



1. Family Issues

Two elderly women met for the first time since graduating from high school. One asked the other, 'You were always so organized in school. Did you manage to live a well-planned life?' 'Yes,' said her friend. 'My first marriage was to a millionaire; my second marriage was to an actor; my third marriage was to a preacher; and now I'm married to an undertaker.' Her friend asked, 'What do those marriages have to do with a well-planned life?' 'One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go.'



Questions

1. What are the main family structures?
2. What possible reasons are there for generations living together?
3. What problems might emerge in a multi-generational household?
4. How have family roles changed in the last few decades?
5. What are typical roles for modern women?
6. What is the role of government in supporting families?
7. How can parents contribute to the personality development of children?
8. What are the most common parenting styles?
9. What are the consequences of permissive parenting?
10. What difficulties does growing up in a single-parent family involve?
11. What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child are?
12. How long should children be supported by their families?
13. Why is there a tendency for young people to leave home at a later age than before?
14. What adoption practices are most frequent?
15. What is the difference between adoption and foster care?
16. Why do some couples cohabit before getting married?



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17. Why do some couples sign a prenuptial agreement?
18. At what age do people get married nowadays?
19. What are typical wedding ceremonies like?
20. What are the main characteristics of wedding receptions in Western culture?
21. What is the ideal age to start a family?
22. What is the difference between bigamy and polygamy?
23. Why can adultery occur in a relationship?
24. Why is the number of divorces increasing nowadays?
25. What problems can emerge after a divorce?
26. What problems may occur in long-distance relationships?
27. How have long-distance relationships changed recently?
28. How has the general acceptance of single lifestyle changed recently?
29. Who are called mingles?



Answers

1. What are the main family structures?

There are three main family structures, that is, nuclear, extended, and blended. The nuclear household consists of only two generations, parents and children. Extended families are multi-generational and they mainly include children, parents, and grandparents. Blended households are the results of divorce or death, and then remarriage. Some people do not remarry but stay alone with the children in a single-parent family.



2. What possible reasons are there for generations living together?

Some families see living together as a solution for the high cost of housing, sharing bills, and the cost of food. Some also say that a multi-generational household is ideal for each generation since they can manage all family issues more easily. While the parents work, the grandparents can look after the children, and when the grandparents are old, the whole family can take care of them. It is also easier to share housework and jobs around the house.

3. What problems might emerge in a multi-generational household?

The diversity of needs might be one of the sources of conflicts. The older generation usually prefers a calm lifestyle while the young want to enjoy themselves and organize parties. There might also be disputes over the division of household bills and chores. Each generation also has its own daily routine which might be so different that the lifestyles become incompatible. Privacy issues cause problems, especially when the home is too small for the generations and there is no place to be alone.



4. How have family roles changed in the last few decades?

Since the definition of a family has broadened considerably, the roles of family members have also changed. It is no longer just the father who has a job, but the mother too. As the parents usually have full-time jobs, children are involved in housework, and older children sometimes have to deal with their younger brothers and sisters. Husbands also need to take part in household chores and the upbringing of the children. Some of the activities, such as doing the shopping or cooking, have become free-time activities for the whole family.

5. What are typical roles for modern women?

Nowadays most women have to find a balance in their lives between careers and family. They are wives, mothers and professionals at the same time. In many cases, though they work outside the home, they are still considered responsible for the housework and the upbringing of the children. This may be one of the reasons why some wives decide to give birth later than a few decades ago.

6. What is the role of government in supporting families?

In many countries the government provides financial support, such as Child Benefit and Family Income Supplement. There are also government-run child-nursing institutions, so the parents can work and they do not have to find a childminder. There is also a subsidy system which helps young couples by providing low-interest-rate home-loans to buy their first homes or improve their flats or houses.



7. How can parents contribute to the personality development of children?

It is the parents' task to teach their children how to decide by themselves what is right and wrong, and what behaviour is acceptable in society. As soon as the children are mature enough, parents should explain to them the possible consequences of their actions, and why they are not allowed to do certain things. Unless children learn how to self-discipline, they will not manage in their adult life. Those children whose parents are too permissive do not acquire coping skills without which they will not succeed in their work and personal life.

