

O Level Sociology (2251)

Unit 5: Family

Recommended Prior Knowledge

Knowledge of the key concepts from unit 2 will prove useful here.

Context

This unit has strong links with units 3 and 6 by providing further examples of the contributions which gender, ethnicity and class make to modern industrial societies.

Outline

This unit explores the various functions the family performs, differing family structures and the changing nature of roles performed within the family.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
5.1	Understand the nature of the family with cross cultural comparisons, including monogamy, polygamy and polyandry.	Provide definitions of monogamy, polygamy and polyandry. Ask students to research where these different types of relationships are likely to be found.	Blundell J, pp134 – 163, Useful glossary of terms on p 162
	Distinguish between family types in traditional societies and family types in modern industrial societies.	Class activity. Ask students to compare family types in traditional societies with family types in modern industrial societies. Draw up a table which demonstrates these differences.	Browne K, pp 218 – 220 for changing roles of the family in modern societies.
	Distinguish between the extended family and the nuclear family.	Provide definitions of the various family types with emphasis on the differences between the extended family and the nuclear family.	Wilson P & Kidd A, pp 48 & 49.
	Describe the functions of the family and how they have changed in modern industrial societies.	Outline the main functions of the family and how those functions differ between traditional societies and modern industrial societies.	Wilson P & Kidd A, pp 52 & 53
	Discuss the family as an agency of social control and of social stability.	Outline the basic features of functionalist and Marxist perspectives of the family.	Wilson P & Kidd A, pp 52 - 57

	Recognise alternatives to the family including types of households that are not families.	Distinguish between households and families emphasising types of units which are not considered a family e.g. single person households, communes and students living together.	Wilson P & Kidd A, p 48 Blundell J, p 134
	Discuss conflict in family life: the dysfunctional family; the 'darker side of family life'.	Review examples from media reports that illustrate different types of conflict in family life. Ask students to suggest causes and possible consequences of conflict in family life.	Blundell J, pp140 & 141 for The dark side of family life.
5.2	Describe the main roles within the family. The maternal and paternal roles; the role of the child and of members of the extended family.	Class activity Ask students to think about their own families and the roles of each member. Compare and contrast with the rest of the class.	Blundell J, pp 156 & 157 for the roles of grandparents and children O'Donnell G, p 46 for maternal and paternal roles.
	Discuss the increase in 'child centeredness' in modern industrial societies.	Outline the concept of childhood and note the changes in the role of the child in modern industrial societies. Ask students to compare childhood in traditional societies with childhood in modern industrial societies.	Wilson p & Kidd A, pp 66 & 67 for the relationships between parents and their children and how it has changed over time. Blundell J, pp 120 & 121 for children and childhood.
5.3	Recognise changes that are affecting the family, demographic trends, marriage and divorce, single parent and same sex families.	Provide statistics to illustrate the changing patterns in marriage and divorce. Ask students to suggest reasons for these patterns and for the increase in single parent families and same sex families.	www.census.ac.uk Wilson p & Kidd A, pp 86 – 91 for changing patterns in marriage and divorce. Blundell J, pp 142 – 147
	Recognise the changes in family role relationships.	Outline the nature and extent of changes in family role relationships with reference to the division of domestic labour, joint and separated conjugal roles, power relationships and the changing role of children.	Wilson p & Kidd A, pp 58 & 59 for changes in gender role relationships. Blundell J, pp 154 & 155 for domestic

division of labour debate.

O'Donnell pp 42 & 43 for changing roles within the family. A summary can be found on pp 50 & 51.

Blundell J, pp 150 & 151 for different types of family globally.

Browne K, pp 218 – 220 for changing roles of the family in modern societies.

Browne K, pp 218 – 220 for changing roles of the family in modern societies

Describe cross-cultural variations in the family.

Invite the students to use the internet and other resources to research the different types of family forms globally. Feedback their findings to the rest of the class.

Discuss the 'loss of functions' debate.

Class activity

Summarise the 'loss of functions debate. Divide class into two groups: ask one group to collect evidence for the loss of functions and the other group to collect evidence against the loss of functions. Invite the class to debate the issues.

It is useful here to look back on the changing role of the family and compare traditional with modern family units.