



GSOC.FAM1 Family Diversity and Family Forms

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 70 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show your understanding by using sociological vocabulary and, where asked, your own examples.

1 Which of these best describes a nuclear family?

- ☐ A) Two parents and their dependent children living together
- ☐ B) A single person living alone
- ☐ C) Three or more generations of the same family living together
- ☐ D) A group of unrelated friends sharing a house

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Define the term 'nuclear family'.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 The nuclear family is not the only family form in the UK today.

(a) Define 'extended family', giving an example. (2)

(b) Define 'lone-parent family', giving an example of a reason a family might become a lone-parent family. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Family diversity in the UK includes many other family forms.

(a) Define 'reconstituted family' (sometimes called a 'step-family'), giving an example. (2)

(b) Give one example of a same-sex family, and state one legal change that has affected same-sex families in the UK. (2)

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Identify two changes in UK society that sociologists link to the rise in the number of lone-parent families.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 The sociologists Rhona and Robert Rapoport identified several distinct types of family diversity in Britain.

(a) Explain what the Rapoports meant by 'organisational' diversity. (2)

(b) Explain what the Rapoports meant by 'cultural' diversity. (2)

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

7 The functionalist sociologist Talcott Parsons argued that the nuclear family developed a 'functional fit' with modern industrial society.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** The functionalist anthropologist George Murdock (1949) argued the family performs four essential functions in every society he studied.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

- 9** The New Right is a perspective that strongly supports the traditional nuclear family.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

- 10** Postmodernist sociologists argue that family life today is far more varied and based on choice than in the past.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

- 11** Feminist sociologists have criticised the idealised image of the traditional nuclear family.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

- 12** Some sociologists and commentators, such as the New Right, argue that the decline of the traditional nuclear family is a serious problem for society. Others, including many feminist and postmodernist sociologists, argue that growing family diversity is not a problem at all. Evaluate the view that the decline of the traditional nuclear family is a serious problem for society. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one perspective.

(Total for Question 12 is 12 marks)

- 13** State one criticism that is often made of the New Right view of family diversity.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

- 14** State one criticism that is often made of the postmodernist view of family diversity.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Explain one way family structures in the UK have changed over the last 50 years.

(Total for Question 15 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.FAM1 Family Diversity and Family Forms

Question 1

- **B1** A (two parents and their dependent children)
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** a family made up of two generations: parent(s) and their dependent child(ren) (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. living together in one household, separate from wider relatives
- **Answer: A two-generation family of parent(s) and dependent children, living together in one household, separate from wider relatives.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** a family that includes relatives beyond the nuclear family (oe)
- (a) **B1** a correct example, e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins living together or in close, regular contact
- (a) **Answer: A family that includes relatives beyond parents and children, e.g. grandparents living with or near the family and in regular contact.**
- (b) **B1** a family in which dependent children live with only one parent (oe)
- (b) **B1** a correct reason, e.g. divorce or separation, the death of a partner, or a parent choosing to raise a child alone
- (b) **Answer: A family where dependent children live with only one parent, e.g. as a result of divorce, separation or a parent's own choice.**

Question 4

- (a) **B1** a family formed when one or both partners bring children from a previous relationship into a new family (oe)
- (a) **B1** a correct example, e.g. a step-parent and step-siblings living together after a parent remarries or re-partners
- (a) **Answer: A family formed when partners bring children from a previous relationship into a new family, e.g. living with a step-parent and step-siblings.**
- (b) **B1** a correct example, e.g. two men or two women raising children together as a couple
- (b) **B1** a correct legal change, e.g. the legalisation of same-sex marriage in England and Wales (2014) or same-sex civil partnerships (2005)
- (b) **Answer: Two women or two men raising children together as a couple; a relevant legal change is the legalisation of same-sex marriage in England and Wales in 2014.**

Question 5

- **B1** one correct change, e.g. a rise in the divorce rate
- **B1** a second, different correct change, e.g. a rise in births outside marriage, or a rise in relationship separation among cohabiting couples
- **Answer: Any two of: a rise in the divorce rate; a rise in births outside marriage; more couples separating.**

Question 6

- (a) **B1** identifies organisational diversity as differences in how families are structured/organised
- (a) **B1** a correct example, e.g. differences between nuclear, lone-parent, reconstituted and dual-worker families
- (a) **Answer: Organisational diversity refers to differences in how families are structured, e.g. nuclear, lone-parent, reconstituted or dual-worker families.**
- (b) **B1** identifies cultural diversity as differences in family life linked to ethnic, religious or cultural background
- (b) **B1** a correct example, e.g. different communities may have different traditions around extended family involvement, marriage or child-rearing
- (b) **Answer: Cultural diversity refers to differences in family life linked to a family's ethnic, religious or cultural background, e.g. different traditions of extended family involvement.**

Question 7

- **B1** identifies that Parsons believed the small nuclear family suits modern industrial society better than the larger extended family
- **B1** explains geographical mobility: a small nuclear family unit can move more easily to wherever jobs are available
- **B1** explains social mobility: the nuclear family is not tied down by obligations to a wide network of extended kin, allowing individuals to take up new jobs/status
- **B1** development, e.g. Parsons argued this is why the nuclear family became the dominant family form as Britain industrialised
- **Answer: Parsons argued the nuclear family 'fits' industrial society because it is geographically mobile (a small unit can move for work) and socially mobile (not tied down by extended-kin obligations), which is why it became the dominant family form.**

