



## Chapter 11: The Family

**Case Study:** The Myth of the Traditional Family

**Section 1:** Family Systems and Functions

**Section 2:** Families in the United States

**Section 3:** Recent Trends in Marriage and Family

**Lab:** Applying What You've Learned

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### Case Study: The Myth of the Traditional Family

The “traditional” family structure of working father, stay-at-home mother, and children who attend school has rarely been the prevalent family structure in the United States. In preindustrial times, the family was the center of economic activity and the authority patterns were patriarchal. Mothers made food and clothes and often produced goods or services to be sold or traded. Industrialization saw many children become workers, as well as both parents. Currently, many women work outside the home. Some sociologists suggest that telecommuting may make the home a major center of economic activity again.

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# The Family



This family from the early 1900s works together sewing clothing. Many families of that era had little time for anything but work.



Today, most paying work takes place outside the home. Families spend much time away from each other.

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## Section 1 at a Glance

### Family Systems and Functions

- Families throughout the world follow similar patterns.
- Family organization is determined by how societies answer questions of authority and relationships.
- The family's most important functions include reproduction, socialization, and economic security.

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## Learning to Love a Perfect Stranger



An elaborate ceremony celebrates this couple's arranged marriage.

**Should love come before or after two people marry?**

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## Family Systems

- **Family:** Group of people who are related by marriage, blood, or adoption and who often live together and share economic resources
- The family is the most universal social institution, but what constitutes a “family” varies across cultures.

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## Family Systems (cont.)

- **Nuclear family:** One or both parents and their children
  - Most recognizable in the United States
- **Family of orientation:** The nuclear family into which the person is born or adopted
  - When a person marries, a new nuclear family is formed, called a **family of procreation**
- **Extended family:** Two or more generations

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## Family Systems (cont.)

- **Kinship:** Network of people who are related by marriage, birth, or adoption
- **Primary relatives:**
  - Mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, daughter, son
- **Secondary relatives:**
  - Grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews
- **Tertiary relatives:**
  - Great-grandparents, great-grandchildren, great-aunts, great-uncles, and cousins

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Click on the image to play the Interactive.

INTERACTIVE \*

## Family Systems

Families are people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. This diagram shows the three major family systems for the person in purple.

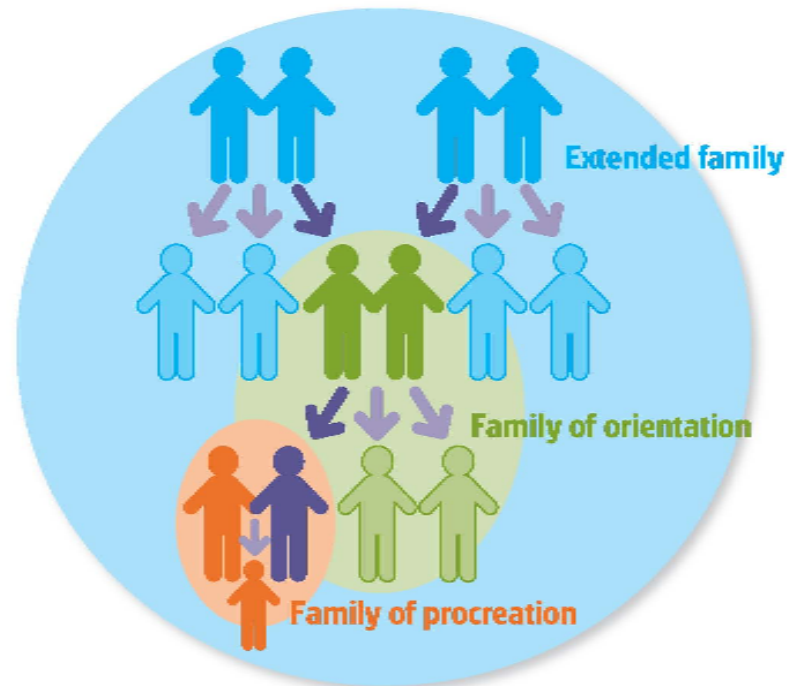
**Extended family** two or more generations of relatives

**Family of orientation** the family into which a person is born or adopted

**Family of procreation** a person's spouse and children

### Skills Focus INTERPRETING CHARTS

Who belongs to the family of procreation for the two dark green people?



