

Join the national conversation!



Word Generation - Unit 3.24

Focus Words

visible | isolate | discretion | mandatory | outcome



Weekly Passage

“Police!” shouted the officer, but no one answered. “Open up!” his partner shouted. Slowly, the door opened. Joel Steinberg was inside, carrying his nine-year-old daughter, Lisa. He had called 911 to say his daughter had gotten sick and stopped breathing, but Lisa had visible bruises and broken bones. Steinberg had beaten her to death. Although this terrible incident occurred in 1987, it is not an isolated event. An estimated four children die each day in the United States from abuse.

Some people say mandatory licensing for all parents could prevent such child abuse. With mandatory licensing, men and women would take parenting classes prior to becoming parents. They would learn what they should and should not do to raise children well. In the U.S., we mandate that people get licenses for activities that, if done incorrectly, could cause harm. For example, we license drivers, gun dealers, doctors, teachers, and plumbers. Why not license parents too?

Those in favor of licensing parents say that, in order to be prepared to be good parents, people need to know about children’s development and children’s developmental needs. License supporters point out that parenting can be very stressful. All parents need to acquire positive discipline strategies and to learn where to get help when they need it. Also, parenting classes could improve parents’

behavior with their children. For example, after learning about the benefits of reading aloud to children, parents may decide to read to their children more frequently.

Others oppose mandatory licensing of parents. They say licensing won’t ensure that children are safe any more than licensing drivers ensures that there will be no car accidents. In other words, if licensing drivers does not guarantee a good outcome, why should we believe that licensing parents will ensure better parenting outcomes? In addition, no class could teach parents everything they need to know.

Besides, licensing opponents argue, we all have a right to have children. If someone cannot take the classes, should he or she lose the right to be a parent? Those who oppose mandatory licensing also say the way we raise children should be left to each family’s discretion. In addition, licensing parents is not practical. Even if a licensing program is a good idea, it cannot be enforced.

What do you think? Should it be mandatory to get a parent license?

Unit 3.24 - Should it be mandatory to get a license to be a parent?

Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
mandatory	(adj.) - required			
isolated	(adj.) - set apart from others; confined			
discretion	(n.) - individual choice			
visible	(adj.) - capable of being seen			
outcomes	(n.) - results			

Unit 3.24 - Should it be mandatory to get a license to be a parent?

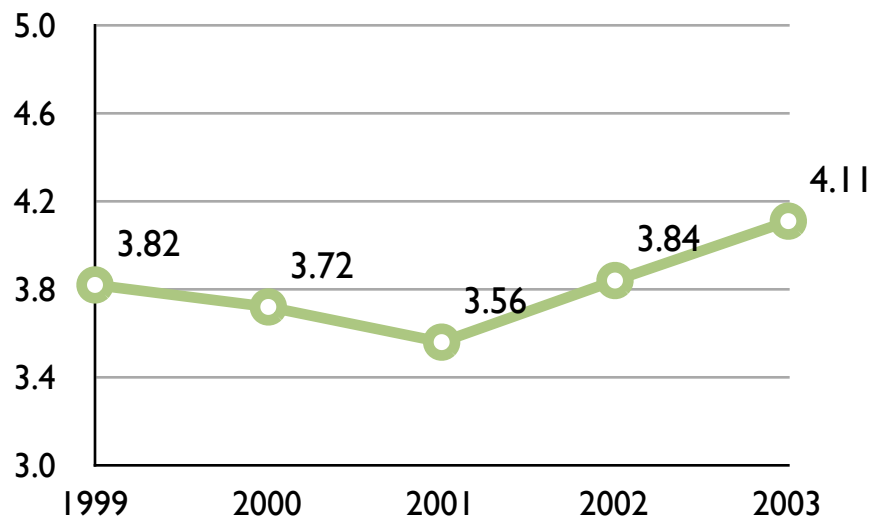


Problem of the Week

Option 1: Child abuse is a national tragedy. It damages and **isolates** its victims, and can lead to **outcomes** like depression and substance abuse. Parents use their own **discretion** to decide how to raise their children. Sadly, some of these parents use violence. This graph shows the number of young victims that die each day. Would **mandatory** parent licenses change these numbers?

Which years are **visible** on the graph?

- A) 1999 – 2004
- B) 1999 – 2003
- C) 1990 – 2000
- D) 1990 – 2004



<http://www.childhelp.org/resources/learning-center/statistics>

Option 2: Making parent licenses **mandatory** would be a huge project. The scale of the project is **visible**: there are potential parents all around us! We would need to think hard about what makes a good or bad parent and **isolate** the most important criteria. Whose **discretion** could we trust to approve or reject people as parents? How would we fund a project of this size?

There are about 300 million people in the United States. Say that we need one Parent Licensing Officer for every thousand people. How many Parent Licensing Officers would we need? (Hint: use exponents!)

Math Discussion Question: People who support **mandatory** parent licenses want this **outcome**: happy, productive children who will become happy, productive adults. But good parenting is often **invisible**. It is difficult to **isolate** the parental decisions that make a child healthy, happy, and productive. What makes a good parent? If the question were left to your **discretion**, what would you say?

Should it be mandatory to get a license to be a parent?

Debating the Issue



GO!

1. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A There should be mandatory licensing for parents. Licenses would protect children and educate parents.

B Parenting classes should be mandatory for very young parents, but parents over 20 should not be forced to get a license.

C Licensing for parents should be optional. Parents could choose whether or not to take classes to learn how to raise their children if they want to.

D There should not be mandatory licensing for parents. Everyone should be free to raise their children as they want.

E _____

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I think it's more accurate to say...

That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?

I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .

Let me share something from the reading that will help us...

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

Unit 3.24 - Should it be mandatory to get a license to be a parent?

Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Physical abuse of children leaves **visible** marks, but it also can leave other hidden marks on how a child's brain develops. Abused children often feel **isolated** and lonely. Because abused children are used to seeing people angry, they may have trouble recognizing when people are happy. Being unable to recognize a happy face could create another negative **outcome** for abused children because they would be less able to respond to happy expressions. These children might even misinterpret the happy faces as angry because that is the expression they are used to seeing.

Question:

Does abuse make children less able to recognize facial expressions?

Hypothesis:

Children who have been physically abused will be less accurate in categorizing facial expressions than children who have not been abused.

Materials:

- ▶ Facial expression recognition tests

Procedure:

Children were asked to look at a series of photographs. The photographs showed people with different expressions: happy, sad, angry, and fearful. Children were asked to tell the researchers which expression was on each face.

Data:

	Happy Faces	Sad Faces	Angry Faces	Fearful Faces
Children with physical abuse	85% accurate 15% chose fearful	75% accurate 25% chose angry	100% accurate	80% accurate 20% chose sad
Children who were not abused	100% accurate	90% accurate 10% chose fearful	98% accurate 2% chose sad	88% accurate 12% chose fearful

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better experiment?



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

visible | isolate | discretion | mandatory | outcome

Check off what you accomplished:

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

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