

## Activity answers

### Unit 1: Defining the family

#### Activity 1 (page 62)

**1 Which of these 'families' fit/s Murdock's definition? Explain your answer.**

The extended family in Item B and the nuclear family in Item C fit Murdock's definition of a family. The lone-parent family and the gay family do not. Members of the nuclear family and at least some members of the extended family live together, share domestic tasks, have children (own or adopted) and include an adult male and female who have a sexual relationship which is approved by the wider society. Lone-parent families and gay families do not fit Murdock's definition because they do not include both an adult male and female. In addition, lone parents do not meet the criteria of common residence or (full) economic cooperation.

**2 Do you think those that do not fit should be regarded as families? Give reasons for your answer.**

Whether or not a social group is considered a family depends on the way 'a family' is defined. For example, a family may be said to exist if members of a social group see themselves as a family. In terms of this definition, the people in all four items are families. What counts as a family is partly due to the beliefs of a particular society at a particular time. For example, compared with 50 years ago, people in Britain today are more likely to consider both a gay couple with children and one parent with children as families.

#### Activity 2 (pages 63–64)

**1 How can polygamous families be seen as extensions of the nuclear family?**

Polygamous families include additional married people compared to nuclear families. Whereas the monogamous nuclear family contains only one husband and one wife, polygamous families extend the marital relationship. Polygyny involves two or more wives, polyandry involves two or more husbands.

**2 Judging from Items A and B, what are the advantages and disadvantages of polygyny and polyandry?**

Judging from Item A, the advantages of polygyny (for women) include sharing the burdens of domestic work and childcare, and economic security. In terms of disadvantages for those involved, Item A suggests possible jealousy (between wives).

Judging from Item B, the advantages of polyandry include: sharing the burdens of work (both inside and outside the home)(for men), social insurance against family breakdown ('If one husband is no good or leaves his wife, there's always another brother')(for women), maintaining the profitability of land through efficient farming and the concentration

of wealth within households. In addition, a large family group of brothers working together in a harsh physical and economic climate has a greater chance of survival and prosperity. In terms of disadvantages, Item B suggests jealousy between the various husbands.

#### Activity 3 (page 65)

**The family is a social construction shaped by cultural norms and beliefs. Discuss with reference to Items A and B.**

'Social construction' involves the idea that something (in this instance family structures and relationships) is shaped by the culture in which it exists. If families were 'natural' units shaped by biological necessities, then all families would have the same structure at all times and in all societies. This, however, is not so – which suggests, at least to some extent, that families are socially constructed because they are shaped by cultural norms and beliefs. For example, both Items A and B allude to matrilineal descent (through the mother's line), which contrasts with our society where where descent can be down either the father's or mother's family line.

Specific examples of different cultural norms and beliefs (and hence evidence of social construction) include (from Item A) the idea that a child's father has no legal authority over his children (this rests with the wife's family, particularly her brother), that the father is responsible for feeding, clothing and educating children and that married couples often live apart. In Trobriand culture (Item B) the father plays no role in the raising of his children – his participation begins and ends with sexual intercourse. These beliefs, practices and relationships are generally different to those found in contemporary British families where, for example, fathers and mothers have a shared legal authority over their children, couples usually live together and the father is expected to play an important role in the raising of children.

### Unit 2: The family and social structure

#### Activity 4 (page 67)

**1 Functionalists often argue that the family's economic function as a unit of production has been replaced by its function as a unit of consumption. Explain with some reference to Item A.**

Item A illustrates the functionalist argument that the family's economic function in our society has changed from being a unit of production (where family members worked together to produce the food they ate and/or the products they made) to being a unit of consumption – the goods and services family members consume are bought from places like supermarkets.

## 2 Look at Items B and C.

### a) Parsons' theory is sometimes known as the 'warm bath theory'. Why?

This is because Parsons' claims that family life provides adults with emotional security and support, and a 'release from the strains and stresses of everyday life', just like the benefits of a warm relaxing bath. He argues that such family life stabilises adult personalities, which in turn contributes to a stable, smooth-running society, and provides children with a safe, stable and comforting environment in which they learn the 'shared norms and values of society'.

### b) Critically evaluate this theory. Refer to Item C in your answer.

Criticisms of this theory focus on four main areas.

