"You can choose your friends, but you sho' can't choose your family."

From *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1926 – 2016)

1. Family Discussion

1. What does 'family' mean? How important is family to you? How important is family in your culture?
2. How many children does the average family have in your country? Do you think this will change in the future? What is an ideal number?
3. How often do you see or speak to the members of your family?
4. Are the members of your family also your friends? What do you spend time doing with your family? Who do you enjoy spending time with the most, your family or your friends?
5. Do you miss your family when you are away from them or are you sometimes glad to have some space?
6. If you have siblings, do you get on well with them? Did you get on well with them when you were growing up?
7. How do family members help each other?
8. Are the people in your family more important than people outside of your family?

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2. Family Vocabulary

- **blood is thicker than water** (saying) – *people who are members of the same family have a stronger obligation to each other than to those outside the family.*
- **to fly the nest** (verb) – *to leave the house of one's parents and live elsewhere.*
- **to take after (someone)** (verb) – *to have similarities to an older member of one's family, either physical features or behaviour.*
- **black sheep** (noun) – *someone who has brought shame or embarrassment to their family and is outcast or shunned as a result.*
- **to raise / to bring up** (verb)**, upbringing** (noun) – *to take care of a child until they reach adulthood; the way a child was raised by its parents, including the values taught.*
- **extended family** (noun) – *the family beyond the immediate parents and children, including aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. You really _____ your father! You have his eyes and ears.
2. He had a terrible _____; his parents neglected him and didn't teach him right from wrong.
3. Now we've moved to Portugal, I only ever see my _____ at Christmas time when we go back to the UK.
4. Even when my little brother got in trouble with the police, my parents still stuck up for him because _____.
5. Paul is the _____ of his family. He's been to jail twice, including for armed robbery!
6. We can't wait for our children to _____ so we can start to enjoy our retirement!

Family vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Do you agree that blood is thicker than water? Why or why not?
2. At what age do children usually fly the nest in your country? How old were you / do you expect to be?
3. Who do you take after in your family?
4. What could make someone the black sheep of their family?
5. Does it make a difference to a child's future if they were raised by a single parent?
6. How many people do you have in your extended family? How often and on what occasions do you see your extended family? Do you enjoy these times?

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3. Video: The Nuclear Family

You are going to watch a video by The Atlantic called "How the Nuclear Family Broke Down."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-family/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How many children does the ideal family have?
   a) 2 *b) 2.5* *c) 3*
2. What did the family provide through most of history?
   a) financial support *b) social cohesion* *c) strong values*
3. In 1800, what proportion of Americans were farmers?
   a) 73% *b) 75%* *c) 77%*
4. Why were black families separated in the 1800s?
   a) small family businesses *b) slavery* *c) segregation*

Sentence completion

5. The size of families reached its peak during the _____ period.
6. The family was seen as a moral unit where children were taught _____.
7. In the 1960s, there was a lot of _____ to live in a nuclear family.
8. By 1965, nuclear families had been replaced by _____ families.

Short answer

9. What kind of activities do women spend more time on than men?
10. What can affluent people afford to buy?
11. What is the average size of a family in Gambia?
12. What can a chosen family help to share the challenges and the rewards of?

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4. Family Conversation Questions

1. How would you describe the 'perfect family'? What leads to dysfunctional families?
2. Is it necessary to get married and start a family to be considered successful by society? Is there a lot of pressure to start a family? If so, where does this pressure come from?
3. What are some of the reasons couples decide not to have any children?
4. How expensive is it to start a family? What are the costs involved? What help did you get, or could you get, for starting a family?
5. What are the typical family roles in your culture? Do men and women or boys and girls have different roles? How have these family roles changed since your parents' or grandparents' time? Do you think family roles will change in any way in the future? How?
6. What values did you learn from your family? What values did you learn from society? Is it more important for children to learn these values from their parents or from society? Why?
7. Has there been a decline in traditional family values and if so, how has this affected society? Should society be built around traditional family values? What are these traditional family values?
8. What problems might families have in the future?

5. Family Writing Task

Write about the importance of family. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Why your family is important to you.
- Why family is or is not important for society.
- How you think families will change in the future.

Alternative exam practice question:

Some people think it is better to live in a nuclear family. Other people think that living in extended families is more advantageous. What do you think?

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