8. What are the most common parenting styles?

In my opinion, parents can be divided into three main groups on the basis of how they behave with their children. There are parents who want their children to obey all the time because they think they know what is best for the kids, and so they are rather inconsiderate to the feelings of their children. The other extreme is parents who always let their children do what they want because they think that this is the way they can show how much they love their children. The worst parents are those who are inconsistent in their relationship with their kids because the children cannot see clearly what behaviour is expected of them and become confused.

9. What are the consequences of permissive parenting?

I think many parents want to be the best friends of their children. They fear that unless they are permissive and understanding, they will lose the love of their children. When a child is



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always allowed to do whatever they want, they do not learn how to respect others, how to be patient to reach their goals while taking other people into consideration, and how to make the right decisions in important situations. Spoiled children will present a problem not only for their parents but for the society as a whole.

10. What difficulties does growing up in a single-parent family involve?

Children might lack emotional security since they cannot discuss certain issues with the parent they live with. Also, they do not see both role models, which is considered important for their emotional development. The worst case is if the children who live with the lone parent do not meet the other parent and their family, so these children can rely on only one set of grandparents and relatives. Growing up in a single-parent family might also cause financial difficulties.

11. What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child are?

Being an only child may mean growing up in better financial circumstances, that is, your parents can spend more on, for example, your education. Your parents can give you much more time and attention. But on the downside, only-children are sometimes said to be spoiled, and might have more difficulty socialising or making friends, so they may feel lonely and isolated. Not having to share your clothes or toys can be good, but on the other hand, not having learnt to share might mean a problem later. The question of freedom is also controversial. Some parents give more freedom to an only child, while others tend to be over-protective.



12. How long should children be supported by their families?

As long as the children do not have sufficient income, they can rely only on their families. So, while they are still studying or starting their career, they cannot manage without the financial help of their parents. The biggest help is that they can stay at home thus saving for their future life. They do not have to pay household bills or buy food at all or just pay for a part of them. Once the children earn enough, the roles should be reversed and they should help and look after their parents.

13. Why is there a tendency for young people to leave home at a later age than before?

A lot of young people attend schools till their mid-twenties and find it more convenient to stay at home during their university years. They do not have to bother with cooking, washing, shopping, and paying the bills, and they can concentrate on their studies and enjoy themselves with their friends. Some stay-at-homes simply do not want to accept the lower standard of living that starting an independent life might mean, so they remain in the parental home even when they start to work.

14. What adoption practices are most frequent?

The most frequent adoption practices are open and closed adoption. Open adoption means that there is a possibility to communicate identifying information between the adopting and



biological parents. It may also involve frequent meetings between the adopted child and the biological parents and their relatives. The practice when neither the adopted child nor the adopting parents know the identity of the biological parents is called closed adoption.

15. What is the difference between adoption and foster care?

Adoption is a permanent arrangement in which the adopted children become family members of the adopting family. Foster care is a temporary arrangement, where certificated foster parents look after children who have been removed from the parents or who have lost them. Foster care is always monitored by authorities to see whether the foster parents can provide appropriate care and living conditions for the children. If both the children and the foster parents decide to do so, they can initiate an adoption process.

16. Why do some couples cohabit before getting married?



People decide to live together for a number of reasons. Apart from wanting to test their compatibility or to establish financial security before marrying, they do not want to legally commit themselves. Some choose cohabitation because they see their relationship as a private and personal matter. Others simply do not have enough money to afford a ceremony they would like, or think is expected of them.

17. Why do some couples sign a prenuptial agreement?

They may simply want some protection against an unlikely or unforeseeable event, like divorce. A prenuptial agreement determines the division of property in the event of the break-up of marriage. The couple may also agree on issues such as expectations about working after the birth of the children, and savings, as well as how they plan to spend substantial sums. It is often said to be unromantic to sign such an agreement though by doing this it is possible to avoid needless disputes and expenditure.