Question 8

- **B1** sexual function: regulating sexual relationships between adults
- **B1** reproductive function: reproducing the next generation
- **B1** economic function: providing for the material needs of family members (e.g. food, shelter)
- **B1** educational/socialisation function: teaching children the norms and values of society
- **Answer: Murdock argued the family performs a sexual function (regulating sexual relationships), a reproductive function (having children), an economic function (providing for members' needs) and an educational function (socialising children).**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies that the New Right sees the married, two-parent nuclear family as the best environment for raising children and maintaining a stable society
- **B1** explains that the New Right is critical of growing family diversity, particularly the rise in lone-parent families
- **B1** credits the sociologist Charles Murray's 'underclass' thesis, which argued that generous welfare benefits can make long-term lone parenthood more financially viable, weakening the traditional two-parent family
- **B1** development, e.g. Murray linked this trend to a rise in social problems such as poor educational achievement and crime among children raised without a resident father
- **Answer: The New Right sees the married nuclear family as best for a stable society and criticises the growth of lone parenthood. Charles Murray's underclass thesis argued that welfare support can make lone parenthood more financially viable, which he linked to a rise in social problems such as low educational achievement and crime.**

Question 10

- **B1** identifies that postmodernists argue there is no longer one dominant, 'normal' family type
- **B1** explains that individuals increasingly choose the type of family and relationships that suit them, rather than following one fixed pattern
- **B1** credits the sociologist Judith Stacey, whose research on Californian families led her to describe increasingly varied and fluid 'postmodern families'
- **B1** development, e.g. Stacey also described a 'divorce-extended family', where former in-laws and step-relatives formed through divorce and remarriage stay connected as an extended network
- **Answer: Postmodernists argue there is no single 'normal' family type today, and individuals increasingly choose the family form that suits them. Judith Stacey's research described increasingly varied, fluid 'postmodern families', including 'divorce-extended families' where former in-laws and step-relatives stay connected after divorce and remarriage.**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies that feminists such as Ann Oakley criticised the idealised media image of the nuclear family, sometimes called the 'cereal packet family'
- **B1** explains that this image (a working father, a homemaker mother, and happy children) presents the nuclear family as natural and universally desirable
- **B1** development, e.g. feminists argue this image disguises real inequality within many nuclear families, particularly an unequal division of domestic labour
- **B1** further development, e.g. treating the nuclear family as the 'ideal' can make other family forms, such as lone-parent

Question 12

- **Level 4** (10-12): A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH the New Right/functionalist case that family change is a problem AND the feminist/postmodernist case that family diversity is not a problem, supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each view are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation that explains both sides of the debate, with some accurate reference to sociologists. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant explanation of one or both sides of the debate, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between views.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or two isolated, undeveloped points about family change, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - New Right/functionalist case: Parsons argued the nuclear family developed a 'functional fit' with industrial society; the New Right, drawing on Charles Murray's underclass thesis, argues that a decline in married, two-parent families and a rise in lone parenthood is linked to social problems such as low educational achievement and crime.
 - Supporting evidence for this case: Murdock's four universal functions (sexual, reproductive, economic, educational) suggest the family plays an essential role that some argue is harder to fulfil reliably outside a stable two-parent structure.
 - Feminist/postmodernist case: Rapoport and Rapoport's five types of family diversity show that varied family forms have always existed in Britain, not just recently; Ann Oakley's critique of the idealised 'cereal packet family' argues the traditional nuclear family disguised real inequality rather than representing an ideal worth preserving.
 - Supporting evidence for this case: Judith Stacey's concept of the postmodern and divorce-extended family suggests that increased choice and diversity reflects positive social change (e.g. more freedom to leave unhappy or unequal marriages), not moral or social decline.
 - Evaluation of the New Right/functionalist case: critics argue it can unfairly blame lone parents for problems that are actually caused by poverty or lack of support, and treats one family type as 'normal' when diversity has always existed.
 - Evaluation of the feminist/postmodernist case: critics argue it may understate real difficulties some family forms can face (for example, the practical and financial pressures on some lone-parent families), and that not everyone experiences family change as a free 'choice'.
 - A balanced conclusion should weigh the New Right's concern about social outcomes against the feminist/postmodernist argument that diversity reflects greater freedom and was never as rare as the 'decline' narrative suggests, without presenting either side as simply correct.

Question 13

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it can unfairly blame lone-parent families for problems that are really caused by poverty or a lack of support
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that it treats the nuclear family as 'normal', when family diversity has always existed in different forms
- **Answer: Critics argue the New Right can unfairly blame lone-parent families for problems really caused by poverty, and wrongly treats the nuclear family as the only 'normal' family type.**

Question 14

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it may overstate how much real choice people have over their family life, since money, housing and other pressures limit choices for many people
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that it can understate the continuing influence of patriarchy or economic hardship on family life
- **Answer: Critics argue postmodernism can overstate how much real choice people have, since money, housing and other pressures limit choices for many families, and it may understate continuing patriarchy or economic hardship.**

Question 15

- **B1** identifies a genuine long-term change, e.g. a rise in cohabitation (couples living together without marrying) or a fall in the average family size
- **B1** brief development, e.g. more couples now live together before, or instead of, marrying, compared with 50 years ago
- **Answer: There has been a long-term rise in cohabitation: more couples now live together before, or instead of,**