

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice



Ready Intermediate Lesson

Today's lesson:



Speaking

Vocabulary

Reading

Writing

Look at the photo:



Do you think the article is about...

- a) a baby with two mothers?
- b) a mother with two daughters?
- c) a woman having a baby for another woman?

Match the meanings and the words:

1) two children born at the same time to the same mother

2) to become the parents of another person's child

3) a woman who has a baby for another woman

4) the action of having a baby for another woman

5) wanting more money than you need

6) accept money so someone can use something

7) where a mother carries her baby in her body before it is born

8) taking people and using them illegally



a) surrogate mother

b) surrogacy

c) twins

d) to adopt

e) womb

f) to rent out

g) greedy

h) human trafficking

What do you think?



You are a poor woman and you live in India. You have three young children. Your husband can't find a job. A couple from New York offer you £30,000 if you will have their baby for them and be a surrogate mother.

What would you do and why?

What do you think?



You are a couple from New York and and you paid £30,000 to a surrogate mother in India to have a baby for you. When the baby is born, there are twins. You already have one child. Would you take only one baby or the twins back to New York and why?

Now read the first paragraph of the article.

Answer these questions:

- 1) The parents are from New York. Yes/no?
- 2) The surrogate mother is in India.
Yes/no?
- 3) The surrogate mother had twins.
Yes/no?
- 4) The parents wanted one baby. Yes/no?



An Indian surrogate mother had a baby for Australian parents. The parents didn't want the baby. People in Australia are worried about this. In India life is cheap. In a country of over one billion people no one is interested in one more baby born, abandoned or dead. The baby was left with the Indian birth mother because the Australian parents wanted just one child and not twins.

Now read the next paragraph of the article



Are the sentences true or false?

- 1) The parents had no children.
- 2) The Australian High Commission asked the parents to have the twins.
- 3) The Indian government could not make the parents take the twins.
- 4) An Indian couple now have one of the twins.

Reports say that they had one child back home, so they chose one of the twins and left the other. The Australian High Commission in India said the story is true but said they could do nothing. They tried talking to the parents but surrogacy is a personal matter. It's something new with few laws. The High Commission could only give a passport for one child, which the parents asked for. It could not legally make them take the other twin. The Indian government could not make them take the other twin. So here is the terrible story of one little Australian baby left behind with a mother who doesn't want it. Happily the baby was quickly adopted by an Indian couple. People want light-skinned babies in India and not babies with dark skins.



Now read the rest of the article.

Find the disadvantages
of surrogacy for the
surrogate mother.

Activists have explained again and again that the laws to protect surrogate mothers and babies in India are not good enough. The activists are using this story to try to get some good laws. So are the Australian authorities. But what does “good” mean? Of course, the women who rent out their wombs for money are poor and weak. It is a big business now – very poor women having babies for rich women who can’t or won’t do it themselves. I am not criticising women who really want to have babies themselves.

Is surrogacy worse than being a sex worker? Criticising doesn’t help. It is impossible to understand the stress couples who want a child of their own may have. It is impossible to really feel for them, if we do not have the same problem.

But we need to understand and make laws to stop the suffering of women who rent out their wombs in their village or small town because they need money. It pays far more than most other work.

It is easy to see greedy husbands and in-laws using it to make money. Women's bodies are worth less than nothing in far too many parts of India. So no one worries about the dangers to a woman's health through having many children.

John Pascoe is an Australian Federal Circuit Court Chief Judge. He has asked for a national enquiry into international surrogacy. He thinks international surrogacy is the new kind of human trafficking and that there are enough examples to believe that people are paying women to have their children with no protections for the children or for the surrogate mothers.

With more parents finding it difficult to have children in the world, I think this is a problem which more and more people are starting to understand. Western women find it cheaper to have surrogate babies in India or other poor countries. And rich Indian women are wanting to have surrogate babies, too. The market will get bigger. The question is: how can we be sure that it is fair for the surrogate mothers, the parents who pay, and the babies.

Speaking



Work with a partner.

Decide if you are A or B.

A tells B everything they can remember about the article.

Change partners. Now B tells A everything they can remember about the article.

Writing



You are writing a short article for the school or college magazine.

Summarise the most important information in the text in five sentences.

Homework:

Now read the original article:

<http://newint.org/blog/majority/2014/10/10/surrogacy-laws/>

Next read this discussion about surrogacy – is it good or bad?

http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Is_being_a_surrogate_mother_a_good_way_out_of_poverty%3F

