

Swapped at birth

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

What do you know about India? Choose the correct answers.

1. India has a population of **130 million** / **1.3 billion**.
2. The most widely spoken language in India is **Indian** / **Hindi**.
3. The capital of India is **New Delhi** / **Mumbai**.
4. The largest city in India is **New Delhi** / **Mumbai**.
5. The currency of India is the **rupee** / **dollar**.
6. India is **north** / **south** of the Equator.

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers will help you.

resemblance

amusing

psychiatrist

features

obvious

1. An _____ mistake is clear to almost everyone. (para 1)
2. Your _____ are parts of your face such as your eyes, nose or mouth. (para 3)
3. A _____ is a doctor who treats people with illnesses of the mind. (para 3)
4. If something is _____, it is funny or entertaining. (para 6)
5. If there is a _____ between two people, they have a similar appearance. (para 7)

biological

coincidence

attached

delay

mix-up

6. A _____ is a mistake or problem that happens because someone is confused. (para 7)
7. A _____ is something that happens or exists by chance. (para 8)
8. If people _____ something, they make it late. (para 9)
9. Your _____ parents are your natural father or mother. (para 9)
10. If you are _____ to someone, you like them very much or you love them. (para 9)

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. When did Salma Parbin give birth to her baby?
2. How long did it take the hospital to admit its mistake?
3. In which Indian state is the hospital where the exchange happened?
4. Which people do the Bodo tribe closely resemble?
5. What kind of test did the laboratory do?
6. When did the police finally release their results?

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Two Indian families opt to keep sons who were swapped at birth

Michael Safi

16 January, 2018

- 1 Salma Parbin gave birth to a baby in March, 2015. Days later, she knew the baby was not hers. Her husband would not believe her for three months. The hospital took two years to admit it. The story has become national news in India. The way Salma Parbin's husband, Sahabuddin Ahmed, tells the story, the truth about the child should have been obvious.
- 2 On the same day at the Mangaldoi Hospital, in the north-eastern state of Assam, another woman had also given birth to a son. She belonged to the Bodo people – their eye shape is more like Tibetan people's than people from India.
- 3 "My wife said: 'This baby has the same eyes and the same features as Bodo people,'" Ahmed said. "She was very sure: this child is not ours, this child belongs to that family." Ahmed went to see the hospital manager. "A doctor told me: your wife has some mental disease," he said. "You should take her to a psychiatrist."
- 4 The next month, Ahmed asked for the details of every person who gave birth at the Mangaldoi Hospital that day in March. "The records showed that a baby was born as my wife was giving birth," he said. The mother's last name was Boro, another name for the Bodo people.
- 5 Ahmed went twice to the village where the Boro family lived. Twice he returned home without speaking to them because he was not brave enough. The third time, Ahmed went to the Boro house, he left a letter. "My wife thinks our children have been exchanged," he wrote. "If you have the same feeling, get in touch."
- 6 The note was not welcomed in the home of Anil and Sewali Boro. Their son, Ryan Chandra, was now six weeks old and his eyes – larger than his parents' eyes – were just something amusing. "I had no idea the child was not mine," Anil Boro said. "It was only when he came to my place and I read the letter."
- 7 Boro invited Ahmed and Parbin to visit. The same day, they took Junaid to the Boro house for a meeting. Ahmed knew immediately. "As soon as they put the two babies together, I saw my son there; I saw the resemblance," he said. "I realized there was a mistake by the doctor." Boro, too, thought the mix-up was obvious. But he did not want to exchange the children. "Whoever comes to live in my house, is my child," he said.
- 8 Ahmed told his wife he was still unsure, that the resemblance might be a coincidence. But he applied to a laboratory for a DNA test. The results came back after four months. They said the possibility that Parbin was Junaid's mother was zero.
- 9 Ahmed told the police and asked for tests on Ryan Chandra. Police mistakes delayed the final results until November, 2017. "The results came back and said, yes, the baby was exchanged," Ahmed said. But Parbin had changed her mind about returning Junaid, now nearly three, to his biological parents. "She's very attached," he said. "I also love him a lot."
- 10 In February, 2018, both families told a court in Assam they did not want to exchange their children. "I just wanted to find out the truth," Ahmed said. He hopes to stay in Ryan Chandra's life and, possibly, pay for his education. But the truth has been less pleasant for the Boros. "I don't like talking too much about it," Anil Boro said. "When your child is yours, you don't want to hear it's someone else's."

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4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make statements about the text.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The DNA test and the police report ... | a. ... where the Boro family lived. |
| 2. Junaid has eyes that ... | b. ... he just wanted to find out the truth. |
| 3. Ahmed went to the village ... | c. ... want to exchange the children. |
| 4. Both fathers could see that ... | d. ... showed that the two mothers were given the wrong baby at the hospital. |
| 5. Boro did not ... | e. ... the mix-up was obvious. |
| 6. Ahmed says that ... | f. ... have the typical shape of the eyes of the Bodo people. |

5 Prepositions

Choose the correct preposition to complete the sentences.

- She gave birth **to / of** a baby.
- Two babies were born **in / on** the same day.
- The child belongs **to / at** another family.
- He returned home **without / with** speaking to the other family.
- There was a mistake **by / to** the doctor.
- Mistakes delayed the final results **before / until** November, 2017.

6 Phrases

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns and noun phrases in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 1. change | a. the truth |
| 2. give | b. tests |
| 3. find out | c. someone's education |
| 4. ask for | d. your mind |
| 5. pay for | e. a resemblance |
| 6. see | f. birth |

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7 Word stress

Put these words from the text into two groups according to their stress.

admit
mix-up

delay
visit

result
village

features
unsure

disease
zero

A o o	B o o

8 Discussion

- In your opinion, did the parents make the right decision? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Warmer

1. 1.3 billion
2. Hindi
3. New Delhi
4. Mumbai
5. rupee
6. north

2 Key words

1. obvious
2. features
3. psychiatrist
4. amusing
5. resemblance
6. mix-up
7. coincidence
8. delay
9. biological
10. attached

3 Find the information

1. March, 2015
2. two years
3. Assam
4. Tibetan people
5. a DNA test
6. November, 2017

4 Comprehension check

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. e
5. c
6. b

5 Prepositions

1. to
2. on
3. to
4. without
5. by
6. until

6 Phrases

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. b
5. c
6. e

7 Word stress

A 0 o	B o 0
features	admit
mix-up	delay
visit	result
village	disease
zero	unsure