**1** Functionalists assume that family life is generally harmonious and that the useful and essential functions families perform (such as effective primary socialisation) outweigh any negative aspects. **2** Critics of this view point to the idea that functionalists ignore the 'dark side' of family life (Item C) – that it can be a place of conflict and discord involving male domination, physical violence, child abuse, and so on. In other words, functionalists are accused of ignoring the dysfunctional aspects of families and the consequences these may have for both individuals and wider society (the breakdown of family life, for example). This leads into **3**, that functionalists tend to ignore the diversity of contemporary family life – 'functional families' tend to be seen in terms of dual-parent nuclear family units whereas contemporary societies involve a mixture of family types (including lone-parent, cohabiting and reconstituted families). Finally, **4** Parsons' arguments have been criticised as being sexist because he sees women's primary role as providing care and emotional support, and de-stressing her husband.

## Activity 5 (page 69)

### 1 Read Item A. Why does Murray see the nuclear family as superior to other family structures?

Murray sees the nuclear family as superior to other family structures because it provides 'effective socialisation'. For example, the nuclear family provides boys with the role models lacking 'in a family without a father and male wage earner'. In addition, nuclear families help to instil the 'disciplines and responsibilities of mainstream society' that are often absent in female-headed families dependent on welfare benefits. In this respect, nuclear families are superior because they discipline 'young men' into the routines of both paid work and the responsibilities of parenthood.

For such reasons, Murray sees the nuclear family form as superior (for both the welfare of individuals and wider society) because it is within such families that children can be effectively socialised into norms of self-control, consideration for others and the realisation that 'our actions have consequences'.

## 2 What points is the cartoon in Item B making?

The main point the cartoon makes is that welfare dependency involves 'lone mothers' being 'married to the State' – they are, in the absence of a male breadwinner, dependent on state benefits. The fact that the woman is smiling also suggests lone mothers are happy to live off benefits and that there is no need to look for/marry a male partner. This situation, the cartoon suggests, results in children suffering neglect (both physical and emotional) and the lack of male role models leads to 'faulty socialisation' – the absence of clear moral guidelines suggested by children smoking, theft (the youth is holding a stolen wallet), and anti-social behaviour (violence).

## 3 How does Item C question the idea that welfare dependency has led to the breakdown of the family?

The Welfare State did not exist in Victorian times, which means there could be no 'welfare dependency' – yet Item C depicts family breakdown in the shape of an 'abandoned mother' with her child. Thus, even in an era generally characterised by the New Right as being one of 'traditional family values' things like lone parenthood and family breakdown existed. This suggests that family breakdown (both past and present) is likely to be caused by a range of factors, not just – if at all – by so-called 'welfare dependency'.

## Activity 6 (page 70)

### Give a Marxist interpretation of the role of the family illustrated in this cartoon.

Such an interpretation might focus on how the role of the family in capitalist society involves different things to different classes. In terms of the working class, it involves things like reproducing labour power, the production and consumption of products which make profits for capitalists, providing emotional support for workers (to help them cope with the harsh realities of life) and socialising children into an acceptance of social inequalities. For the ruling classes, the cartoon reflects ideas about the importance of legitimate children (marriage ensured the upper classes knew their (male) heirs were actually their children) and inheritance – the rich could pass on their wealth to their sons.

## Activity 7 (page 72)

### How might a feminist analyse these magazine covers?

A feminist might analyse the magazine covers in terms of four main ideas. **1** Both covers (although separated by around 50 years) suggest domestic labour is a major part of the female role (e.g. the housewife pictured in her kitchen or the tips for 'family recipes' in *Good Housekeeping*). For Marxist feminists, this 'unpaid work' is invaluable to capitalism because it provides numerous 'free services' (such as rearing future workers). **2** Both suggest that emotional labour is unequally given and received within the family

– and that this is also part of the everyday feminine role. Examples here include the wife surrounded by her children, while the ‘cover star’ Jane Asher ‘talks frankly about life, love... and cakes’. For Marxist feminists, female emotional support also contributes a ‘free service’ to capitalists by ‘soaking up the (male) frustrations’ produced by routine wage labour. **3** Economic dependency is evident in the 1955 cover (the wife is portrayed as being blissfully happy in the kitchen, surrounded by her children). We’re left to assume that the husband has paid for the ‘modern kitchen appliances’ that seem to make her so happy. The suggestion in the 2003 cover is that while women may be in paid work it’s still a female responsibility to meet family childcare and domestic responsibilities. **4** Male domination in terms of female economic dependence is demonstrated clearly in *Red Star Weekly*, where the wife is pictured in the kitchen paid for by her husband and implicitly in *Good Housekeeping* through ‘ways to give the home a fresh look’, low-cost, easy-to-make recipes and ‘budget-beating’ ideas.

## Unit 3: The family and social change

### Activity 8 (page 75)

#### 1 How might the people in each of the pictures in Item A be related?

They are likely to be family members (possibly part of an extended family group) rather than paid employees.

