the bedroom floor is, of course, undeniable.

However, this popular belief, shared by many husbands and boyfriends, is in stark contrast to the findings of a recent survey, which suggest that men are no longer masters of technology. Forty eight per cent of women questioned by Comet, one of the biggest electrical retailers in the UK, feel comfortable tackling technological tasks in the home, compared with 47 per cent of men. Most women said they would happily set up their laptop or freeview box - and only 4 per cent are daunted by installing their own HDTV.

The sex that once prided itself on technological prowess seems to be undergoing a crisis of confidence, with 85 per cent of men no longer considering themselves the most competent member of the household. 13 per cent of the men questioned confessed they let their wives and girlfriends pick the household computers, DVD players, and other electronic equipment.

Bill Moir, from Comet, said: “It appears men are no longer the sole IT directors in the home.” Gadget journalist and tech expert Susi Weaser added: “Women are definitely as tech savvy as men these days, relying on the latest gadgets like an iPhone or BlackBerry to make their lives tic.”



## focus on comprehension

**Activity 4. Read the article again and decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).**

1. Men are considered to be better at all kinds of household chores.
2. The survey presented in the article contradicts the opinion that women are not confident with electronic gadgets.
3. Only 4 per cent of women would not be afraid to instal their HDTVs.
4. According to the survey, the majority of men think they are the most competent members of their households.
5. A small group of men admit allowing their wives and girlfriends to choose electronic equipment.



## focus on talking

**Activity 5. In pairs, discuss the following questions.**

- ▶ How competent are you when it comes to using new electronic gadgets? Would you consider yourself to be a person quickly adopting new technologies? Why yes or why not?
- ▶ How is technology improving or ruining your life?
- ▶ Can you observe a growing interest of women in technology in your country? Are women as tech savvy as men? Do you think a similar survey to the one presented in the article, conducted in your country, would give similar results? Why yes / not?
- ▶ Is the fact that a growing number of women embrace technology positive or negative? Why yes or why not?

## focus on vocabulary

**Activity 6. Find in the text on page 2 expressions, sentences describing skills, talent and ability, e.g.:**

Technological household chores, ..., **are** often **considered beyond the realm of expertise of** women.

**Now learn other words related to skills, talent and ability:**



## skill, talent and ability

### **aptitude / flair / gift / talent / knack**

a natural ability or skill to do something well  
*He has a flair for languages.*

### **artistry**

great skill in creating or performing something, such as writing, music, sport, etc.  
*One must appreciate the artistry of his novels.*

### **craftsmanship**

skill at making things  
*Their jewellery is well known for its style and craftsmanship.*

### **command**

a great knowledge of a subject and an ability to use that knowledge  
*She has an impressive command of the English language.*

### **dexterity**

the ability to perform a difficult action quickly and skillfully with the hands, or the ability to think quickly and effectively  
*She caught the ball with great dexterity.*

### **expertise**

a high level of knowledge or skill  
*I have no expertise in biology.*

**Activity 7. Explain the following words and phrases from the article:**

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. gizmo                      | 6. to pride oneself on something |
| 2. chores                     | 7. a crisis of confidence        |
| 3. undeniable                 | 8. sole                          |
| 4. to be in stark contrast to | 9. confess                       |
| 5. to be daunted              | 10. to make someone's life tick  |