

Knowledge organiser

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L017 • v1.0

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Has family diversity become normal?

Concept	Meaning
Descriptive normality	What is common or statistically typical in a specified context.
Normative normality	What people regard as acceptable, proper or expected.
Prevalence	How common a feature is in a defined population and period.
Acceptance	Recognition of a practice or form as legitimate or acceptable.
Modernist account	An approach seeking patterned relationships between family forms and modern social organisation.
Postmodern account	An interpretation emphasising plurality and less uniform family pathways.
Neo-conventional family	Chester's term for a continuing nuclear form with a dual-earner pattern.
Dual-earner family	A family in which both partners participate in paid employment.

What official evidence can show

Concept	Meaning
Continuity	Persistence of features through time despite other changes.
Plurality	Coexistence of multiple forms or practices.
Cross-section	A picture of cases at a particular point in time.
Life-course perspective	Attention to changing arrangements across an individual's life.
Denominator	The total group against which a proportion is calculated.
Percentage-point change	The arithmetic difference between two percentages.
Longitudinal evidence	Information following the same people or units over time.
Generalisation	Extending a claim beyond the cases directly examined.

Worked explanation

A ignores a 1.3-point decline; B ignores continued majority prevalence. The category remains common while its share changes. Neither statement captures both dimensions.

Avoid these confusions

ONS figures are UK 2025 estimates released 17 April 2026: married-couple families 65.3% of all families, versus 66.6% in 2015; one-person households 29.5% of all households. Married-couple families include couples without children and are not a direct count of Parsons's nuclear model. A 1.3 percentage-point fall is not a 1.3% relative fall. Chester: The Rise of the Neo-Conventional Family, New Society, 9 May 1985; this historical interpretation is not itself a current estimate. Stacey's US cases cannot establish UK prevalence.

Retrieve later

Tomorrow: define descriptive normality and normative normality. In one week: explain a case mechanism and one limit without notes.