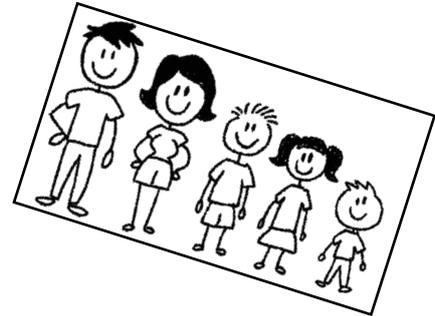


The Family



There are different types of families but hardly any society without some kind of family. The family is the basic social unit. It is the smallest social cell in any society. The family is a special group of people who feel good and relaxed together, who grow in an environment of sharing. The family is a place of synergy, the members bring out the best in each other and from this union a house becomes a home, a refuge, a battery for recharging tired souls and muscles, a haven for welcome new born kids.

What makes up a family? What may come to mind first is a **typical nuclear family**: a married couple—father and a mother with one or more children born in wedlock who together share by themselves the same place of residence. But there are many other more family structures that have been developing through time and reflect the type of society in which these family exist.



Prior to industrialization, the family generally included two, three or more generations of blood and kin relations. Grandparents, parents and children would typically form part of the same household, along with many other relatives. This **extended family** had no pressure to break up, rather inter-generational ties performed a mutual service. The

older members providing advice, education and consultation on the basis of many years of experience and in turn receiving care and attention in their old age. The extended family also performed as a unit of production often operating as a self-sufficient economic unit, producing and consuming its own food or producing goods and services for the market.



The family in contemporary society

The family in contemporary society is undergoing further change. Demand for female labour by industry, along with widened educational achievements and heightened expectations by women, has led to a large number of women leaving their traditional workplace—the home—and seeking paid employment. For some families, this arrangement is quite a necessity because women could not afford not to go to work.

We have seen an increase in childcare centres, and family-friendly measures (example parental leave, where both men and women can make use of it) which made it easier for women to have a paid job. This leads to a different form of family, the **symmetrical family**—a family where the adult members share all the work, paid and unpaid, inside and outside the home, including domestic chores. At the same time, the one-parent family/**single parent family**—a single working mother/father with young children is becoming increasingly common.



us



The Maltese Family

The Maltese family is basically a nuclear one but with still considerable inter-generational contact. It is not so rare to find parents still living with their children after these get married and have their own children. It is also common to find grandparents living fairly close to their married kids, helping out in various domestic chores, including baby-sitting. With the small geographical size of the Maltese islands, and the ease of internal transportation, the Maltese family is actually a **modified nuclear family**, having components of both the nuclear and extended family versions.

The two-income household is also becoming popular. Many women are opting for paid employment, although the majority still do so only until they get married or until they become mothers, usually soon after marriage.

monogamy

Monogamy is a form of relationship in which an individual has only one partner during their lifetime or at any one time. In Malta people have monogamous marriages. When one of the couple is not loyal to the other that means that he or she have committed adultery and have the right for a separation or divorce.

Polygamy

Polygamy is a state of marriage to many spouses or "frequent marriage" is a marriage that includes more than two partners. When a man is married to more than one wife at a time, the relationship is called **polygyny** and when a woman is married to more than one husband at a time, it is called **polyandry**.



Until 2010 polygyny was legally recognized in Thailand. In Burma, polygyny was also frequent. In Sri Lanka, polyandry was practiced (though not widespread) until recent times. The Roman Catholic Church clearly condemns polygamy .



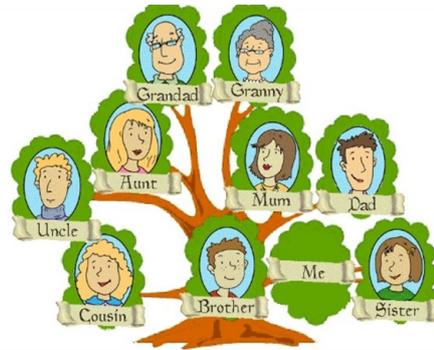
Did you know??

A **referendum on divorce** was held in Malta on 28 May 2011. Voters were asked whether they approved of a new law to introduce allow divorces, as at that time, Malta was one of only three countries in the world (along with the Philippines and the Vatican City) in which divorce was not permitted. The proposal was approved by 53% of voters, resulting in a law allowing divorce under certain conditions being enacted later in the year.

Roles and responsibilities in the family

Families are not democracies. Each family has its own ways of deciding who has the power and authority within the family unit, and which rights, privileges, obligations, and roles are assigned to each family member.

In most families parents are expected to be the leaders or executives of the family; children are expected to follow the leadership of their parents. As children in the middle years grow older, they will ask for, and certainly should be allowed, more autonomy, and their opinions should be considered when decisions are made; however, parents are the final authorities.



Traditionally, fathers have been the providers and authority figures, but while they may be the final decision-makers, they often have assumed only limited functions beyond that in the family. Mothers have been the caretakers, responsible for the emotional side of the family; they have kept the family together and functioning smoothly. What this means is that mothers and fathers are likely to hold different positions in the family hierarchy, that mothers take primary responsibility and that fathers may have only partial responsibility for day-to-day parental decisions.



A **matriarchy** is a social organizational form in which the mother or oldest female heads the family. Descent and relationship are determined through the female line. Therefore a matriarchal family refers to when the mother is the head of household.



1. Read this passage carefully and answer the questions

We live in an increasingly diverse world, even within our own family structures. The concept of the "nuclear" family does not predominate in our society as it once did. More children are being raised by single parents, by same-sex parents, in blended families and in families with mixed race, religion and ethnicity. Even though differences are common, that does not automatically make children comfortable with their own unique family situations or with differences in their peers' families. And as families look different, it may be harder to identify what is similar.

Mothers and fathers, siblings, grandparents and members of the extended family all teach the baby what it needs to know. In this way the baby is brought up in an environment where it is learning all the time. Although the education of new members of society starts within the family it does not stop there.

1. Which factors have caused the traditional family to change? (4 marks)

2. Describe **three** types of families that we find today.

3. What values can you learn from the family to be a good citizen? Mention **four** of these and explain them.

2. Match column A with column B that follow

A

B

1. Here we find a nuclear family where the mother and father have a paid-job and a career, and they share household work and upbringing of the children.		Same-sex couple/family
2. This type of family consists of parents who are of opposite sex, and their biological or adopted children. This is the type of family that is most desired by society.		Extended Family
3. This is a type of family where we find it in more than two human generations. Here we find the parents, the children along with some grandparents or uncles all living under the same roof. This family was the most popular in the past where everyone remained living in the same household.		Modified extended family
4. This is a type of family unfortunately is on the increase as time passes. This is when the children are in the care of one of their parents only. This happens for many different reasons.		Nuclear Family
5. This family is very similar to the extended family but with a difference. Grandparents, uncles and aunts live or in the same street or in the same neighbourhood.		Symmetrical Family
6. Here we find a couple, two men or two women who decide to marry or live together and may have children through adoption		Single Parent Family