

Read this article. Define the words in bold print. Answer and discuss the questions at the end.

The **nuclear family** is the traditional family structure in the West. This term, originating in the 1950s, describes families consisting of a father, a mother, and their **offspring**. Under this **conventional** structure, the family is seen as the basic unit in society; the father functions as the **breadwinner** and the mother as the **homemaker**. Nowadays, alternative family types are becoming more common, such as single-parent families, families headed by same-sex parents, and extended families where families live with their **kin**, which may include several generations. Extended families are less common in North America, where it is not uncommon to place grandparents in retirement homes.

A Social Trends survey in 2009 reported radical changes in child **rearing** and marriage practices in the United Kingdom. Figures showed that while 30 percent of women under thirty had given birth by the age of 25, only 24 percent had married. This marked the first time childbirth had become the first major **milestone** in adult life, ahead of marriage. In 1971 in the U.K, 3/4 of women were married by the age of 25 and half were mothers.

Judging by the high rates of **divorce** and the increasing number of children born out of **wedlock**, it would appear that the family as an **institution is in decline**. American sociologist Stephanie Coontz believes so too, but for different reasons. Coontz points out that marriages are no longer arranged for political or economic reasons, and children are no longer required to contribute to the family income. Marriages nowadays are founded on love. She believes this shift towards love, emotional fulfillment, and free choice has actually weakened the family by making it optional and **fragile**.

Describe a nuclear family of the 50's. In this family who is the breadwinner and who is the homemaker? Does this describe your family today? Does this describe most families in your home country?

What are the three types of alternative family types this article talks about? Do you know anyone who lives in one of these kinds of families?

Are single-parent families becoming more common in your home country?

Are same sex families common in your home country?

Are they accepted at all in your country?

What is your feeling about same-sex parents raising children?

Would you ever consider living with your parents while you raise your children? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Do many or most people in your country live with their parents while raising their children?

Describe the home where you were raised. Were their grandparents or other relatives living with you? Did you enjoy that?

Many Americans place their elderly parents in retirement homes or assisted living facilities. Does this seem strange to you or wrong? Would you prefer to have your elderly parents living with you? How are elderly parents treated in your country.

The article stated that 30% of women under thirty had given birth by age 25 in the UK, but only 24% were married. In 1971 75% were married and only 50% had given birth. Is this a positive or negative change? Why? What impact will this statistic have on families and on the society?

Do you believe that families are in decline?

Do you think this is a pattern happening only in the west?

Do you worry about this happening in your home country?

Is there any way to change this trend?

**What is the English word for:**

your sister's daughter

your brother's son

your grandmother's mother

your wife's brother

the son of your mother's new husband

**These terms are used to describe family. Say the word and make a sentence with it.**

bachelor	foster parent	genealogy	nephew
fiancé	juvenile	groom	patriarch
cousin	kin	grownup	offspring
kinfolk	progeny	maternal grandparent	orphan