#### 2 Why is a family essential for the farmer in Item B?

A family is essential for the farmer because it is a unit of production. Family members must work together to maximise their chances of physical survival and the item illustrates this in a number of ways: the working day is long and the husband needs assistance from his wife/children if the work is to be completed and the family fed. Meals, for example, are cooked in the home by his wife and taken to the workplace (fields) by his children to allow more time for work. Children can also be used to do some of the necessary tasks that would otherwise have to be performed by a paid employee. The wife also contributes vital resources – in addition to domestic labour she may also perform non-domestic labour such as milking buffalo.

### Activity 9 (page 76)

#### What evidence does this activity provide which suggests that the family is a unit of production?

The text and picture show evidence of cottage industry production: making cloth for sale with all the associated processes – dyeing, carding and spinning carried out within the home/family. There is also evidence of small-scale (subsistence) farming – keeping animals and sowing corn. All family members (grandparents, parents and children) were involved, thereby making the family a unit of production.

### Activity 10 (page 76)

#### Why is marriage in traditional Inuit society essential for both husband and wife?

Marriage is essential for economic reasons – men and women bring different and indispensable skills to the family group (such as hunting and sewing respectively) which, in combination, contribute to the family’s survival.

### Activity 11 (page 77)

#### How can these pictures be used to argue that many of the functions of the family have been reduced or lost in modern industrial society?

They illustrate two basic functions of the family that have been reduced or lost. **1** The economic function of the family as a unit of production: paid productive work in contemporary societies usually takes place in areas other than in or around the home (Item A). **2** The welfare function of the family has either been lost or reduced – care for the sick, disabled, elderly and dying has been at least partly taken over by local or national government. Although many families care for elderly relatives, many are placed in, or choose to go to, care homes (paid for through welfare, insurance or family income).

### Activity 12 (page 78)

#### 1a) What evidence of extended families is provided by Item A?

Item A provides evidence of the help and cooperation that existed within the extended family group. Examples here include male members of the extended family, such as cousins and nephews, helping each other at harvest time, female members clubbing together to make butter and children being ‘lent’ to help other members of the extended family when they were shorthanded.

#### 1b) How can this evidence be used to question Laslett’s conclusions?

Laslett’s main conclusion was that nuclear families were the norm in pre-industrial England and Western Europe. However, his research was based on family members in the same household. The evidence from Item A suggests that in 1930s Ireland an elaborate system of cooperation existed between extended family members who did not live in the same households, such that they would help each other in times of need (such as harvest time).

#### 2 Judging from Item B, why are farmers today less likely to rely on extended family members?

Item B suggests that one reason is the use of machines (mechanisation), which has meant fewer people are needed for work like hay cutting and baling. Farming has become less labour intensive and so farmers are less likely to need – or rely on – the labour of extended family members.

**Activity 13** (page 79)

**Suggest ways in which members of the working-class extended family might help each other during the 19th century.**

In the absence of a welfare state, the working-class extended family developed to provide a network of kin for support and care, whereby family members could provide mutual aid when the family group experienced some kind of crisis or times were hard, for example, where there was a shortage of housing or a desire to save on rent, people often moved in with other family members.

**Activity 14** (page 80)

**How does this magazine cover from 1957 reflect Oakley's picture of the mother-housewife role in the 1950s?**

It illustrates what Oakley concludes is the culminating effects of industrialisation in that the primary female role is constructed around three ideas. **1** The physical separation of men from domestic labour. The man is pictured in his overcoat (coming home from work) while the woman is doing domestic labour (cooking and childcare). **2** The economic dependence of women – the cover suggests that while the man is 'the breadwinner' the woman is 'the bread-maker'. **3** The isolation of housework and childcare. While the cover portrays a female world of 'kitchen and children', the return of the man to the home suggests the possibility of his developing wider social networks through his paid employment.

**Activity 15** (page 81)

**1 In view of Young and Willmott's definition, does Mrs Wilkins in Item A belong to an extended family? Give reasons for your answer.**

In terms of Young and Willmott's definition, Mrs Wilkins belongs to an extended family. According to the item, her family life involves a combination of families (grandmother/mother and children) who effectively form one domestic unit (the children treat their grandmother's house as an extension of their own household). The two families live close enough for regular kin contact – Mrs Wilkins is 'in and out of her mother's all day' – and they share services such as childcare and shopping.

**2 Mr Sykes who lives near his mother-in-law in Bethnal Green said, 'This is the kind of family where sisters never want to leave their mother's side'. How does Item B suggest that this kind of family is widespread?**

Item B suggests that the extended family was widespread (at least in Bethnal Green in 1950s) because of the frequency of contacts between married men and women with their parents. In a 24-hour period around half the women saw their father (48%) or mother (55%), while around one-third of sons saw their father (30%) or mother (31%).