18. At what age do people get married nowadays?

We are witnessing the postponement of marriage. In the last century most people decided to get married in their early twenties, but today many study in tertiary education and start a career before starting a family. Some couples say that getting married is solely a kind of formality and prefer living together. Others choose cohabitation because they want to test their compatibility, or establish financial security before marriage.

19. What are typical wedding ceremonies like?

The choice of the wedding ceremony is largely culture-dependent, though the families' financial background is also a determining factor. Most wedding ceremonies involve an exchange of wedding vows by the couple and a public proclamation of marriage. The celebration, which includes the ceremony itself and then the reception, lasts usually a day but there are countries, such as India, where the event may continue for a whole week. In most cultures a wedding involves wearing special clothes. In Western culture exchanging rings is the symbol of everlasting love and commitment.



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20. What are the main characteristics of wedding receptions in Western culture?

After the wedding ceremony, the guests are invited to take part in a wedding reception, which can be held at hotel lounges, restaurants, or the home of the bride. The party usually starts with a glass of champagne and toasting the newlyweds. An abundant meal is served and then the couple cuts the traditional wedding cake. After the dinner, it is customary for the newlywed couple to start the first dance, which the guests join. The bride throws her bouquet into the assembled group of guests. At which point of the celebration this happens depends on the local traditions.

21. What is the ideal age to start a family?



It depends on various factors, such as personality, religion, culture, financial background, and career opportunities. Statistical data show that there is a tendency to postpone starting a family. A lot of young couples think that establishing a firm financial background is the most important issue, and they are ready to start a family only when they are certain that they can provide everything a child needs. Others want to enjoy life and each other's company for some years. Another possible reason for postponing childbearing is that young people concentrate on building their careers, and when they are climbing the corporate ladder, it is difficult to stop and give up everything they have achieved.

22. What is the difference between bigamy and polygamy?

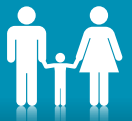
Bigamy means being married to more than one person at the same time, and it is illegal in most Western countries. The term polygamy is used when a person is married to several spouses, and polygamy is legal in Muslim countries and in some parts of Africa. In the US some Mormon communities also accept and practice polygamy. Another difference between bigamy and polygamy is that in the later case the spouses know about one other.

23. Why can adultery occur in a relationship?

I think there are several reasons. Feeling lonely because the partner spends too much time away, for example, at work or with friends, can be a reason. Poor communication can also cause problems in a relationship if the partners are either unwilling or unable to discuss important issues with each other. Lack of love, emotions, and intimacy can also lead to adultery. Serious financial problems are considered to be a frequent cause of marital conflict, as well.

24. Why is the number of divorces increasing nowadays?

Today it is much easier to get divorced than some decades ago, and getting divorced is also more widely accepted. Some people get married when they are too young or they do not know each other well enough. They realize that what they want to do with their lives is different from what their spouses want. For example, one wants to build a career and the other would like to have children and a happy family life.



25. What problems can emerge after a divorce?

Sharing common property might cause big problems if the couple has not signed a prenuptial agreement. The other main issue is deciding what happens to their children. First the couple has to agree who the children stay with, then they should discuss visitation issues, that is, when and how often the other parent spends time with the children, and finally they have to come to an agreement about child support. There are also emotional issues involved. It is especially the children who find it extremely hard to adjust to the new circumstances.

26. What problems may occur in long-distance relationships?



I think the most frequent problem is that you cannot discuss important issues with your partner face to face and when you want to. For example, it is much harder to share your happiness or sorrow by phone or in writing, so personal communication would be more desirable. There are also matters that should be discussed urgently and require real-time feedback. Some people may also feel bored or lonely if they do not have their partner around.

27. How have long-distance relationships changed recently?

With the advance of technology, partners find it much easier to keep in touch. Instead of having to wait for letters for days or the evening to phone, they can phone wherever they are, send e-mails, chat online, or text to each other. Even webcams are often used, which is almost like talking face to face. Not only are all these means quicker and simpler, but they are also affordable as most households in the developed world have internet access and most people have a mobile phone.

