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SHOULD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
BE COMPLETELY BANNED AT
HOME AS WELL AS IN SCHOOL?

Word Generation - Unit 2.2 I

Focus Words

privacy | invasion | consists | secure | corporal

WEEKLY PASSAGE



Around the world, children are disciplined by their families. Sometimes this discipline may **consist** of spanking or hitting children when they are behaving badly. In 1997, the United States Court of Appeals ruled that parents do not have a **secure** right under the U.S. Constitution to physically punish their children. In the same year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that schools may use corporal punishment despite parental objections.

In some places, teachers physically punish students who misbehave. In fact, the U.S. and Australia are the only two industrialized countries that have not banned **corporal** punishment in schools, although 19 of the 50 states have explicitly prohibited corporal punishment. In the United States, some school districts allow “paddling,” i.e. using a wooden paddle to spank a child. There have been lawsuits against school districts by parents who have documented the pain and suffering inflicted on their children inflicted by school staff.

But many school officials have banned physical punishment at school even if the state allows it. For example, paddling used to be allowed in Memphis, Tennessee, until Superintendent Carol Johnson asked the school board to consider alternatives such as counseling and in-school suspension.

Some parents claim that corporal punishment by teachers violates children’s rights. Some parents argue that using corporal punishment to discipline their own children at

home is their business. They believe that having the courts decide what they may do in their own homes is an **invasion** of their **privacy**.

What do you think about this? Should corporal punishment be banned in schools as well as at home?

Should corporal punishment be completely banned at home as well as in school?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

privacy : (noun) freedom from the attention of others

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

invasion : (noun) unwanted interference

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

consists : (verb) to be made up of

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

secure : (adjective) safe

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

corporal : (adjective) related to the body

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:



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PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

According to a 2004 poll, most Americans think that good family discipline **consists** of occasional spankings. But while most Americans feel **secure** in the right to spank in the **privacy** of their own homes, they also tend to disagree with **corporal** punishment in school. Is spanking in school an **invasion** of family rights?

<i>Spanking Approval Poll</i>	Yes	No
Approve of spanking children at home	65%	31%
Think spanking should be permitted in school	26%	72%

Option 1: Which of the following is true?

- A) More people disapprove of spanking at home than agree with spanking in school.
- B) Most people disagree with spanking at home.
- C) Most people agree with school spanking.
- D) Seven out of ten people agree with spanking in school.

Option 2: What is the *maximum* percentage of people polled who could both approve of spanking at home and disapprove of spanking in school? Would you expect the actual percentage to be higher, lower, or exactly equal to the maximum?

Discussion Question: Why do people change their opinions about **corporal** punishment depending on where it happens? If people disapprove of **corporal** punishment in school, does that mean it shouldn't happen anywhere? Or, should families have a **secure** right to **privacy**?

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THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn’s students are discussing **corporal** punishment in schools and at home.

“Spanking and all that should be against the law for everyone,” exclaims Viet Ly. “If I have kids when I’m older, I won’t ever spank them. And I definitely don’t think teachers should be able to hit kids.”

“I understand Viet Ly’s point,” says Jonah, “but Americans really value their **privacy** and independence. Parents won’t like being told they can’t raise their own children the way they want to in their own homes. It’s an **invasion** of their rights.”

“Maybe they won’t like it, but laws already **consist** of rules telling people what to do, at home and at school,” argues Rashad. “Hitting kids to make them behave better doesn’t even work, does it Ms. Kahn?”

“Well Rashad, there is a lot of research suggesting that corporal punishment may do more harm than good,” said Ms. Kahn. “But doing scientific research on something like corporal punishment is difficult. Can you, Jonah, and Viet Ly get together and brainstorm reasons why?”

→ Here are some of the ideas Ms. Kahn’s students had about the challenges of doing research on corporal punishment.



I don’t think people would tell the truth to researchers on this topic. So interviews and surveys might be misleading.

Jonah

 Do you agree with Jonah? Why or why not?



I think that doing experiments involving hitting children would be wrong and dangerous. So it would be hard to come up with experimental evidence to prove anything.

Rashad

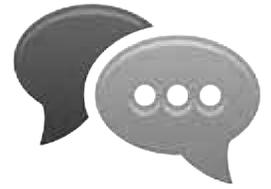
 Do you agree with Rashad? Why or why not?



I think corporal punishment might seem to work in the short term—it might stop children from doing something bad at the moment. But I think it would do harm in the long term. That would be hard to measure.

Viet Ly

 Do you agree with Viet Ly? Why or why not?



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DEBATING THE ISSUE

Get ready...

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

A Corporal punishment should be banned from homes. There is no reason for violence against children.

B Discipline at home should be a decision left to parents. The government should not interfere with individuals' privacy.

C Corporal punishment should be banned from schools. There are other more effective and humane methods of disciplining children.

D Corporal punishment should not be banned from schools. Some cases require more vigorous discipline.

E _____

Get set...

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

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I believe that...

I agree with you, but...

You make a good point, but have you considered...

Can you show me evidence in the text that...

