

How does the family support industrial society?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L008 • v1.0

CONNECT & CHECK | SHARE | PRESENT | APPLY | RECALL & REVIEW

Connect & Check → Share → Present → Apply → Recall & Review. Explain the key concepts, apply them accurately to the supplied case and answer the enquiry with a qualified, evidence-led judgement. Use fictional examples; no personal family disclosure is required.

Recall and connect

Missed the preparation? Name two functions identified by Murdock. Any two of sexual, reproductive, educational and economic, accurately described. Why does a contribution not establish that a family form is necessary? Another institution or arrangement may make the same contribution. Why must a historical claim be tested with evidence? An internally plausible story is not evidence that events occurred in that order.

Retrieve the previous lesson, then record a view you can revisit.

R1

Name two functions identified by Murdock.

R2

Why does a contribution not establish that a family form is necessary?

R3

Starting judgement: “Industrial employment must produce one family form.” Explain your view.

Parsons and functional fit

Parsons connects family organisation to the requirements of industrial society. Employment may demand geographical movement and reward achieved occupational status. A relatively small nuclear household may move more easily than a large co-resident kin group. This is an explanatory claim, not a rule that every industrial worker lives in a nuclear family. Relatives can remain important across different addresses.

D1

Explain the link between geographical mobility and Parsons's functional-fit argument.

D2

Distinguish achieved from ascribed status using an employment example.

Two specialised functions

As schools, workplaces and other institutions take on specialised activities, Parsons emphasises primary socialisation and the stabilisation of adult personalities. Early interaction teaches expected behaviour; supportive close relationships may help adults manage tensions. These are claimed contributions to social order. Families may perform additional activities, and support cannot be assumed to occur in every relationship.

D3

Explain primary socialisation and stabilisation using different examples.

D4

Does specialisation mean families do nothing except two activities? Explain.

Testing the account

Parsons associated instrumental provision with husbands and expressive care with wives. Teach this as a historically situated theory, not a prescription or a biological necessity. Historical research on parts of Western Europe challenges a simple extended-to-nuclear transition: nuclear households also existed before industrialisation. A household census cannot, by itself, reveal the strength of wider kinship ties.

D5

Why should instrumental and expressive roles not be taught as natural rules?

D6

Explain how pre-industrial nuclear households challenge a simple functional-fit history.

Apply the evidence

Fictional case: The Arden household moves to a manufacturing town for two adults' jobs. A grandparent in another town provides advice and occasional childcare. The adults share earning and emotional support. They teach their child routines, while a local school teaches additional skills. The case illustrates possible mechanisms; it is not a historical survey or evidence of what most families do.



Observe the visible activity and identify what further evidence is needed. This photograph also appears on slide 19.

A1

Describe what is visible in the photograph. What further evidence would be needed to apply this lesson's concepts?

Apply the case evidence

Fictional case: The Arden household moves to a manufacturing town for two adults' jobs. A grandparent in another town provides advice and occasional childcare. The adults share earning and emotional support. They teach their child routines, while a local school teaches additional skills. The case illustrates possible mechanisms; it is not a historical survey or evidence of what most families do.

A2

Apply functional fit and one specialised function to the Arden case.

A3

Identify two details that complicate a simple Parsons account.

Optional scaffold: Name the concept → select a precise case detail → explain the connection → state what the detail cannot establish. Rehearse aloud, then write independently.

Challenge and judge

Make a precise claim, connect it to evidence and state its limits.

C1

What evidence would distinguish family change caused by industrialisation from a form that already existed?

C2

Improve: “The Ardens moved, so Parsons was right about every family.”

Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

P1

Explain two functions of the family identified by Parsons. [6 marks]

P2

Identify the two points in your response. Improve one missing explanation or example.

P3

Return to R3. Give a qualified judgement and identify one piece of evidence still needed.

Prepare for Lesson 9

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

Three separate claims

Functionalists direct attention to contributions such as socialisation and material cooperation. Evaluation should identify the exact claim being tested. Showing that an activity contributes to social order does not demonstrate that one family form is necessary, that the contribution occurs in every case, or that everyone benefits equally. These propositions require different evidence.

Two connected concepts

Function: A contribution an activity or institution makes to a wider social system. Dysfunction: An effect that disrupts a system or harms its operation.

A question to bring

Distinguish contribution, necessity and equal benefit. Contribution means an activity helps produce an outcome. Necessity means that outcome requires it. Equal benefit concerns the distribution of its effects among people.

F1

Summarise the main idea in the first passage in one or two sentences.

F2

Define function and give an original fictional example.

F3

What evidence would you need to test the opening claim? Retrieve two current-lesson concepts tomorrow and next week.

Retrieval check for self study

Complete before the extended response. Cover the key while answering. One mark per correct answer; total 6. Correct insecure ideas and retry tomorrow. Extended writing needs teacher review.

Q1

Which meaning best fits functional fit?

A Movement between social positions, within or across generations. B Parsons's claim that close family support helps sustain adult personalities. C A proposed relationship between family organisation and the needs of a society.

Q2

Which meaning best fits primary socialisation?

A Early learning of language, values and expected behaviour. B Institutions becoming more specialised in their activities. C Growth of machine-based production and associated economic changes.

Q3

Which meaning best fits structural differentiation?

A A family unit of a couple and their dependent children, in this theoretical model. B Institutions becoming more specialised in their activities. C A position attributed to performance or attainment rather than birth.

Q4

Which meaning best fits extended kin?

A Early learning of language, values and expected behaviour. B Parsons's model of emotional support and internal relationships. C Relatives beyond the nuclear unit, whether or not they share a home.

Q5

Does support across addresses contradict the existence of separate nuclear households?

A Yes: kinship requires co-residence. B No: household boundaries and kinship ties differ. C The question can be answered from a person's appearance alone.

Q6

What can the supplied fictional case establish?

A It illustrates a mechanism to examine with further evidence. B It proves what all UK families do. C It establishes a causal law without further evidence.

Self marking key

Q1: C. Q2: A. Q3: B. Q4: C. Q5: B. Q6: A.