**Activity 16** (page 82)

**Match each picture to one of Young and Willmott's three stages of family life. Explain your choices.**

Item A most closely fits Young and Willmott's Stage 1: Pre-industrial family. It represents an extended farming family whose members work together as a production unit. Item B fits the Stage 2: Early industrial family, with its suggestion of the family 'disrupted by industrialisation'; male family members are at work (now located outside the home) and female family members develop an extended kinship network to provide mutual aid/support to cope with things like poverty. Item C represents Stage 3: the symmetrical family. This is nuclear, home-centred (the family sharing a meal), privatised (a self-contained family unit) and one where the roles of husband and wife are increasingly similar.

**Activity 17** (page 84)

**1a) Briefly summarise the data in Item A.**

Overall, the data shows a decline in face-to-face contacts between relatives/friends, as evidenced by a decline in family contacts, parent-child contacts and contacts between friends. The greatest decline is in children seeing their mother (10% fall) or their father (11% decline). The area of least decline (4%) is contact between brothers and sisters.

**1b) How does it indicate that friends have not taken over from family?**

If contact with friends had taken over from family we would expect to see two things: a substantial rise in this type of contact (in fact there was a 6% decline) and a much more pronounced fall in family contacts. Although the latter have fallen, they still represent substantial levels of face-to-face contact (contact with adult children, for example, has stayed roughly the same as contact with friends).

**2 What does Item B suggest is the reason for reduced contact with relatives?**

Item B suggests the reason for reduced contact with relatives is participation in full-time work. One implication here is that the demands of work have increased, leaving less time for visiting relatives.

**3 Items A and B refer to face-to-face contact with relatives. This may exaggerate the extent of the decline of contact. Why? Refer to Item C in your answer.**

If we assume the only form of contact that counts is face-to-face, then Items A and B suggest a decline. However, it's possible that other forms of contact have replaced (or added to) the face-to-face type. In Item C, for example, the mobile phone is one way we keep in touch. Mobiles are convenient ways to maintain contacts and the growth of texting represents an inexpensive and flexible form of contact. In addition, many mobiles now allow internet access, which opens up the use of things like email and social networking sites (such as MySpace and Bebo) as forms of personal contact that are

not face-to-face. In contemporary societies, therefore, people adapt technology to the needs of their lifestyles – it doesn't necessarily mean 'less contact' (it may actually involve more); it does, however, involve different types of contact.

## Unit 4: Changing family relationships

### Activity 18 (page 86)

#### 1a) Describe the trends shown in Item A.

Since 1950 there has been general decline in all marriages. Marriage peaked in the early 1970s, since when it has declined. First marriages have followed this trend – a general decline over the past 50 years, peaking in 1970, followed by a rapid decline. Remarriages, on the other hand, show an overall rise, with a peak around 1970, since when remarriages have levelled off. Divorce trends show an overall rise since 1950, but with a levelling off since the 1980s. There was a significant rise in the numbers divorcing following the Divorce Reform Act of 1969.

#### 1b) What does Item A suggest about the relationship between divorce and remarriage?

The data in Item A suggests a close correlation between divorce and remarriage. As the numbers of those divorcing rises and falls, so too do the numbers remarrying. This suggests two things: that many divorcees are likely to remarry and that many marriages are likely to end in divorce.

#### 2 Why does the term 'serial monogamy' fit Patsy Kensit's and Joan Collins' marital history?

'Serial monogamy' means that although someone can only legally have one marriage partner at a time (monogamy) it's possible to have a series of marriage partners over an individual's lifetime – as demonstrated by Item B.

#### 3 How might Item C help to explain

##### a) the decline of marriage?

Item C helps to explain the decline in marriage in terms of changing social attitudes (girls putting greater personal emphasis on work and career) and priorities – whereas Sharpe found that 'love' and 'marriage' were high priorities for girls in the 1970s, this wasn't the case 20 years later. This may reflect changing economic positions (girls 'able to support themselves') and a sense of economic independence which means that girls can make a wider range of behavioural choices than in the past. Two further things to note are changing expectations of love and marriage ('Only 4 per cent wanted to be married by 20'), and greater awareness of risk, perhaps, of divorce and its consequences ('Young people had witnessed adult relationships breaking up'/'Girls in particular were far more wary of marriage').

##### b) the later age of marriage?

Item C suggests that although girls' priorities had changed

over 20 years, they were not necessarily 'anti-marriage' (there was still a feeling of 'A wedding day – that sounds good fun'). Sharpe's 1990 respondents, however, wanted to establish their economic independence ('Job, career and being able to support themselves'). This suggests that once these women had achieved such independence, they would be more inclined to consider marriage – which offers an explanation for later marriage.