Interactive Feature



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## Marriage and Kinship Patterns

Family organization depends on the answers to four questions: How many marriage partners; Who lives with whom; How is family membership determined; Who makes the decisions in the family?

### *Marriage Partners*

- In most industrialized nations, an individual is allowed to be married to only one person at a time.
- **Monogamy:** The marriage of one man to one woman
- **Polygamy:** Multiple marriage partners
- Polygyny: One man and multiple women (most common form of polygamy)
- Polyandry: One woman and multiple men (less common)

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## ***Residential Patterns***

- Newly married couples might be expected to live near wife's home, husband's home, or on their own

## ***Descent Patterns***

- Some societies trace kinship through mother's side (matrilineal), some through father's side (patrilineal)
- Helps decide inheritance rules

## ***Authority Patterns***

- Patriarchy: Father holds most of the authority
- Matriarchy: Mother holds most of the authority
- Egalitarian: Mother and father share authority
- Many industrialized societies are moving toward egalitarian patterns.

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## MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP TERMS

QUICK  
FACTS

Sociologists use special terminology to describe families.

### Marriage Partners

**Monogamy** Marriage of one man to one woman

**Polygamy** Marriage with multiple partners

**Polygyny** Marriage of one man to multiple women

**Polyandry** Marriage of one woman to multiple men

### Residential Patterns

**Patrilocality** Couple lives with or near the husband's parents

**Matrilocality** Couple lives with or near the wife's parents

**Bilocality** Couple decides which parents to live with or near

**Neolocality** Couple lives apart from both sets of parents

### Descent Patterns

**Patrilineal descent** Kinship traced through father's family;  
property passed from father to son

**Matrilineal descent** Kinship traced through mother's family;  
property passed from mother to daughter

**Bilateral descent** Kinship traced through both parents;  
property inherited from either side of family

### Authority Patterns

**Patriarchy** Father holds most authority

**Matriarchy** Mother holds most authority

**Egalitarian** Authority shared between mother and father

**Skills Focus** **INTERPRETING CHARTS** What is the name for the marriage of one woman to multiple men?

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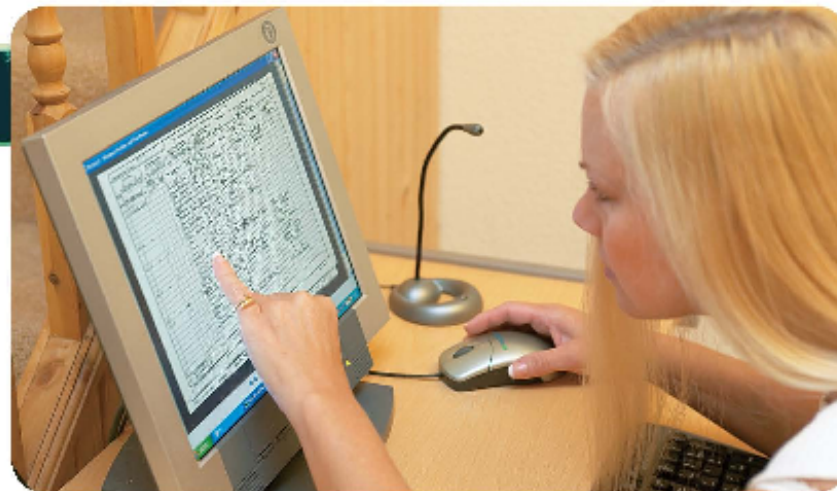
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### TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

## Wired Genealogy

Genealogy—tracing a family’s ancestors and history—has long been a popular hobby. In the past, it required travel to libraries, courthouses, and other places where ancestors had lived. Researchers would dig through musty files and record books in search of birth certificates, census records, and other documents.

With the advent of the Internet, much of the research has moved online. Thousands of Web sites specialize in genealogical research. There are so many of these sites that people have created online genealogy directories, sites that contain lists and descriptions of genealogical Web sites. There are also genealogy-specific search engines. Results from typing a family name into a general-purpose search engine would include mostly pages with irrelevant information. The genealogy-specific search engines restrict the search to genealogy sites and produce much better results.



