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## **Divided-at-birth twins marry each other**

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## THE ARTICLE

A twin brother and sister who were separated at birth and later married each other without knowing they were siblings have had their marriage ended. The British courts decided the marriage was invalid because of their strong blood relationship. This tragic and unfortunate case happened because the pair were adopted by different sets of parents and their birth certificates did not identify their biological parents. Britain's Lord Alton immediately used the story to push for a law that allows children conceived via donor insemination to be told about the method of their conception. It is not thought, however, that the British brother and sister were conceived through a donor. Their identities and details of their relationship and marriage, including how long they were married, have been kept secret.

Lord Alton is pressing for a change in the law to make more information about parents available on birth certificates. He says people also have a right to know how they were conceived: "The state is colluding in a deception. We are opening the door to more cases like this one. One of the most fundamental things of all is to know who you are. The issue here is about human rights. A birth certificate that omits any mention of your true origin falsifies your history in a very significant way," he said. He lamented the situation of the brother and sister whose marriage ended in such sadness, saying: "[They] met later in life and felt an inevitable attraction, and the judge had to deal with the consequences of the marriage that they entered into and all the issues of their separation."

## WARM-UPS

**1. TWINS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about twins (or triplets, quadruplets, etc.) Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*separation / siblings / blood relationships / adoption / donor insemination / secrets / birth certificates / conception / deception / family history / attraction / marriage*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. TWINS:** Talk with your partner(s) about how similar or dissimilar you think twins might be. Use the items below in your conversations. Change partners and share your ideas with others.

- looks
- fashion
- taste in food
- best friends
- intelligence
- sporting ability
- hobbies
- other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. BIRTH CERTIFICATE:** Talk with your partner(s) about which of the information below should be on a birth certificate. Change partners and share your ideas with others.

- birth weight
- eye color
- biological father's name
- place of birth
- method of conception
- distinguishing marks
- parents' address
- parents' professions
- time of birth
- name of medical staff at delivery

**5. BIRTH:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'birth'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. QUICK ROLE PLAY:** Student A **strongly** believes adopted children should be allowed to know everything about their conception, birth and parentage; Student B **strongly** believes otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Twin siblings separated at birth married each other.              | T / F |
| b. A British court has annulled the marriage.                        | T / F |
| c. The siblings' birth certificates showed they were related.        | T / F |
| d. The British court said the couple had been married for two years. | T / F |
| e. A British Lord said people need to know about their conception.   | T / F |
| f. The Lord accused the British government of lying.                 | T / F |
| g. The Lord said many people do not know who they are.               | T / F |
| h. The judge felt sorry for the couple whose marriage was annulled.  | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. sibling     | a. bamboozlement       |
| 2. invalid     | b. giver               |
| 3. donor       | c. names               |
| 4. conception  | d. conspiring          |
| 5. identities  | e. worthless           |
| 6. pressing    | f. lies                |
| 7. colluding   | g. insemination        |
| 8. deception   | h. certain             |
| 9. falsifies   | i. a brother or sister |
| 10. inevitable | j. pushing             |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. separated                                  | a. through a donor          |
| 2. The British courts decided the marriage    | b. at birth                 |
| 3. their birth certificates did not identify  | c. of your true origin      |
| 4. children conceived via                     | d. they were conceived      |
| 5. conceived                                  | e. donor insemination       |
| 6. pressing                                   | f. in a deception           |
| 7. people also have a right to know how       | g. their biological parents |
| 8. The state is colluding                     | h. attraction               |
| 9. A birth certificate that omits any mention | i. for a change in the law  |
| 10. felt an inevitable                        | j. was invalid              |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A twin brother and sister who were separated at \_\_\_\_\_ and later married each other without knowing they were \_\_\_\_\_ have had their marriage ended. The British courts decided the marriage was invalid because of their strong \_\_\_\_\_ relationship. This tragic and unfortunate case happened because the pair were \_\_\_\_\_ by different sets of parents and their birth certificates did not identify their biological parents. Britain's Lord Alton immediately used the story to \_\_\_\_\_ for a law that allows children conceived via donor insemination to be told about the method of their conception. It is not thought, however, that the British brother and sister were \_\_\_\_\_ through a donor. Their \_\_\_\_\_ and details of their relationship and marriage, including how long they were married, have been kept \_\_\_\_\_.