### Activity 19 (page 87)

#### 1 How does the term creative singlehood apply to Item A?

'Creative singlehood' describes a positive view of singlehood, whereby people choose to remain single as a lifestyle option. This is reflected in Item A: an emphasis on the importance of personal independence and freedom ('to come and go when I like'), and the importance of work to single women – the woman in the item, by the age of 30, had chosen to concentrate on work rather than men.

#### 2 Why are more women choosing to remain single? Refer to both items in your answer.

'Choice' is a key concept here and both items illustrate this. In Item A, for example, women are choosing independence and freedom and, in some cases, work and a career over marital relationships. The implication is that singlehood is both a lifestyle choice and something that must be chosen if women want a successful career. Item B, on the other hand, suggests that singlehood is a newly available choice for women. New opportunities in education and employment mean that women no longer have to choose between 'living with and looking after their aged parents or getting married' – a 'third way' that involves choosing to develop and maintain social networks is now available.

### Activity 20 (page 90)

#### How might changes in the law have affected the divorce rate?

Although the divorce rate is not just affected by legal changes, such changes have had an impact by making divorce easier (by widening the grounds, simplifying the procedure and reducing both the legal expenses associated with divorce (for example, the Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949) and the length of time a couple must be married prior to petitioning for divorce).

### Activity 21 (page 91)

#### To what extent do Items A, B and C support the explanations given for divorce?

The reasons for divorce are supported to varying extents by the items. In terms of 'changing values', Items A and B demonstrate an acceptance of divorce as a way out of an 'unhappy' marriage (both indicate a female resentment with domestic inequality). The changing economic position of women is supported by each item: Sarah (Item A) had a successful business, Jan (Item B) was bringing money into

the home and the wife in Item C appears to be in paid work. Changing expectations of love and marriage are supported in Item A where Sarah refers to 'high expectations' about equality that were not met, and also in Item B in terms of Jan's observation about being not only expected to 'bring money into the house' but also to do all the domestic chores. The woman's expression in the final frame of Item C suggests these 'changed expectations'. Individualisation is supported in Item A (Sarah felt she couldn't 'be herself' because of a controlling husband), Item B (Jan referring to wanting 'control of my life') and possibly in Item C (the wife apparently realising that she is doing everything around the house as well as having paid employment). 'Male dominance and the unequal division of domestic labour' (women and marriage) is illustrated in all three items. Jan (Item B) suggests that women no longer want to be 'controlled by men', while Sarah (Item A) suggests that 'being in control of my life' was something that wasn't happening within her marriage. Item C illustrates the unequal division of domestic labour.

## Unit 5: Family diversity

### Activity 22 (page 94)

#### 1 How can ads portraying the nuclear family be seen as ideological?

Adverts portraying the nuclear family are ideological in the sense that they present 'a misleading view, based on value judgements, which obscures reality'. For example, the advert in Item A gives the impression there is only one form of nuclear family (that headed by a married, heterosexual, couple) and that this 'nuclear family norm' is the most effective in raising children (such adverts generally focus on the positive features of this particular family arrangement). Gittins (1993) suggests the idealised 'cereal packet image' of the family put forward in adverts is ideological because it both defines what people should see as 'normal and desirable' and suggests that, by extension, other family forms are 'abnormal and undesirable'.

#### 2 How do the book covers in Item B picture the family today?

The book covers in Item B suggest a picture of family life that is fragmented (splitting into many different types of family unit), fractured (breaking down) and diverse (one cover shows a couple of possible family structures and relationships (dual-parent and lone parent) as well as the idea of singlehood).

### Activity 23 (page 96)

#### Lone parenthood is not a permanent status. Explain with reference to the above diagram.

Allan and Crow (2001) observed that the average length of lone parenthood is around five years – which indicates that lone parenthood is not a permanent status (one that is fixed

and unchanging). One reason for this, as demonstrated by the diagram, is the number of routes out of lone parenthood (such as cohabitation, marriage, remarriage, and so on).

### Activity 24 (page 98)

#### 1 What does Item A indicate about the economic situation of many lone parents?

Item A indicates that the majority of lone parents are poor with a substantial minority being among the very poorest in our society. However, the item also shows that a significant minority are not poor (they appear in the highest income bracket) and that lone parents are represented in all income bands.