Many sites have electronic copies of documents important to genealogical research. Social security records, census forms, and other documents are all available online. However, some significant records are not yet available online and still require old-fashioned methods of research.

Genealogy is an extremely popular hobby, and many of the sites charge fees. But millions of people are willing to pay for easy access to family records.

### Thinking Critically

**Infer** Why are there so many genealogy Web sites?



## The Functions of the Family

### ***Regulation of Sexual Activity***

- All societies regulate sexual activity to some extent.
- Incest taboo is found in every society, but categories of restricted relatives differ across cultures. ▼

### ***Reproduction***

- Family is the approved social unit for producing members to replace those who die or move away.
- Rules are set in place about who can raise children and how children should be raised. ▼

### ***Socialization***

- The family is the first agent of socialization, so societies rely on the family to teach the norms of the society.
- Parents, siblings, and other relatives serve as the earliest role models. ▼

### ***Economic and Emotional Security***

- Family is the basic economic unit.
- Family is expected to guide the psychological development of its members and provide a loving environment.

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## Section 2 at a Glance

### Families in the United States

- Most families in the United States begin with courtship followed by marriage.
- The way families in the United States handle responsibilities has changed.
- Violence within families remains one of the leading forms of disruption.
- Many marriages end in divorce, which also disrupts families.
- Families face other disruptions later in life.

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## Switched at Birth



**What counts as your  
real family?**

**A hospital mistake sent Kimberly Mays home with the wrong family. After a five-year court battle, she won the right to stay with the family that raised her.**

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## Courtship and Marriage

- The “typical” American family that consists of a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and children in school is only one of many kinds of families in the United States.
  - Some families are a married couple without children, a family with only one parent, or children living with grandparents instead of parents.
- Most families begin with a marriage.
  - Romantic love is the most common basis for marriage in the United States.
  - Most Americans marry someone similar to themselves in terms of age, socioeconomic status, religion, and race (homogamy).
  - **Heterogamy** is marriage between individuals who have different social characteristics.

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# Distribution of Responsibilities

- In order to survive, families need to provide shelter, food, and clothing for all members.
- In the mid-1900s, many American families followed a similar pattern of working father, stay-at-home mother, and children who helped with chores and went to school.
- **Dual-earner families**—families in which both husband and wife have jobs—became the norm during the late 1900s.
- Today day-care centers care for children and fathers are more likely to help with household chores.

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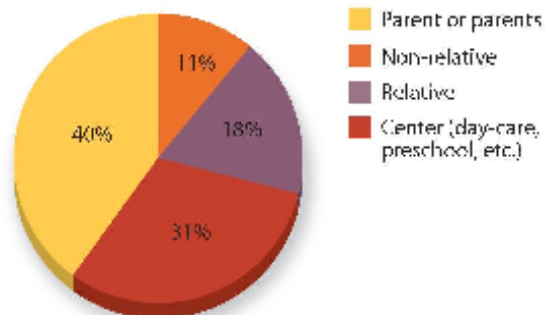
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## Child-Care Arrangements

**Options for Child Care** In the United States, about half of children younger than three years of age are cared for by their parents. The majority of children from three to five years of age receive care from someone other than a parent.

When a relative takes care of children, it is usually a grandparent. People caring for unrelated children include nannies, neighbors, and informal day care based in homes. Over half of children from three to five years of age attend day-care centers or pre-schools, including Head Start programs.

### CHILD-CARE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE



Source: estimates based on 2005 National Household Education Surveys Program

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# Family Violence

- Some argue that family violence is the most devastating family disruption.
  - Family violence occurs among all social classes and racial and ethnic groups, but generally goes unreported in middle- and upper-income families.
  - A 1975 study concluded one-third of people interviewed had experienced some form of family violence.
- Wives are just as likely as husbands to commit violence, but of a less severe nature.
  - Family violence has decreased since the 1975 study, but it remains a serious problem.
  - Neglect of children is a form of child abuse.
  - Child abuse caused at least 1,500 deaths in 2006.