28. How has the general acceptance of single lifestyle changed recently?

It is becoming an increasingly accepted and even desired lifestyle in Western societies. Singles say that though they do not have a partner, they do not feel alone, but have lots of friends they spend time with. They enjoy all the opportunities being independent provides without having to accommodate to anyone else's needs. On the other hand, some think that being single implies that the person is not mature enough to be serious about life and take the responsibilities grown-ups are expected to.

29. Who are called mingles?

Being a mingle is a relatively new phenomenon. This is the abbreviation for mixed singles, that is, people who have a partner but do not share a home with them. They have their own separate lives but spend a lot of time together too. Often they do not even live in the same town, but spend their weekends and holidays together. Mingles say that, though some people consider them selfish, this lifestyle is their own and their partner's choice.



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abc Wordlist

abundant	ə'bʌndənt	bőséges
accommodate	ə'kɒmə,deɪt	alkalmazkodik
adjust to sg	ə'dʒʌs tʊ	alkalmazkodik vmihez
adultery	ə'dʌltrɪ	házasságtörés
advance	əd'vɑ:ns	fejlődés
assembled	ə'sembld	összegyűlt
benefit	'benɪfɪt	támogatás, segély
childminder	'tʃaɪld ,maɪndə	gyermekgondozó
climb the corporate ladder	klaɪm ðə 'kɔ:prət 'lædə	halad a ranglétrán
cohabit	kəʊ'hæbɪt	együtt él
cohabitation	kəʊ,hæbɪ'teɪʃn	együttélés
commit oneself	kə'mɪt wʌn'self	elkötelezi magát
compatibility	kəm,pæətə'bɪlətɪ	összeférhetőség
coping skills	'kəʊpɪŋ skɪlz	boldoguláshoz szükséges készségek
diversity	daɪ'vɜ:sətɪ	sokféleség
division	dɪ'vɪʒn	megosztás
emerge	i'mɜ:dʒ	felmerül
emotional security	i'məʊʃnl sɪ'kjʊərətɪ	érzelmi biztonság
extended	ɪk'stendɪd	tágabb
foster care	'fɒstə ,keə	nevelőszülői gondozás
government-run	'gʌvnmənt ,rʌn	állami
incompatible	ɪnkəm'pæətəbl	összeegyeztethetetlen
inconsiderate	kən'sɪdərət	tapintatlan, figyelmetlen
inconsistent	ɪnkən'sɪstənt	következetlen
initiate	i'nɪʃɪ,et	kezdeményez
low-interest-rate	ləʊ 'ɪntrəst ,reɪt	alacsony kamatozású
marital	'mæɪntl	házassági
newlyweds	'nju:li ,wedz	friss házások
nuclear	'nju:klɪə	alap
obey	ə'beɪ	engedelmeskedik
over-protective	'əʊvəprə'tektɪv	túlságosan óvó
parental home	pə'rentl həʊm	családi otthon
permissive	pə'mɪsɪv	engedékeny



polygamy	pə'ligəmi	többnejűség
prenuptial agreement	prɪːnʌpʃl ə'gri:mənt	házassági szerződés
privacy	'praɪvəsi	(zavartalan) egyedűllét
proclamation	prɒklə'meɪʃn	kihirdetés
self-discipline	,self 'dɪsə'plɪn	önfegyelem
spoiled	spɔɪlt	elkényeztetett
substantial	səb'stænjəl	jelentűs (nagyságű)
supplement	'sʌplɪmənt	kiegészítés
unforeseeable	,ʌnfɔ:'si:əbl	előre nem látható
vow	vəʊ	eskű
wedding reception	'wedɪŋ rɪ'seɪʃn	eskűvűi ebéd/vacsora



Tasks



Reading Comprehension

You are going to read an article about stay-at-home fathers. Your task is to give short answers in no more than four words to the questions (1-8). Write your answers on the lines after the questions. There is an example (0) at the beginning.

Are the Sons of Stay-at-home Dads Bad Learners?