#### 2 Look at Items B and C. Argue the case for and against choosing to become a single mother.

The case for single motherhood (Item C) centres on the concept of choice – the idea that contemporary women have the freedom to take decisions about whether and when to have children and how they want to raise them. In some respects, this is related to personal fulfilment and the idea that where no suitable father exists women have the right to have and raise children. This choice may sometimes reflect honesty – the desire to have children without 'tricking' a lover into becoming a father.

The case against single motherhood (Item B) focuses on the consequences of women exercising choice. It could be seen as selfishness because the mother is condemning her child to a fatherless life. One consequence is that the child may be handicapped in terms of its future life chances – the lack of a father to provide support and care may seriously disadvantage the child. Finally, we can note that single motherhood is not always about choice – women can, for example, be deserted or abandoned by their partner.

### Activity 25 (page 99)

#### Reconstituted families have been described as the new extended families.

##### a) What does this mean?

It means that reconstituted families potentially draw together a group of relatives from a number of different families – such a family might join members of two or more families to form a large extended group, for example, a twice-married woman bringing children (and relatives) from both marriages into her third marriage.

##### b) What advantages does it suggest?

Reconstituted families offer a number of advantages, not the least being the chance to 'try again' after the failure of a previous partnership. Bedell (2002) suggests this commitment to a new form of family may result in happiness for both the marriage partners and their children. A further advantage may be a widening of family support networks and the 'enriched relationships' that may follow from an 'instant family' of step-brothers/sisters, and so on.

**Activity 26** (page 101)

**There's no particular problem with gay or lesbian families – apart from some heterosexuals! Discuss.**

This statement suggests that there is nothing wrong with gay or lesbian families. The only problem is heterosexuals who are prejudiced against such unions. Fitzgerald (1999), for example, demonstrates that children raised by same-sex parents are no different from those raised by heterosexuals. This suggests that the so-called 'problems' with same-sex parenting simply reflect the attitudes and behaviours of some heterosexuals. For example, 'the neighbour who won't speak to us' (Item C) and the possibility of prejudice against children raised in same-sex families (Item B).

**Activity 27** (page 103)

**1 With reference to Item A, suggest how class differences might affect family life.**

Class differences might affect family life in three main ways:

- Standard of living – the wealthy family pictured outside their stables clearly have a higher standard of living than the working-class family pictured below them. Horse riding is an expensive pastime. Judging from the lack of garden, the clothes line strung up along the front of the house and the clothes they are wearing, the working-class family are poor. By comparison, the wealthy upper-class family are dressed for the occasion in expensive riding boots. These pictures suggest that class differences result in very different living standards, life chances and quality of life.
- Health and happiness – the upper-class family appear to be brimming with health. They seem happy and satisfied – an 'ideal' family! There is no sign of this in the picture of the lower-class family which presents an overweight woman on the right and an unhappy looking woman sitting on the wall smoking. Statistics indicate that the lower the class position of the family, the more likely they are to suffer from ill-health and for the family to break up.

**2 Look at Item B.**

**a) What problems might this couple experience?**

The problems this couple might face include prejudice from both their ethnic groups of origin and possible conflicts created by the differing cultural expectations each may bring to family life.

**b) How can an increase in multicultural families be seen as a positive development?**

An increase in multicultural families, according to Beck-Gernsheim (2002), is a positive development for two reasons. They might break down barriers between ethnic groups and they reflect 'a growing opportunity for individual choice'. This can be viewed positively because multicultural couples may be together as a way of fulfilling their personal needs rather than following the directives of parents or the

norms of their ethnic group.

**Activity 28** (page 104)

**1 How does Item A reflect Giddens' picture of late modernity?**

Item A reflects Giddens' picture of late modernity in four main ways. **1** People have the freedom to choose family structures, lifestyles and relationships. This choice is reflected in both the gay/lesbian partnerships and the relationship between the partners ('having choice and being able to be creative and decide what we want for ourselves'). **2** It shows people are no longer prisoners of either the past or tradition ('Not mimicking everything...'). **3** Partnerships and families can be tailored to meet individual needs and identities – as in the first extract involving a lesbian family. **4** Amanda refers to having 'no script to follow' which suggests the idea of 'unchartered territory'.

**2 Look at Item B. To what extent are reconstituted families based on choice?**

According to Anthony Giddens, late modern society is characterised by increasing diversity and choice. This can be seen in the diversity of family forms and the choices they offer. No longer are people tied by tradition. They have greater freedom to create their own family forms. Reconstituted families are one example of this freedom. They are one of the family types available for choice in late modern society.

However, the partners in a reconstituted family did not initially choose this form of family. In most cases this is their second marriage after their first marriage ended in divorce.

