

Worksheet 2.1 Defining the family (pages 61–66)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 According to Murdock (1949), how can 'a family' be defined?
- 2 Why did Murdock believe that the nuclear family is a universal social grouping?
- 3 Identify two ways that the nuclear family can be extended.
- 4 Briefly outline the difference between polygyny and polyandry.
- 5 What do sociologists mean by 'family diversity'?
- 6 Give four examples of family diversity in Britain today.
- 7 Briefly explain what Edholm means when she argues that 'the family is socially constructed'.
- 8 What evidence is there that family diversity is steadily increasing in modern Western societies?
- 9 Summarise Cheal's (1999) responses to the problem of 'defining the family'.
- 10 Identify one advantage and one disadvantage of asking members of society to define a family.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 What criticisms can be made of Murdock's definition of 'the family'?
- 2 Suggest ways we could update Murdock's definition of the family to take account of changing cultural norms and beliefs over the past 50 years.
- 3 If the family is 'socially constructed', what implications does this have for our understanding of family diversity?
- 4 Why it is important for sociologists to be able to define 'a family'?
- 5 Some sociologists have argued that we should abandon the notion of 'a family'. What arguments can you suggest for and against this idea?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 The evidence of family diversity makes it difficult to both define and talk about 'the family'. What are the arguments for and against this statement?
- 2 'The family is whatever people in a society say it is.' What arguments can you put forward to both support and criticise this statement?

Worksheet 2.2 The family and social structure (part 1, pages 66–70)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Identify and briefly explain Murdock's 'four functions of the family'.
- 2 Identify Parsons' two 'core functions' of the modern family.
- 3 Briefly explain what Parsons meant by 'the stabilisation of adult personalities'.
- 4 Identify and explain three criticisms of functionalist views on family life.
- 5 What evidence do the New Right put forward to support their argument that the family is 'in decline'?
- 6 What, for the New Right, are the causes of family decline?
- 7 What, for the New Right, are the consequences of family decline?
- 8 What solutions do the New Right put forward to halt the decline of family life?
- 9 Summarise the arguments put forward by Dennis and Erdos.
- 10 Outline two criticisms of the New Right view of family life.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Identify some of the 'shared norms and values' you were taught by family members as part of your primary socialisation.
- 2 Identify and explain some of the ways that the functions of the family have been taken over partly or largely by other social institutions.
- 3 How might 'welfare dependency' be a cause and a consequence of family breakdown.
- 4 Both functionalists and the New Right sometimes talk about 'healthy' or 'sick' families. Suggest some reasons – for and against – the idea that we can talk about family groups in these terms.
- 5 How could sociologists measure the concept of 'family decline'? Suggest some social indicators that might be used for this purpose.

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 The New Right argue that family diversity is evidence of 'family decline' in modern societies. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view of modern family life?
- 2 Do families need fathers? Discuss the arguments for and against the idea that female-headed lone-parent families are necessarily dysfunctional.

Worksheet 2.2 The family and social structure (part 2, pages 70–74)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 How is the family, according to Marxists, related to the needs of capitalism?
- 2 How, according to Engels, did the monogamous nuclear family answer a key concern of capitalists?
- 3 Identify three ways that Marxist views of the family are different to those of functionalists.
- 4 Explain, using an appropriate example, the meaning of 'patriarchy'.
- 5 Identify and explain three ways that 'women are oppressed by family life'.
- 6 Identify and explain two aspects of the 'dark side' of family life related to male domination.
- 7 Summarise New Right views on the relationship between family life and the welfare system.
- 8 Identify three features of Conservative social policy towards the family between 1990 and 1997.
- 9 Summarise Labour social policy towards the family since 1997.
- 10 How does David Cameron's policy towards the family differ from that of John Major?

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 What similarities and differences are there between Marxist and functionalist perspectives on family life?
- 2 What arguments can you suggest for and against the New Right claim that the nuclear family, consisting of husband, wife and children, is superior to all other forms of family arrangement?
- 3 Feminists are sometimes accused of 'ignoring the trend to gender equality in our society'. Identify some of the ways women have become more equal to men over the past 25 years.
- 4 Why have government attempts to encourage married couples to stay together been unsuccessful?
- 5 What reasons can you suggest to support the statement that 'Children need a stable family background'?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Social policy should encourage marriage as the best way we have to raise children. What are the arguments for and against this view?
- 2 The family is a private institution and governments should not interfere with how people live their lives within it. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view?

