

Part 1:

What's your name?

My name is Philip Morris

Do you work or study?

I work as a Civil Engineer for a local company here.

Where are you originally from?

I'm originally from South London, although I moved here with my parents when I was about 9 years old.

What kind of food do you like?

My favourite food is Italian pasta and in particular my favourite Italian dish is pasta carbonara

Have you always liked that food?

Well, I don't think I actually tried it until I was about 16, when I travelled to Italy for the summer, but when I had it for the first time - I immediately loved it and since then it's always been my favourite Italian dish.

In the future, if you have children, what food will you recommend they eat?

Healthy food. I think it's very important for children to develop healthy eating habits when they are young as the benefits of healthy eating are well documented now. You know what they say - you are what you eat - and it's very true. Many children are overweight these days because of the amount of junk food they consume, so I would try to get them to eat food that is good for them - you know, a well balanced diet.

Is there any food that you liked when you were a child but you don't like now?

Yes, I used to like a lot of sweet things, in particular chocolate cake and ice-cream, but not anymore. I prefer to eat fruit and other healthy foods now. I actually feel a lot better for it.

How has food in your country changed since you were a child?

It's changed a lot. When I was a child the food here was still quite traditional, but now it's very different due to the many different cultural influences in our society. It's definitely more cosmopolitan and international. People here now eat food from all over the world on a regular basis and traditional food seems to be a lot less popular than it was.

Part 2:

Talk about an enjoyable family event (such as a birthday party or family dinner) you attended, please say:

- when and where did it happen
- what happened at this event
- who was there at this event

And explain why the event was enjoyable

[follow up question] Do you often take part in family events?

A couple of months ago I attended a family wedding. It was my sister's wedding and it was on a Saturday afternoon. She was getting married to her long time boyfriend John. They held the wedding ceremony in a local church, which was really picturesque, very old, and beautiful, set in the countryside a few hours from where they live.

The ceremony was a small affair, just immediate family and very close friends. The marriage ceremony lasted about an hour and a half and was all very formal. After that, we all went to a local hotel for the wedding reception in the evening. At the reception there were a lot more people, as normal. All their friends and colleagues from work and friends of the family and so on had all been invited. I think there must have been about 300 people in total. It was a very good celebration - everybody was very happy, especially the newlyweds, and there was dancing, singing and a lot of food.

As usual we all sat down at the beginning and various people made speeches; the bride's father, John's father, the best man and other close friends including myself, toasting the bride and bridegroom. Then they served dinner, which was spectacular. I think it was one of the best meals I have ever had at a wedding. After the meal, people started to mingle and speak to each other, and for those of them who hadn't attended the actual wedding ceremony it was an opportunity to speak with my sister and her new husband and to congratulate them.

Later there was an orchestra which played some beautiful music and people were dancing, it was all very elegant, like something out of a movie. My sister and John were delighted with everything and they just looked so happy that I really felt good for them. It seemed as if they really had the perfect wedding that so many people dream of. Definitely, one of the most memorable and enjoyable events I have ever attended. Everything went perfectly.

I don't usually go to most of the family events that are organized - like family lunches and things like that, for two main reasons. Firstly, I'm not really that close to my family and secondly because I travel a lot, so it's not always easy to share such family activities. However, I wouldn't have missed my sister's wedding - it was a very important day.

Part 3:

Do you think families are important? (Why? / Why not?)

I think families are very important, especially when you are growing up. They provide a foundation for society and a stable environment where children can grow and develop, while learning, and being protected and feeling loved. Children learn so much from their families and a lot of what they learn from their parents in particular - they carry on into their adult lives. Yes, they're very important.

Who are more important, friends or family? (Why?)

I think as we get older sometimes friends become more important on a daily or short term basis. We may have more interaction with friends on a regular basis than our own family, but in the long term, family is family, and the bond between you is longer and stronger than between friends. Personally though, I think that both are important to have a well balanced life.

When do friends become more important than family?

Possibly when someone is living a long distance away from their family or even in another country and it's not so easy to maintain contact other than by phone or email. That kind of breaks the bond a little bit. Alternatively not all families have great relationships, so if you have a dysfunctional family then I think under those circumstance friends do actually become more important than family on a day to day basis because it's our friends that we share things with and spend most time with.

What is your opinion about old people who are living without their family?

I think it depends on the circumstances. Many older people nowadays are much more independent, both financially and health wise, than a generation ago and are not so dependant on their family when they get older. So they actually prefer to live by themselves. For a long time it was normal for old people to live by themselves or in sheltered housing or special communities with other people in the same circumstances. I think this may change back in the future though, as families begin to integrate more again as a means of economic survival.

Do you think there are any advantages to having a grandparent living with the family?

Yes, of course, it offers many advantages; grandparents can be involved with their grandchildren more, they can offer companionship, it's more economic living in the same place than living in separate places and there are other reasons why it could be advantageous depending on the particular circumstances of the family. Older people also have quite a different opinion on many things and can make family discussions more interesting - they have a wisdom which comes from their own life experiences - there's a lot we can learn from them.

Many countries are experiencing what is called, "an aging population". What problems will these countries have as the percentage of old people in society increases and the percentage of young people decreases?

This is a common problem, or will be a common problem in many countries. Any major change in demographics requires planning on behalf of the government so as to avoid potential problems. An aging population could be the cause for an increased strain on health resources; this is probably one of the most serious worries at the moment. The fact that there will be considerably less young people working suggests that governments will not be able to collect the same amount in taxes as before, and their policies for public services should reflect this otherwise they will encounter serious problems if they just try to continue on as they are now.