**Unit 6: Gender, power and domestic labour****Activity 29** (page 106)

**1 Look at Item A. To what extent are tasks allocated on the basis of gender?**

The extent to which tasks are allocated by gender varies by the type and nature of the task. For example, although both genders spend time doing housework, women perform more of the routine work (like cooking, cleaning, washing and shopping) while men spend more time on 'maintenance duties' (things like repairs and gardening). This suggests a gendered division of housework, with some forms being seen mainly as 'women's work' while other are mainly 'men's work' – an idea confirmed, perhaps, by the fact that pet care, where there is no clear-cut association with men or women, is a task equally shared. The evidence in the item tends to confirm Devine's (1992) observation that 'Women remain responsible for...housework and their husbands help them'.

**2 Look at Item B. Judging from Item A, which of these pictures are untypical?**

Judging from Item A, each of the pictures is untypical. Men generally carry out household repairs; women have greater

responsibility for cleaning and greater involvement in cooking.

## Activity 30 (page 107)

### 1 How do the pictures illustrate emotion work?

'Emotion work' involves a number of factors. Both pictures, for example, depict women showing love (for children and partner), reassurance (holding the child/male partner close to their bodies) and attention – both women being attentive to needs of a child or partner. Similarly, both women are showing sympathy, one in terms of comforting a crying child and the other through cradling her partner. The final aspect of emotion work illustrated here is of understanding. The mother has her head bowed towards her child while the other woman is cradling her partner.

### 2 Why do you think women are primarily responsible for emotion work in the family?

We can see how 'emotion work' is associated with women in the family by looking at traditional male and female roles and supposed qualities. The feminine role, for example, casts women as mothers/supportive partners and it is this aspect of her 'nurturing role' that is associated with emotion work. Charles and Kerr (1988) for example, show how women give priority to their partner's and children's tastes and do their best to make mealtime a happy family occasion. The traditional masculine role, on the other hand, is one of showing things like strength and emotional fortitude (keeping one's emotions hidden). Duncombe and Marsden (1995), for example, found that most women complained of men's 'emotional distance'. They felt that they were the ones who provided reassurance, tenderness and sympathy, while their partners had problems expressing intimate emotions.

Traditional feminine qualities tend to be associated with the ability to listen, empathise (put themselves in the shoes of others), and care for others. Traditional masculine qualities, on the other hand, tend to be seen as the reverse of female qualities; men should not, for example, make open shows of emotion (e.g. crying).

## Activity 31 (page 109)

### 1 Judging from Item A, who has most power – husbands or wives? Give reasons for your answer.

From the quantitative analysis in Item A, husbands and wives have equal levels of power in terms of the number of decisions they make, although wives have slightly more power if we count the frequency of decision-making. However, if we interpret the item qualitatively, in terms of the perceived importance of decisions made, husbands have most power because they take more of the very important/important family decisions. This is supported by looking at the types of decision each gender makes. Female decision-making is higher over (perceived as not very important) routine domestic matters, whereas male decision-making is

higher over (perceived as very important) non-routine and financial matters.

### 2a) Use Items B, C and D to argue that men have more power than women.

The Items can be used to support the idea that men have more power than women in a number of ways. Item B shows that although the domestic division of labour is unequal, only 14% of women said they were dissatisfied with their partner's contribution. This suggests that men have more power because women believe, for whatever reason, that such inequality is not unfair. Item C suggests that many women (even successful and powerful career women) choose childcare over paid employment. This decision relates to power in the sense that women become economically dependent on their partner. Item D illustrates a different dimension of male power. While women may perform a triple shift of domestic labour, paid work and emotion work, men may only have a single shift (paid work). This is an example of male power because men benefit more than women from these arrangements.

### 2b) Using the same information, criticise this view.

The items can be used to criticise the idea that men have more power than women by arguing that women have the power to exercise more choices than men. In Item C, for example, the successful career women chose to give up careers in order to pursue something (childcare) that they saw as more important and may have given them more satisfaction. This also suggests that women have more freedom (in terms of their ability to choose paid work or domestic work). Item D could also support the idea that women have greater levels of power because it suggests they can 'have it all' – a personal income through paid work plus the emotional benefit of caring for both their family (through housework) and their partner. Item B also shows women exercising power through personal choices by expressing satisfaction with their chosen role.

## Activity 32 (page 111)

### With some reference to Items A and B, suggest why the domestic division of labour in lesbian families may be more equal than in heterosexual families.

There are two main reasons why the domestic division of labour in lesbian families may be more equal.

1 Equality as an ideal suggests lesbian relationships are not surrounded by traditional forms of male/female inequality (as Item A argues, 'everything is negotiable'). Consequently there is greater scope for lesbian couples to work out equality-based relationships freed from assumptions about traditional gender roles and relationships. Where heterosexual couples bring various forms of 'cultural baggage' into their relationships (such as assumptions about male/female family roles), this doesn't apply to lesbian couples – 'heterosexual conventions', therefore, do not have the same force.