*adopted*  
*identities*  
*siblings*  
*conceived*  
*blood*  
*secret*  
*birth*  
*push*

Lord Alton is \_\_\_\_\_ for a change in the law to make more information about parents available on birth certificates. He says people also have a \_\_\_\_\_ to know how they were conceived: "The state is \_\_\_\_\_ in a deception. We are opening the door to more cases like this one. One of the most \_\_\_\_\_ things of all is to know who you are. The issue here is about human rights. A birth certificate that \_\_\_\_\_ any mention of your true origin falsifies your history in a very significant way," he said. He \_\_\_\_\_ the situation of the brother and sister whose marriage ended in such sadness, saying: "[They] met later in life and felt an \_\_\_\_\_ attraction, and the judge had to deal with the consequences of the marriage that they entered into and all the issues of their \_\_\_\_\_."

*fundamental*  
*right*  
*inevitable*  
*omits*  
*separation*  
*pressing*  
*lamented*  
*colluding*

**LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.**

A twin brother and sister who were \_\_\_\_\_ and later married each other without knowing \_\_\_\_\_ have had their marriage ended. The British courts decided the marriage was invalid because of their strong blood relationship. This \_\_\_\_\_ case happened because the pair were adopted by different sets of parents and their birth certificates \_\_\_\_\_ biological parents. Britain's Lord Alton immediately used the story to push for a law that allows children \_\_\_\_\_ insemination to be told about the method of their conception. It is not thought, however, that the British brother and sister were conceived \_\_\_\_\_. Their identities and details of their relationship and marriage, including how long they were married, have been kept secret.

Lord Alton is \_\_\_\_\_ in the law to make more information about parents available on birth certificates. He says people also have a right to know \_\_\_\_\_: "The state is \_\_\_\_\_. We are opening the door to more cases like this one. One of the most fundamental things of all is to know who you are. The issue here is about human rights. A birth certificate \_\_\_\_\_ of your true origin \_\_\_\_\_ in a very significant way," he said. He lamented the situation of the brother and sister whose marriage ended in such sadness, saying: "[They] met later in life and felt \_\_\_\_\_, and the judge had to deal with the consequences of the marriage that they entered \_\_\_\_\_ their separation."

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'brother' and 'sister'.

brother	sister

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• siblings</li> <li>• invalid</li> <li>• sets</li> <li>• push</li> <li>• thought</li> <li>• secret</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pressing</li> <li>• right</li> <li>• fundamental</li> <li>• omits</li> <li>• lamented</li> <li>• issues</li> </ul>
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## STUDENT ADOPTED CHILDREN SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about adopted children in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
  - b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'adoption'?
  - c) Is adoption common in your country?
  - d) Would you adopt?
  - e) What do you think would be the good and bad things about being a twin?
  - f) Was the British government right to end this marriage?
  - g) Do you agree with the system of donor insemination?
  - h) How do you think the couple will continue from now?
  - i) Do you think children conceived via donor insemination should be told everything?
- 

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What information do you think should be on birth certificates?
- c) What are the laws in your country concerning adoption, donor insemination, etc?
- d) "One of the most fundamental things of all is to know who you are." What do you think of Lord Alton's quote?
- e) How do you think the siblings feel now?
- f) What do you think are the issues surrounding the separation?
- g) Do you think artificial insemination is wrong?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the couple?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

## LANGUAGE

**CORRECT WORD:** Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

A (1) \_\_\_\_\_ brother and sister who were separated at birth and later married each other without knowing they were siblings have had their marriage ended. The British courts decided the marriage was (2) \_\_\_\_\_ because of their strong blood relationship. This (3) \_\_\_\_\_ and unfortunate case happened because the pair were (4) \_\_\_\_\_ by different sets of parents and their birth certificates did not identify their biological parents. Britain's Lord Alton immediately used the story to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ for a law that allows children conceived via donor insemination to be told about the method of their conception. It is not thought, however, that the British brother and sister were conceived through a donor. Their identities and details of their relationship and marriage, including how long they were married, have been kept (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

Lord Alton is (7) \_\_\_\_\_ for a change in the law to make more information about parents available (8) \_\_\_\_\_ birth certificates. He says people also have a right to know how they were conceived: "The state is colluding (9) \_\_\_\_\_ a deception. We are opening the door to more cases like this one. One of the most fundamental things of all is to know who you are. The issue here is about human rights. A birth certificate that (10) \_\_\_\_\_ any mention of your true origin (11) \_\_\_\_\_ your history in a very significant way," he said. He lamented the situation of the brother and sister whose marriage ended in such sadness, saying: "[They] met later in life and felt an inevitable attraction, and the judge had to deal with the consequences of the marriage that they entered (12) \_\_\_\_\_ and all the issues of their separation."