Worksheet 2.3 The family and social change (pages 74–85)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Briefly explain, using an example, the idea that the family was a 'unit of production' in pre-industrial society.
- 2 Briefly explain how the pre-industrial family was multifunctional.
- 3 Identify three reasons why the processes of industrialisation led to the development of the 'isolated nuclear family'.
- 4 According to Laslett, what percentage of households included kin beyond the nuclear family between the mid-16th and early 19th centuries – and what was the percentage at the start of the 21st century?
- 5 Explain how, according to Anderson, the early stages of industrialisation encouraged the development of extended families.
- 6 Define the terms 'industrialisation' and 'urbanisation'.
- 7 According to Oakley, what effects did industrialisation have on the role of women?
- 8 Define, using an example, the concept of stratified diffusion.
- 9 Give three criticisms of Young and Willmott's 'stages of family development' theory.
- 10 How does the 'modified extended family' differ from:
 - a. The nuclear family?
 - b. The extended family?

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Using the work of Parsons, Laslett and Anderson, explain how 'the family' was changed by the industrialisation process.
- 2 With reference to Oakley's arguments, how did the role of women change from 'production worker' in the pre-industrial family to 'domestic worker' in the industrial family?
- 3 Identify some of the ways that people within your family 'help each other' (in terms of things like emotional support, financial help, etc.). Include yourself/your parent/s in this exercise as well as extended kin if appropriate. Does your family exchange services, such as fixing/mending something for a family member?.
- 4 What functions of contemporary families can you identify? How do they differ, if at all, from the functions of the family in the past?
- 5 What reasons can you suggest for the decline in women being full-time mothers and housewives?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 'The symmetrical family is the norm in contemporary British society.' Discuss the arguments for and against this view.
- 2 Has the family lost its functions?

Worksheet 2.4 Changing family relationships (pages 85–93)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Briefly explain the term 'civil partnership'.
- 2a. In 2005, what was the average age of first marriage for men and women?
 - b. How have these figures changed since 1971?
- 3 Identify one positive and two negative aspects of 'creative singlehood'.
- 4 What support does Figure 1 (page 87), provide for this statement: 'Cohabitation before marriage has now become the norm'?
- 5 What are the trends in the extent and age of cohabitation in the UK since 1986?
- 6 Identify three reasons for the increase in cohabitation over the past 50 years in the UK.
- 7 Summarise the trends in divorce (Table 1, page 88) in the UK during the 20th century.
- 8 Identify two ways that changing expectations of love and marriage might contribute to an increase in divorce.
- 9 Identify three groups who are particularly 'at risk' of divorce.
- 10 Summarise Rodgers and Pryor's findings on the effects of divorce on children.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Examine the evidence for and against the argument that 'cohabitation is not an alternative to marriage'.
- 2 How does the identification of a 'post 2nd World War baby boom' help us to explain marriage trends over the past 50 years?
- 3 How, according to the New Right, are high divorce rates and the lone-parent families that often result from divorce, 'a serious threat to society'?
- 4 How might changes in both male and female roles, relationships and experiences help to explain the increase in divorce over the past 50 years?
- 5 What are the advantages and disadvantages of singlehood for both men and women?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 'Declining marriage combined with rising cohabitation, singlehood, lone-parenthood and divorce means the family is in decline.' To what extent does the evidence support or reject this view?
- 2 'Divorce always has negative consequences for both the individual and society.' Discuss the arguments for and against this view.

Worksheet 2.5 Family diversity (pages 93–104)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 What is meant by 'family diversity'?
- 2 What is meant by the idea that 'increasing family diversity means increasing family breakdown'?
- 3 Using an example to illustrate your answer explain how 'a household' differs from 'a family'.
- 4 Summarise household trends in the UK (Table 2, page 94).
- 5 Identify two difficulties sociologists might face in defining 'lone-parent families'.
- 6 Identify three reasons for the growth in lone-parent families in the UK over the past 25 years.
- 7 Give three examples of 'the strains of reconstituted families that may help to explain their high level of breakup'.
- 8 Suggest three ways that social class contributes to family diversity.
- 9 Identify three ways that ethnicity contributes to family diversity.
- 10 Identify two criticisms of Stacey's research.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Identify and explain two reasons for the lack of research into gay and lesbian families before the 1990s.
- 2 How can we measure the concept of 'family breakdown'? (Think about indicators such as divorce rates that we could use to quantify and measure this concept.)
- 3 Why is household composition, rather than family composition, a more valid way of understanding 'relationship diversity' in contemporary British society?
- 4 Summarise the evidence for diversity **within** and **between** families and households.
- 5 How has 'family diversity' been affected by the kind of social/economic changes Giddens associates with 'late modernity'?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 'Like postmodern culture, contemporary family arrangements are diverse, fluid and unresolved.' To what extent does the evidence support or reject this view of contemporary families?
- 2 We should welcome family diversity. Discuss the arguments for and against this view.

