

Has family diversity become normal?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L017 • 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? Distinguish life-course and cohort diversity. Life-course concerns changes within lives; cohort concerns groups shaped by different historical experiences. Why can one family fit several diversity dimensions? Composition, resources, meanings and historical context describe different aspects. What does a percentage need before it can be interpreted? A numerator/category, denominator, place, period and an understanding of the source's definitions.

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

R1

Distinguish life-course and cohort diversity.

R2

Why can one family fit several diversity dimensions?

R3

Starting judgement: "If a family form is common, it must be universally accepted and best for everyone." Explain your view.

Different meanings of normal

Normal can mean common, socially accepted or desirable. These meanings should not be exchanged without argument. Counts can show the prevalence of categories, but they do not establish whether everyone approves of them or whether one form produces better experiences. Diversity can increase while a particular category remains common, and acceptance can vary between settings.

D1

Distinguish statistical prevalence from social acceptance.

D2

How can diversity and continuity coexist?

Continuity and plurality

Parsons links family organisation to the needs of industrial society. Chester's neo-conventional interpretation emphasises continuity of the nuclear form alongside greater dual earning, rather than complete replacement. Postmodern interpretations such as Stacey's emphasise varied and reworked family relationships. A strong comparison asks whether a theory concerns composition, practices, meanings or trajectories, because those dimensions may change differently.

D3

Explain Chester's neo-conventional emphasis without saying nothing changes.

D4

What does a postmodern interpretation add to a single standard pathway?

What official evidence can show

ONS estimates for the UK in 2025 put married-couple families, with or without children, at 65.3% of all families, compared with 66.6% in 2015. This is a fall of 1.3 percentage points alongside continued numerical predominance. Separately, one-person households were 29.5% of all households in 2025. The denominators differ. These figures do not measure acceptance, dual earning or a complete life course.

D5

Calculate the change from 66.6% to 65.3% and state what is being counted.

D6

Why can 65.3% and 29.5% not be added to describe one distribution?

Apply the evidence

Fictional interpretation panel using real ONS estimates: Analyst A says the 65.3% married-couple share of UK families in 2025 proves nothing has changed. Analyst B says its fall from 66.6% in 2015 proves marriage has disappeared. Analyst C says the 29.5% one-person share of all households proves those people have no family ties. Analyst D asks for life histories and attitude evidence alongside the counts. Only the quoted ONS figures are observed estimates; the speakers are invented.



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 interpretation panel using real ONS estimates: Analyst A says the 65.3% married-couple share of UK families in 2025 proves nothing has changed. Analyst B says its fall from 66.6% in 2015 proves marriage has disappeared. Analyst C says the 29.5% one-person share of all households proves those people have no family ties. Analyst D asks for life histories and attitude evidence alongside the counts. Only the quoted ONS figures are observed estimates; the speakers are invented.

A2

Correct analysts A and B using both change and continuity.

A3

Correct analyst C and justify one request made by D.

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

Give a qualified answer to the lesson enquiry, specifying the meaning of normal.

C2

Improve: “Postmodernism proves every family form is equally common and equally accepted.”

Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

P1

Explain two limitations of using a household snapshot to assess family diversity. [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 18

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

Counts and rates

A marriage count records events. A marriage rate relates events to a specified population. A change in counts can reflect population size or composition as well as changing behaviour; check the denominator and geographical coverage.

Timing and alternatives

People may marry later, cohabit, remain single or change arrangements across their lives. A snapshot cannot establish whether someone will never marry. Consider the distinction between postponement and non-marriage.

Explaining change

Attitudes, education, employment, housing and institutional conditions may affect decisions about marriage. A plausible explanation needs a mechanism and evidence. Changes in one measure cannot by themselves establish everyone's reasons.

F1

How is a count different from a rate?

F2

Why is later marriage not the same as never marrying?

F3

Suggest one mechanism that might affect marriage timing. Retrieve two diversity 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 descriptive normality?

A An interpretation emphasising plurality and less uniform family pathways. B Coexistence of multiple forms or practices. C What is common or statistically typical in a specified context.

Q2

Which meaning best fits modernist account?

A An approach seeking patterned relationships between family forms and modern social organisation. B Coexistence of multiple forms or practices. C The arithmetic difference between two percentages.

Q3

Which meaning best fits dual-earner family?

A The total group against which a proportion is calculated. B A family in which both partners participate in paid employment. C What is common or statistically typical in a specified context.

Q4

Which meaning best fits denominator?

A What people regard as acceptable, proper or expected. B An interpretation emphasising plurality and less uniform family pathways. C The total group against which a proportion is calculated.

Q5

Do the ONS family-type percentages directly measure public acceptance?

A Yes: frequency and approval are the same thing. B No: attitudes and treatment require different evidence. 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.