

Does capitalism need the family?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L010 • 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? Why does a useful contribution not prove necessity? Alternative arrangements may make the same contribution. What is an unequal family burden? A cost, such as unpaid care or forgone work, that is not shared evenly. Why should we ask who benefits from an institution? An arrangement can serve some interests more strongly than others.

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

R1

Why does a useful contribution not prove necessity?

R2

What is an unequal family burden?

R3

Starting judgement: “Anything that benefits capitalism must have been deliberately designed by capitalists.” Explain your view.

Engels: property and inheritance

Engels linked the development of particular family arrangements to private property and the transmission of wealth through male lines. This is a historical Marxist argument about ownership and class relations. It should not be presented as a proven universal account of all family origins. Its analytical question remains useful: how can transfers within families help preserve the advantages of property owners?

D1

Explain how inheritance may reproduce a property-owning advantage.

D2

Why is Engels's account an argument to evaluate rather than a universal fact?

Zaretsky: private life and capitalism

Zaretsky examines the relationship between capitalist production and apparently private family life. Families may offer emotional relief from pressures experienced in paid work, while unpaid domestic activity helps sustain workers. This can support the continuation of wage labour. The argument does not require all family members to intend to serve employers, and it does not mean affection is unreal.

D3

Explain how unpaid domestic activity could sustain wage labour.

D4

Why does emotional support not have to be deliberately pro-capitalist?

Consumption and ideology

Family households are important sites of purchasing and consumption. Advertising may connect goods with ideas about successful care or family life, encouraging spending. A Marxist analysis also asks how everyday expectations can make hierarchy or unequal ownership appear normal. These are possible mechanisms, not proof that every purchase or act of socialisation reproduces capitalism. Resistance and alternative values remain possible.

D5

Explain a consumption mechanism using an original example.

D6

Distinguish ideology from a neutral list of beliefs.

Apply the evidence

Fictional case: In the Rowan household, a parent transfers shares to an adult child through inheritance. Another adult prepares meals and coordinates care around a worker's shifts. A company advertises a costly device as essential for a successful family. The child questions whether inherited wealth is entirely earned. These details are invented to compare Marxist mechanisms and possible resistance.



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: In the Rowan household, a parent transfers shares to an adult child through inheritance. Another adult prepares meals and coordinates care around a worker's shifts. A company advertises a costly device as essential for a successful family. The child questions whether inherited wealth is entirely earned. These details are invented to compare Marxist mechanisms and possible resistance.

A2

Explain inheritance and social reproduction using different Rowan details.

A3

Apply consumption or ideology, then identify a limit in the case.

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

Does showing a benefit to capitalism prove that only families can provide it?

C2

Improve: “All families deliberately train children to accept capitalism.”

Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

P1

Explain two ways families may support capitalism. [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 11

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

Follow the mechanism

Class reproduction requires an explanation of how resources affect opportunities. A gift can pay a housing deposit, reduce immediate insecurity or fund training. An inheritance may add assets that generate further returns. Wealth is a stock and income is a flow; they are not interchangeable. A family's support can matter even when two young adults have similar current wages.

Two connected concepts

Economic resources: Income, savings, property and other material assets. Wealth: The value of assets owned, allowing for relevant debts.

A question to bring

Distinguish wealth from income with an original example. A person can earn a monthly wage but own few assets; another may have modest current income but substantial property or savings. The first is a flow, the second a stock.

F1

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

F2

Define economic resources 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 capitalism?

A Transfer of property or wealth after an owner's death. B An economic system centred on private ownership and production for profit. C Making an arrangement appear justified or acceptable.

Q2

Which meaning best fits private property?

A Making an arrangement appear justified or acceptable. B Reliance on another person or institution for material resources. C Assets controlled by particular owners rather than held in common.

Q3

Which meaning best fits social reproduction?

A Processes that sustain people, relationships and social arrangements over time. B Processes through which class advantages and disadvantages persist. C An economic system centred on private ownership and production for profit.

Q4

Which meaning best fits consumption?

A An explanation treating outcomes as fixed by one set of forces. B Use or purchase of goods and services. C Resources and equipment used to produce goods and services.

Q5

If family support helps a worker return to work, must the carer intend to protect capitalism?

A Yes: every social effect must be intended. B No: purposes and wider effects can differ. C The question can be answered from a person's appearance alone.

Q6

What can the supplied fictional case establish?

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

Self marking key

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