Worksheet 2.6 Gender, power and domestic labour (pages 105–111)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 What is the difference between 'domestic' and 'non-domestic' labour?
- 2 What does the 'gendered division of domestic labour' mean?
- 3 Identify the patterns and trends in housework/childcare identified by Layder *et al.* (Table 6, page 106).
- 4 Suggest two problems with time-use studies of domestic labour.
- 5 Explain, using an example, the concept of 'emotion work'.
- 6 What is the meaning of the term 'women's triple shift'?
- 7 What evidence is there that contemporary family life is patriarchal?
- 8 Identify two ways that 'access to and control over money are gendered' within contemporary families.
- 9 Identify two decisions usually made by husbands and two usually made by wives.
- 10 What does interview data reveal about gay and lesbian partnerships?

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Why is 'domestic labour' still primarily seen as 'women's work'?
- 2 Identify and explain three problems with sociological research that has attempted to measure the domestic division of labour.
- 3 Thinking about family life, give examples (other than those in the textbook) of:
 - a. decision-making
 - b. non-decisions
 - c. agenda-setting
 - d. shaping desires.
- 4 How and why is 'emotion work' related to the 'feminine role'?
- 5 How does the fact that 'access to and control over money are gendered' reflect power relationships within families?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Is contemporary family life in the UK symmetrical?
- 2 'Women choose unpaid work and men choose paid work.' Discuss the sociological factors that influence our work choices in the context of family life.

Worksheet 2.7 Childhood and children (pages 112–115)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 What does the term 'the social construction of childhood' mean?
- 2 How can historical and/or cross-cultural evidence be used to show that childhood is not simply a 'natural' state?
- 3 Why, according to Ariès, is childhood a relatively 'modern creation'?
- 4 What does 'childhood became a separate legal status' mean?
- 5 Identify and explain one criticism of Ariès' argument.
- 6 What two 'images of childhood' were identified by Rogers (2001)?
- 7 What change in the social construction of childhood was identified by Lee (2001)?
- 8 Identify one way that 'adults are becoming more like children' and one way that 'children are becoming more like adults'.
- 9 Identify three ways the mass media has 'brought adult lives into the world of children'.
- 10 Explain, using examples, what is meant by the 'dual status' of children.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Identify some of the ways that the contemporary meaning of childhood has been shaped by our culture and society.
- 2 'Childhood' is a general label that hides a range of biological and cultural differences. Identify some of the ways that childhood is a 'diverse experience' in our society. (Hint: Think about different labels (baby, infant, etc.) and their cultural meaning.)
- 3 How are children in 'today's society' different from children 'in the past'?
- 4 What differences can we identify between childhood in modern Britain and childhood in other societies?
- 5 Which view of children (the welfare view or the control view) do you most agree with? Give reasons for your answer.

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 'Childhood is a cultural construction, not a biological condition.' To what extent does the available evidence support this argument?
- 2 Is childhood in contemporary Britain becoming more ambiguous?

Worksheet 2.8 Demographic trends (pages 116–119)

Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 What is demography?
- 2 Identify the main factor accounting for population growth in the UK since 1900.
- 3 What does the term 'total fertility rate' (TFR) mean?
- 4 What is the main trend in total fertility rates in the UK since 1900?
- 5 Identify two trends in life expectancy shown in Table 7 (page 116).
- 6 Briefly explain why the UK today has an 'ageing population'.
- 7 Summarise changes in family size in England and Wales over the past 50 years.
- 8 How might welfare changes help to explain a falling death rate in the UK during the 20th century?
- 9 How might the cost of raising children affect the UK birth rate?
- 10 Aside from cost, suggest one reason why people choose not to have children.

Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Why is it useful to use rates (rather than actual numbers) for comparing things like births and deaths?
- 2 Why is total fertility rate a more valid measure of fertility than either 'actual numbers' or 'birth rate'?
- 3 If we wanted to compare something like births and deaths between different societies (such as the UK and China), why would it be more valid to use the concept of 'rate' rather than 'actual numbers'?
- 4 Why is total fertility rate only a rough indicator of family size?
- 5 How might the increase in childlessness since the 2nd World War affect the statistics for 'average family size'?

Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 What are the social implications of the UK having an 'ageing population'?
- 2 'The most important factor in any explanation for falling death rates in the UK during the 20th century has been advances in medicine.' Discuss the arguments for and against this view.