- |     |                |                |                |                 |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) twine      | (b) twins      | (c) twinned    | (d) twin        |
| 2.  | (a) invaluable | (b) invalidity | (c) invalid    | (d) invasive    |
| 3.  | (a) tragedy    | (b) tragic     | (c) trajectory | (d) tragically  |
| 4.  | (a) adopted    | (b) adapted    | (c) activated  | (d) addicted    |
| 5.  | (a) pusher     | (b) pushy      | (c) push       | (d) pushing     |
| 6.  | (a) secretion  | (b) secrecy    | (c) secretive  | (d) secret      |
| 7.  | (a) ironing    | (b) pressing   | (c) steaming   | (d) flattening  |
| 8.  | (a) on         | (b) onto       | (c) unto       | (d) to          |
| 9.  | (a) from       | (b) in         | (c) on         | (d) at          |
| 10. | (a) remits     | (b) emits      | (c) omits      | (d) permits     |
| 11. | (a) falsifies  | (b) falsely    | (c) false      | (d) false alarm |
| 12. | (a) on         | (b) onto       | (c) unto       | (d) into        |



## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information about different adoption methods around the world. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. BIRTH CERTIFICATE:** Make your own example "21<sup>st</sup> Century birth certificate". State what information should be on it and why. Show your certificate to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. TWINS:** Write a magazine article about the lives of twins. Include (imaginary) interviews with twins.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the British government. Ask them three questions about their policy on information regarding adoption. Give them three suggestions on what they should do to avoid future cases of siblings mistakenly marrying. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. sibling     | a. a brother or sister |
| 2. invalid     | b. worthless           |
| 3. donor       | c. giver               |
| 4. conception  | d. insemination        |
| 5. identities  | e. names               |
| 6. pressing    | f. pushing             |
| 7. colluding   | g. conspiring          |
| 8. deception   | h. bamboozlement       |
| 9. falsifies   | i. lies                |
| 10. inevitable | j. certain             |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. separated                                  | a. at birth                 |
| 2. The British courts decided the marriage    | b. was invalid              |
| 3. their birth certificates did not identify  | c. their biological parents |
| 4. children conceived via                     | d. donor insemination       |
| 5. conceived                                  | e. through a donor          |
| 6. pressing                                   | f. for a change in the law  |
| 7. people also have a right to know how       | g. they were conceived      |
| 8. The state is colluding                     | h. in a deception           |
| 9. A birth certificate that omits any mention | i. of your true origin      |
| 10. felt an inevitable                        | j. attraction               |

### GAP FILL:

#### Divided-at-birth twins marry each other

A twin brother and sister who were separated at **birth** and later married each other without knowing they were **siblings** have had their marriage ended. The British courts decided the marriage was invalid because of their strong **blood** relationship. This tragic and unfortunate case happened because the pair were **adopted** by different sets of parents and their birth certificates did not identify their biological parents. Britain's Lord Alton immediately used the story to **push** for a law that allows children conceived via donor insemination to be told about the method of their conception. It is not thought, however, that the British brother and sister were **conceived** through a donor. Their **identities** and details of their relationship and marriage, including how long they were married, have been kept **secret**.

Lord Alton is **pressing** for a change in the law to make more information about parents available on birth certificates. He says people also have a **right** to know how they were conceived: "The state is **colluding** in a deception. We are opening the door to more cases like this one. One of the most **fundamental** things of all is to know who you are. The issue here is about human rights. A birth certificate that **omits** any mention of your true origin falsifies your history in a very significant way," he said. He **lamented** the situation of the brother and sister whose marriage ended in such sadness, saying: "[They] met later in life and felt an **inevitable** attraction, and the judge had to deal with the consequences of the marriage that they entered into and all the issues of their **separation**."

### LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - c    3 - b    4 - a    5 - c    6 - d    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - c    11 - a    12 - d