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## Divorce

- Significant family disruption.
- About 40 to 45 percent of marriages end in divorce.
- The U.S. divorce rate is one of the highest in the world.
- Age, education level, and race and ethnicity are factors in divorce rate.
- Divorce affects women more in economic ways, and men more in emotional ways.
- Children of divorced parents often struggle to adjust.

### ***Four Reasons for Rising Divorce Rate***

- Laws governing divorce make the process easier than in the past.
- Increase in working wives make leaving a husband more economically feasible.
- Society attaches less stigma to divorce.
- Many people expect more from marriage and are less ready to accept marital problems.

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## Statistically Speaking...



**Divorce, USA** As divorce became more socially acceptable in the United States, the divorce rate skyrocketed. Although the rate has begun to decrease, close to half of all marriages end in divorce.

**1 in 5** Number of adult Americans who have ever been divorced.

**38%** Marriages in which one or both of the partners had been previously divorced.

**8 years** Average length of first marriages that end in divorce.

**5.3 per 1,000** Divorce rate in the United States at its peak in 1981.

**6.4 per 1,000** Divorce rate in Nevada in 2004.

**Skills Focus** **INTERPRETING DATA** Does divorce stop people from getting married again? What statistic shows this?

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics; Census Bureau

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# Disruptions Later in Life

- **“Empty nest” occurs when children leave home.**
  - Mothers may feel increased satisfaction after children have left.
  - In recent years, the empty-nest stage has often been delayed.
  - About 12 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds live with their parents.
- **Family dissolution occurs with the death of a spouse.**
  - Widowed women frequently face economic problems and increased levels of loneliness.
  - Identity problems can occur if the widow has defined herself primarily in terms of being a wife.

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## Section 3 at a Glance

### Recent Trends in Marriage and Family

- People have begun to delay getting married for economic reasons.
- Some women choose to postpone having children so that they can pursue their careers.
- Many married couples choose to never have children.
- In most American families, both the mother and the father work.
- About a quarter of families in the United States are led by a single parent.
- Many divorced people get remarried, and new families are formed as a result.

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## Till Death Do Us Part



Many marriages that began in the mid-1900s lasted much longer than historical averages.

**Are marriages lasting as long as they used to last?**

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# Delayed Marriage

- In 1890 the median age at first marriage in the United States was 22.0 years for women and 26.1 years for men.
- In 1950 the median age had dropped to 20.3 years for women and 22.8 years for men.
- In 2000 the median age was 25.1 years for women and 26.8 years for men.
- These figures are used as evidence that being single has once again become an acceptable alternative to being married.
- Today young people are delaying marriage in order to finish their education and start their careers.
- An increase in cohabitation rates also contributes to delayed marriage ages.

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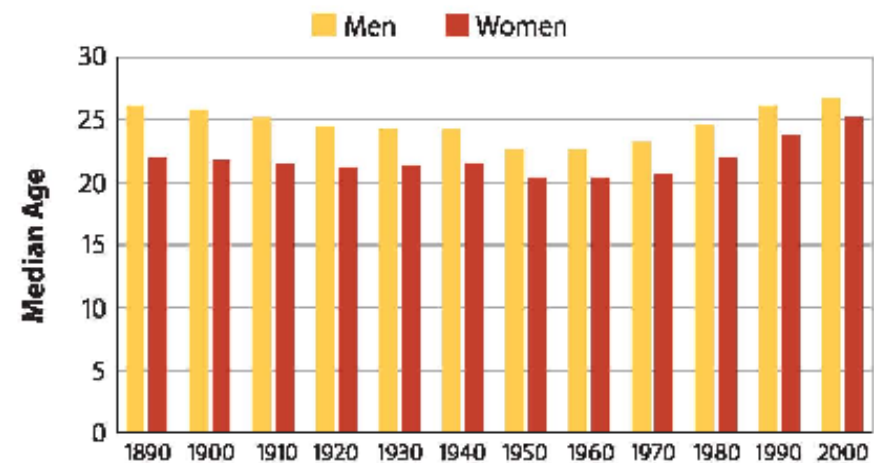
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## Statistically Speaking...

