# Only 10% of UK engineers are women

**6th November, 2013**



A new report says less than ten per cent of Britain's engineers are women. This is the lowest figure of all European countries. Vince Cable, the UK Business Secretary, told reporters that this would be an "enormous problem for years to come". He said one of the biggest areas that needed more women was in computer science. Many women graduate from university with degrees in computer science, so Mr Cable did not understand why there were so few female computer engineers. He suggested that many companies had a "psychological barrier" against women becoming engineers. He said: "Half of all state schools don't have a single girl doing physics. We are only tapping half the population."

The British government has started a new campaign to get more women into engineering. It is called "Tomorrow's Engineers Week" and started on November the 4th. Mr Cable said at the launch: "Engineering has a vital role to play in the future of UK industry. It is important that we act now to ensure businesses have access to the skills they require to enable them to grow." A spokesman for Siemens UK said Britain needed to "help young people understand how an engineering [training programme] can lead to a rewarding career". The campaign website said it would "showcase all the exciting businesses and industries…that rely on the work of creative engineers."

*Sources: Independent / Guardian / TomorrowsEngineers.org.uk*

## Writing

*There are no jobs that women cannot do.* Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

new report / less than 10% / engineers / enormous problem / computer science / campaign / a vital role / act now / training / rewarding career / exciting businesses

## True / False

a) Just over 10% of UK engineers are women.  T / F

b) Britain has the lowest percentage of female engineers in Europe.  T / F

c) Many women graduate from university with computer science degrees.  T / F

d) Half of the girls in state schools study physics.  T / F

e) The UK launched a new campaign called "Next Week's Engineers".  T / F

f) The UK Business Secretary said his country must take action now.  T / F

g) A spokesman said a career in engineering isn't that rewarding.  T / F

h) A website will have information on the work of creative engineers.  T / F

## Synonym Match

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | report | a. | fields |
| 2 | figure | b. | study |
| 3. | enormous | c. | essential |
| 4. | areas | d. | huge |
| 5. | tapping | e. | start |
| 6. | campaign | f. | number |
| 7. | launch | g. | fruitful |
| 8. | vital | h. | drive |
| 9. | rewarding | i. | depend on |
| 10. | rely on | j. | using |

## Discussion – Student A

a) Why do you think there are so few women engineers in Britain?

b) Why is this an "enormous problem"?

c) Are women attracted to engineering as a career?

d) What do you think of a job in engineering?

e) How important are engineers?

f) Do you think studying computer science would be interesting?

g) Why might companies have a "psychological barrier" against women becoming engineers?

h) Did / Do you like studying physics?

## Phrase Match

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | an enormous problem | a. | a new campaign |
| 2 | graduate from university with degrees | b. | career |
| 3. | companies had a psychological | c. | girl doing physics |
| 4. | schools don't have a single | d. | role to play in the future |
| 5. | We are only tapping | e. | for years to come |
| 6. | The British government has started | f. | barrier against women |
| 7. | Engineering has a vital | g. | act now |
| 8. | It is important that we | h. | half the population |
| 9. | lead to a rewarding | i. | of creative engineers |
| 10. | rely on the work | j. | in computer science |

## Discussion – Student B

a) Are men or women better engineers?

b) Why is engineering vital for the future?

c) Is engineering an attractive career in your country? (Why)?

d) What kind of engineer would you like to be?

e) Is engineering a "rewarding career"?

f) Would you prefer to be an engineer at Apple or NASA?

g) Which is a better job, an engineer or a banker?

h) What questions would you like to ask an engineer?

## Spelling

1. an <u>eonrusmo</u> problem for years to come
2. Many women <u>gtardeau</u> from university
3. <u>egeders</u> in computer science
4. a "psychological <u>reirbra</u>"
5. schools don't have a single girl doing <u>chspisy</u>
6. only tapping half the <u>tpluinoaop</u>
7. started a new <u>panamigc</u>
8. at the <u>nuchla</u>
9. <u>reeusn</u> businesses have access
10. lead to a <u>iadwrnreg</u> career
11. exciting businesses and <u>rsiditsnue</u>
12. rely on the work of <u>reteiavc</u> engineers

## Role Play

**Role A – Designing cities**
You think designing cities is the best engineering job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a genetic engineer, an engineer at Apple or a space engineer.

**Role B – Genetic engineer**
You think a genetic engineer is the best engineering job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): designing cities, an engineer at Apple or a space engineer.

**Role C – Engineer at Apple**
You think an engineer at Apple is the best engineering job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a genetic engineer, designing cities or a space engineer.

**Role D – Space engineer**
You think a space engineer is the best engineering job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a genetic engineer, an engineer at Apple or designing cities.

## Speaking – Engineering career

Rank these engineering jobs and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best career at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- designing roads
- genetic engineer
- nanotechnology
- computer systems
- electronic devices
- automotive engineer
- industrial design
- space engineer

**Answers – True False**

| a | F | b | T | c | T | d | F | e | F | f | T | g | F | h | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

**Answers – Synonym Match**

| 1. | b | 2. | f | 3. | d | 4. | a | 5. | j |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | h | 7. | e | 8. | c | 9. | g | 10. | i |