

Families – extended, nuclear, chosen

[Before you hand out the worksheets, read the following words to your students and ask them to guess what the lesson will be about: *blended, immediate, cohabitation*.]

1. Write a short definition of the word **family**. Then, compare the definitions in class and find the similarities between them.

[If you are teaching a one-to-one lesson, use the definition from Merriam-Webster's dictionary for comparison: 'the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children'.]

2. Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

blended	close-knit	extended	immediate	nuclear	single
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- a) Your closest relatives, such as your parents, spouse and children, are your **immediate** family.
- b) Two parents and their children are a **nuclear** family.
- c) Your parents, grandparents, children, aunts, uncles and cousins are your **extended** family.
- d) A family whose members help and support each other is **close-knit**.
- e) A **single**-parent family consists of children and one of their parents.
- f) A **blended** family is a household with at least one stepparent, stepsibling or half-sibling.

3. Choose the correct words.

- a) For most people, the purpose of nuclear families is to **persevere/perverse/preserve** traditional values.
- b) Less **close-knit/affluent/upscale** nuclear households struggle to survive because the government is not supportive of them.
- c) **Fertility/Fertile/Fertilization** rates are dropping.
- d) Women are usually the ones **delegated/promoted/relegated** to housework.
- e) The **division/share/fraction** of people living in single-parent households is growing.

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- f) The phenomenon of blended families has come to **eminence/ prominence/importance** in the last couple of decades.
- g) Of course, to improve the perception of quality and **equitable/ impartial/rightful** healthcare, improved access is needed.
- h) It is more common for couples to **cohere/coalesce/cohabit** than to get married.
- i) Families are not as close-knit as they used to be. Nowadays it's more of a transactional **bond/contract/warrant** between people.

4. Discuss whether the statements in ex. 3 are true for your country.

5. You are going to watch a video about the history of the nuclear family. Before watching, try to guess the answers to the questions.

- a) When did nuclear households come to prominence in the US? **In 1950s, when people moved from farms to big cities.**
- b) Why did nuclear households become so common there? **Wages increased, so men could support their family on one salary; union membership, church attendance and social trust were high; with time, people felt the pressure to form a nuclear family.**

6. Watch the first part of the [video](https://youtu.be/sd9d5z7idyQ) [https://youtu.be/sd9d5z7idyQ] (to 02:45) and check your answers in ex. 5.

7. Before watching the second part of the video, write down three topics which you think will be addressed in it. Then, watch the second part of the [video](#) (02:45–05:00) and check your answers.

Possible answers: current social trends, e.g. higher divorce rate, less people getting married, lower fertility rate, 'chosen families'; how the social changes impact less affluent families; social trends in other parts of the world; disadvantages of living in an extended household; impact of the social changes on gay and lesbian community; why family is important.

8. Complete the statements with the information you remember from the video. Then, watch the second part of the [video](#) (02:45–05:00) again and check your answers.

- a) Over the last half century, the share of people living alone in America has **doubled**. [02:45]
- b) The thing that has not changed with the shift from an extended to a nuclear family unit is **the fact that women perform most of the housework and childcare**. [02:55]
- c) The switch from an extended to a nuclear family has only been beneficial for **those who are affluent/privileged**. [03:13]
- d) The phenomenon of chosen families came to prominence in **the gay and lesbian community of San Francisco in the 1980s**. [04:01]
- e) A chosen family can make its members' lives more **equitable**. [04:26]
- f) A family is a place where people offer unconditional love, and the bond between the members is not **transactional, or even voluntary**. [04:41]

9. Discuss the questions.

- What surprised you most in the video?
- In what way has the evolution of the family model been the same in your country as in the US?
- To what extent do people in your country feel social pressure to form nuclear family units?
- What do you think of the idea of chosen families? Can people not related to each other form a family? Why/Why not?
- In what way can a chosen family make its members' lives more equitable? Can you give any examples?
- How has your family model been changing? Do you live differently than your grandparents, for example?

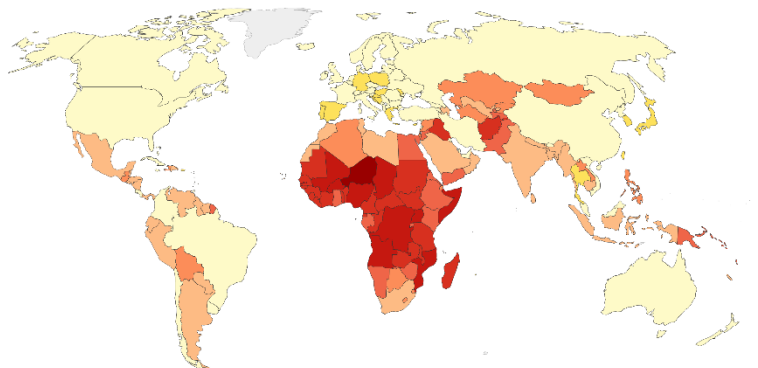


10. Look at the statistics. Discuss how the family model will change in the future and what implications for society the changes will have.

- Up to 1965 the average woman in the world had more than 5 children. Since then, the number has halved. Globally, the fertility rate is now below 2.5 children.

Children born per woman, 2019

Shown is the 'Total Fertility Rate' which measures the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with the age-specific fertility rates of the specific year.



Source: Gapminder (2017)

OurWorldInData.org/fertility-rate • CC BY

- In some countries, population ageing brings an increasing proportion of households that include older persons. In Europe and Northern America, one third of households include at least one older person. By contrast, in Africa, where less than 5% of the total population is aged 60 years or over, less than a quarter of households have an elder.
- Across the 124 countries with available data, the median proportion of two-parent households is 73% among households with children under 15 years of age. The median proportion of one-parent households is much lower, at 21% for lone-mother households and 3% for lone-father households.

Sources: ourworldindata.org, un.org