A study recently conducted in the United Kingdom suggests that stay-at-home dads hurt their sons' chances in school. They do not have an adverse effect of the school performance of their daughters, however. The study claims that fathers do not, on average, provide the same degree of cognitive stimulation to sons that mothers provide.

The reliability of these findings is debated, though. Sceptics point to the fact that though there are numerous studies about single mothers which show that they don't do as good a job raising children, in terms like mental health and school achievement, as two-parent families, there are also numerous other studies disproving these findings. In many cases it is poverty and social isolation, and not single motherhood, that hurts kids' chances in life.

In countries with a powerful social network to support single mothers, like Sweden, there is no difference between the children of single mothers and two-parent families. And even in countries with much less social support, like the United States, mothers with strong social networks of friends and relatives still succeed in raising happy, healthy, successful children.





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Single motherhood, as a by-product of the emancipation of women, is now a permanent feature of the western societies. And so are stay-at-home dads. Reverse-traditional families are a new family form, and studying the effects is justified. We cannot plan to do away with new family forms, though, but we need to address the questions of how we can leverage the good and mitigate the bad, so that children in these families have the same chances as other children.

The results of a study like the one conducted in the UK need to be replicated before it can be considered authoritative and, even if stay-at-home mothers prove to provide some marginal benefit to sons that fathers do not, the results are not necessarily an argument against stay-at-home fatherhood. Instead, after asking 'Why is that?' we need to find out what we can do to resolve the problem.

It is not conceivable that a study showing that the sons of stay-at-home-fathers are likely to do worse at school will put a stop to dads taking care of children. The increasing number of fathers who take the role of caregivers is being driven by forces that are larger than any one family. The reversal of roles comes with huge advantages for men, women, children, and society. These advantages, such as greater paternal investment in children and more work opportunities for women, far outweigh the objections of those in favour of a return, or relapse, to 19th century gender roles.

0. According to a study, what do stay-at-home fathers' sons lack?
cognitive stimulation

1. What does the upbringing given by a single mother affect harmfully compared to that provided by two-parent families?

2. What are the reasons for single mothers' kids poor school performance?

3. How is the social network offered by Sweden different from the one offered by the USA?

4. What helps American single mothers bring up healthy and successful children?

5. Besides families with stay-at-home fathers, what reverse-traditional family form is mentioned in the text?

6. What made it possible for reverse-traditional families to develop?

7. How can the results of a study be made more reliable?

8. According to studies, which family members may suffer from living in a reverse-traditional family?



Listening Comprehension

You are going to hear an interview with Kevin Livingstone, co-author of *Some Risks of Living Together*. He discusses some of the adverse effects of cohabitation with *The World Today Online* editor Tracy O'Leary. Your task is to write the letter of the correct answer in the boxes below. There is an example (0) at the beginning.



Some Risks of Living Together

0. Cohabitation before marriage is _____ .
- A popular
 - B rare
 - C non-existent
1. _____ split up while cohabiting and do not get married.
- A More than half of the couples
 - B 80% of the couples
 - C Almost every second couple
2. Nowadays the number of marriages is _____ in the 1970s.
- A 50% higher than
 - B 50% lower than
 - C a bit higher than
3. According to a study, couples who cohabited before deciding to get married _____ .
- A can discuss any matter in a friendly way
 - B do not tend to behave politely in discussions
 - C avoid arguments
4. According to Kevin Livingstone, cohabiting couples should _____ .
- A organise the wedding together
 - B have separate bedrooms
 - C spend some time separately before the wedding
5. In the past, more than half of unwed mothers _____ .
- A had several children
 - B had no partner
 - C lived with their parents
6. Today about 50% of unmarried women with children _____ .
- A are usually teenagers
 - B live with their partner at the birth
 - C do not cohabit



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7. According to some studies, public opinion on single motherhood is _____ in the past.
- A almost as bad as
 - B not so good as
 - C better nowadays than
8. According to Livingstone's study, couples who have very similar backgrounds _____.
- A are the happiest and most compatible of all couples
 - B have the most stable relationship
 - C are not more likely to get married than others

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A								