2 Lesbian couples are less likely to be bound by the labour market inequalities that shape heterosexual relationships (where men, for example, traditionally have or expect higher status). Again, this means lesbian relationships are less likely to be shaped by heterosexual assumptions about gender roles. In Item B, for example, both couples are able to share/enjoy the 'traditional female childcare role'.

## Unit 7: Childhood and children

### Activity 33 (page 112)

**How do Items A and B indicate that childhood is socially constructed?**

'Social construction' involves the idea that something (in this instance childhood) is shaped by the culture in which it exists. If childhood was a natural state shaped by biological necessities, then all children would behave in much the same way at all times in all societies. This, however, is not so – which suggests that childhood is socially constructed because it is shaped by cultural norms and beliefs. Evidence for this can be found in Item A where 'the child' is performing a role normally associated with adults (soldier). Item B illustrates how Blackfoot culture developed assumptions about childhood, such as riding a horse at four years old and having a hardened physique, very different to our cultural expectations of children (the 'public whipping' of Blackfoot children by their fathers, for example, would be considered child abuse in our society).

### Activity 34 (page 113)

**What evidence do the paintings in Item B provide to support Ariès' statement in Item A?**

Ariès' argument that childhood did not exist in Medieval society (Item A) is supported by the paintings (Item B) in a number of ways: children are dressed as 'miniature versions' of adults and share adult activities (such as eating the same meal). Their similar status to adults is suggested by everyone being seated at same table and their participation in adult society by adult doctors discussing business in their presence.

### Activity 35 (page 115)

**Why is childhood in the 21st century seen as 'ambiguous'? Make some reference to Items A and B in your answer.**

The ambiguity of childhood refers to the idea that 'children' in the 21st century occupy a position that is 'part childhood'/'part adulthood' with no clear dividing line between the two. Technological developments mean children now have access to television, computers (Item A) and mobile phones (Item B), which allow them to enter an adult world that is not designed for them. Item A suggests a further blurring of the line between childhood and adulthood by suggesting

that children (through 'pester-power') can influence adult decisions. Further ambiguity between 'childhood' and 'adulthood' is suggested by Item B. Children's fashions, for example, increasingly ape those of the adult world and where female make-up was once an exclusively adult preserve, it is increasingly sold as a 'fashion accessory' to children.

## Unit 8: Demographic trends

### Activity 36 (page 118)

**Briefly describe what is shown by Items A and B.**

Item A shows an overall decline in live births during the 20th century, although there are major peaks and troughs (e.g. following the 1st and 2nd World Wars). It also shows little change in the number of people dying, despite the large population growth in the UK during the century. Natural change (the difference between the number of births and deaths) has narrowed considerably. Item B shows a general decline in the fertility rate since the mid-1960s 'baby boom'. Fertility rate is a reasonable, but not perfect, indicator of average family size (which has also fallen over the past 50 years).

### Activity 37 (page 119)

**1 Look at Item A. How might school meals have made a contribution to the decline in the death rate?**

School meals may have contributed to a decline in the death rate in two main ways. Children from poor families received at least one square meal each day and their diet improved because of the meals' content (vegetables, fruit, etc.). This means that children were healthier and less likely to die from the diseases associated with malnutrition. A healthier diet is likely to increase life expectancy.

**2 What does Item B suggest about the contribution made by medical advances to the reduction of deaths from tuberculosis?**

It suggests that although the introduction of antibiotics and vaccination probably contributed to the decline in tuberculosis deaths, they were not the major factors accounting for this decline. The major part of the reduction in tuberculosis deaths occurred *before* the medical advances. It was probably due to improvements in diet, sanitation and living standards.

**3 How might the comments in Item C help to explain the decline in fertility?**

The comments suggest a decline in fertility is related to changing attitudes. Unlike in the past when 'it was automatically accepted that motherhood was just what girls did' (Grace, 71), there is no longer an automatic association between 'marriage' and 'motherhood'. Where women are intent on pursuing a career (Vicky, 17) and either marrying later or remaining single, they have, on average, fewer children.

Individualisation is also a factor. Vicky suggests motherhood

involves sacrifices ('losing achievements, adventures, success and...friends') she's not prepared to make. Both women's comments illustrate the idea of choice – for Grace there was little choice – 'motherhood' was an expectation – whereas for Vicky, it's one possible choice among many. Finally, Vicky points to a further factor in the decline in fertility, namely risk – she is not willing to risk a successful career by becoming a mother.