

Can personal relationships explain family life?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L015 • 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? What makes individualisation different from isolation? It concerns managing a biography, while people may remain deeply connected to others. Name one constraint on relationship choice. Money, housing, caring obligations or continuing social expectations, with explanation. Why is a pure relationship not a perfect relationship? It describes the basis of continuation, not a moral rating or guaranteed equality.

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

R1

What makes individualisation different from isolation?

R2

Name one constraint on relationship choice.

R3

Starting judgement: “Only legal or biological relatives can be central to personal life.” Explain your view.

Smart: connected lives

Carol Smart's personal life perspective examines how people remain connected through memories, emotions, obligations and shared histories. It questions accounts that treat each person as freely constructing a life independently. Connections can be supportive, difficult or ambivalent. Investigating what a relationship means to participants does not require assuming that all attachments are freely chosen or beneficial.

D1

Explain how connectedness challenges an isolated-individual account.

D2

Why can a relationship remain significant even when it is difficult?

Practices and recognition

Everyday actions can sustain relationships: organising visits, preparing familiar food or remembering significant events. Finch's idea of displaying families concerns making the family significance of actions recognisable to relevant others. Display is not simply showing off or posting publicly. A routine may matter because participants and others understand it as expressing a continuing relationship.

D3

Give an example of a practice and explain its possible meaning.

D4

Explain Finch's displaying families without equating it with social media.

Boundaries and evidence

A focus on personal life can reveal meaningful ties beyond a single household or a narrow legal category. It also asks why particular objects, places and memories matter. Interviews or relational accounts may explore these meanings, but they do not automatically show how common a pattern is. Resources and inequalities still shape which practices are possible and whose relationships receive recognition.

D5

Why might a legal definition miss part of personal life?

D6

Give one strength and one limit of an interview about meaningful relationships.

Apply the evidence

Fictional case: Nia lives alone and meets close friend Sol every Sunday to cook a recipe linked to Nia's late grandmother. A relative in another town calls daily, although their relationship is sometimes tense. When Nia moves, the neighbours recognise Sol as someone to consult about practical help. Limited travel money reduces visits to the relative. Living arrangements, meanings and resources tell different parts of this story.



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: Nia lives alone and meets close friend Sol every Sunday to cook a recipe linked to Nia's late grandmother. A relative in another town calls daily, although their relationship is sometimes tense. When Nia moves, the neighbours recognise Sol as someone to consult about practical help. Limited travel money reduces visits to the relative. Living arrangements, meanings and resources tell different parts of this story.

A2

Use connectedness and memory to interpret Nia's personal life.

A3

Apply displaying families or recognition, then identify a material constraint.

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 does this perspective reveal that a household count would miss?

C2

Improve: “The personal life perspective ignores society and only studies feelings.”

Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

P1

Explain two ideas used in the personal life perspective. [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 16

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

A multidimensional map

The Rapoport identified organisational, cultural, class, life-course and cohort dimensions of family diversity. These are analytical lenses, not five boxes into which every family fits once. Organisation includes composition and divisions of labour. Cultural expectations and class resources can vary within the same family form. Applying several dimensions helps explain what a single label leaves out.

Two connected concepts

Family diversity: Variation in family forms, practices, meanings and experiences. Organisational diversity: Variation in family structure and organisation of roles or labour.

A question to bring

Identify the five dimensions and explain why they can overlap. Organisational, cultural, class, life-course and cohort. One family can be described through several dimensions because structure, resources, meanings and history are different aspects.

F1

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

F2

Define family diversity 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 personal life?

A A perspective examining meaningful relationships, attachments and lived connections. B A life's pattern and account through time. C People treated as family through significant commitment beyond biological ties.

Q2

Which meaning best fits memory?

A People treated as family through significant commitment beyond biological ties. B Recollections through which people understand past and present connections. C An approach seeking to understand the meanings attached to social action.

Q3

Which meaning best fits recognition?

A An approach seeking to understand the meanings attached to social action. B The ways a person's life is bound up with other people. C Acknowledgement of a relationship or claim as meaningful.

Q4

Which meaning best fits ambivalence?

A Coexistence of different or conflicting feelings. B A perspective examining meaningful relationships, attachments and lived connections. C Recollections through which people understand past and present connections.

Q5

Does a relationship's personal significance prove that it is freely chosen and positive?

A Yes: meaningful ties are always beneficial choices. B No: obligation and mixed feelings may also sustain ties. 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 illustrates a mechanism to examine with further evidence. C It establishes a causal law without further evidence.

Self marking key

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