**Age at First Marriage** This graph shows the median age at first marriage for men and women in the United States from 1890 to 2000. "Median" is a type of statistic that shows the middle value of any group of figures. From 1890 to 1950, the median age at first marriage generally followed a downward trend. An exception to the trend occurred from 1920 to 1940, as the median age for women rose slightly. From 1960 to 2000, the median age at first marriage for both men and women followed an upward trend.

**Skills Focus** **INTERPRETING GRAPHS** When was the median age of first marriage the lowest?

**MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES**



Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau



# Delayed Childbearing and Childlessness

In the past, having children was a primary purpose of marriage. Now, many couples have other priorities.

## *Delayed Childbearing*

- Time between marriage and first child averaged 15 months in the 1960s.
- Women over 30 accounted for 40 percent of births in 2004.
- The **sandwich generation** are couples who have babies and elderly parents to care for at the same time.

## *Childlessness*

- Some couples choose to wait for children, but end up waiting too long.
- **Voluntary childlessness** is the conscious choice to remain childless.
- Couples who choose to remain childless often have high levels of education and income.



# Dual-Earner Marriages

- In 1940 about 17 percent of married women worked outside the home.
- Today about 61 percent of married women work outside the home.
- Few families today can survive or live as comfortably as they want on a single salary.
- After World War II there was an increase in jobs.

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# Dual-Earner Marriages

- Women's participation in the labor force is influenced by the ages of their children.
  - 1993 law required most companies to give up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to new parents.
- Research fails to confirm any negative effect on children of working mothers.
  - Daughters of working mothers often have better self-image, are more independent, and are higher achievers.

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## One-Parent Families

### Single Parenting



“Fathers lead 12 to 20 percent of single-parent households.”

Many single-parent households are run by dads.  
*What trends may have contributed to the rise of single-parent households?*

- One-parent families are formed through separation, divorce, death of a spouse, births to unwed mothers, or adoption by unmarried individuals.
- One-parent families account for about 25 percent of U.S. families with children under 18. Women head 70 percent of these.
- Single parents face emotional, responsibility, and task overload.
- Lack of money is most major source of stress.

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# Remarriage

- In over one-third of the marriages occurring today, one or both of the partners have previously been married. The majority of people who get divorced eventually remarry.
- Stepfamilies, or blended families, arise when one or both of the marriage partners bring children from their previous marriages into their new family.
- About 17 percent of children under 18 live in stepfamilies.
- The process of adjustment is sometimes a source of conflict in the family.
- Studies show that it takes approximately four years for children to accept a stepparent.





## Lab: Applying What You've Learned

### Changes in Family Life in the Recent Past

How have families changed over the past 40 years or so?

#### 1. Introduction

- In this lab you will explore the changes that have occurred in family life during the last 60 years.
- You will ask older people how life was different when they were younger.

#### 2. Conducting an Interview

- Interview one person who is at least 60 years old. Try to find several people.
- Arrange the interview.
- Use the list of questions and create three of your own.
- Be courteous and use follow-up questions to gather information.

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## Lab (cont.)

### 3. Documentation and Analysis

- Organize your notes. Type hand-written notes and transcribe any audio or video recording you made.
- Review your notes and what you learned about life in the past.
- Prepare to present your findings to your class.
- Prepare a brief description of your interview subject(s). ▼

### 4. Presentation and Discussion

- Share findings with your class, then hold a discussion.
- Did all interviewees present the same picture of family life?
- How has family life changed?
- How is family life the same?
- Would you rather live in the past or today?
- What was the most surprising thing you learned?

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## Sample Interview Transcript

### Transcript of conversation with Mr. Evan Jones

Conversation took place on April 10 from 7:00 to 7:30 PM

**Me:** Thank you for meeting with me, Mr. Jones. To begin the interview, could you just tell me a little about yourself?

**Mr. Jones:** Well, sure. I'm 68 years old, and I've lived in Maryland my entire life. I'm married to a wonderful woman, and I have three children and four grandchildren.

**Me:** Where in Maryland did you grow up?

**Mr. Jones:** My family lived on the Eastern Shore near Chestertown . . .

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