

Week 11 – Giving and reporting opinions 2

Preparation: reading and listening

1 The details of the cases in the three texts are imaginary, but they are based on real ones. Read and, just for yourself, summarize the dilemma in each case.

Text 1

Mr and Mrs A have three children aged twelve, ten and eight. The youngest has a rare hereditary disease, from which he will die, unless a suitable bone marrow donor can be found. So far, no match has been found and the boy has been given two more years to live.

Mr and Mrs A want the right to be given IVF treatment¹ so that an embryo with the correct bone marrow can be selected, and Mrs A can have another baby who will save its older brother's life. The genetic selection of embryos is at present illegal in the country where the A family live. The As have appealed to the European Court of Human Rights.

QUESTION: Should the As be allowed to have a baby in this way?

Text 2

A year ago Miss B was living a normal life as an administrator in a large hospital. She then suffered a severe stroke, which left her paralysed from the neck down. Now the forty-three-year-old cannot be moved from her hospital bed: she is kept alive only by a ventilator and the tubes that deliver food into her body. She has been told that there is a less than a one percent chance of her condition ever improving. Her mental abilities are unaffected, but she is severely depressed. Miss B, who is single with no children, has asked the doctors to turn off the ventilator so she can die a peaceful death. The doctors have told her that they are not allowed to fulfil her request.

QUESTION: Should the doctors be allowed to do what Miss B asks?

Text 3

Two years ago C, a thirty-eight-year-old woman, was diagnosed with cancer, which needed to be treated with chemotherapy. She was told she would be unable to have children after the treatment so, using sperm from her partner D, she was given IVF treatment, and the embryos were then frozen, until C was well enough to have a child.

However, shortly after her treatment was completed, D left C for another woman. C is now applying to the courts for the right to have the child. However, D says he does not now want to have a child with C, and wants the embryos to be destroyed.

QUESTION: Should C be allowed to have the child?

2 (Rec 11.6) Listen to two people discussing one of the cases and answer the questions.

- a Which case are they discussing?
- b What are the main arguments for and against?

¹ in vitro fertilization: a medical treatment in which a human egg is fertilized outside a woman's body and then put back inside her body to grow into a baby.

3 (Rec. 11.7) Listen and complete the phrases they use for disagreeing with each other.

a I can _____ but ...

b The _____ of it is ...

c I know _____ but ...

d I know but _____ ...

TASK:

1 Choose the case that most interests you. Then look at the question at the end of the case and make notes under the following headings: arguments for and arguments against. Think of three or four arguments for each category. Write them in the forum giving your opinion on what should happen.

2 Once you post your contribution, find someone else's post on the same topic and compare it with yours. If you feel like discussing your opinions, you of course can do so.

Useful language:

a Arguments for and against

What if ... (he/she became ill again)?

How would (the baby) feel when he/she grew up?

What about the rights of (the father/baby)?

b Giving your opinion

He/She should(n't) be allowed to ...

I think people should have the right to ...

In my opinion it's morally wrong to ...

It's a question of whether or not ...

I think you have to be practical ...

I feel really sorry for ... but I feel that ...

c Agreeing/disagreeing

I see what you mean, but ...

I totally agree (with ...)

I don't agree (at all).

(Source: New Cutting Edge Upper Intermediate, Student's Book, Pearson Education Ltd., 2005)