

How have same-sex relationships changed family life?

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L021 • v1.0

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

Connect & Check → Share → Present → Apply → Recall & Review. Distinguish legal and social recognition, apply personal-life concepts and test claims about equality. Use fictional examples; no personal family disclosure is required.

Recall and connect

Missed the preparation? Why should legal change and personal motives be distinguished? A law alters available procedures or statuses but does not establish every person's reason for acting. Why does family form alone not establish experience? Resources, practices, conflict and support can vary within the same category. How could a researcher investigate recognition beyond legal status? Use evidence about institutional treatment, attitudes and people's accounts of everyday encounters.

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

R1

Why should legal change and personal motives be distinguished?

R2

Why does family form alone not establish experience?

R3

Starting judgement: "Once the law changes, every couple's everyday experience becomes the same." Explain your view.

Law and recognition are distinct

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 enabled same-sex marriage in England and Wales, where the first marriages took place on 29 March 2014. Same-sex civil partnerships had provided an earlier registered status. Legal recognition changes the options available and the public status of relationships. It does not mean those relationships first existed when the law changed, nor that approval or treatment instantly became uniform. Dates and jurisdictions matter: England and Wales should not be relabelled as the whole UK.

D1

Distinguish legal recognition from social recognition.

D2

Why is 2014 not the beginning of same-sex relationships?

Practices within diverse relationships

Personal-life approaches ask how care, obligation and belonging are sustained. Smart's connectedness directs attention to histories and ties; Finch's displaying-family concept concerns recognition by an audience. These questions apply across family forms. Some same-sex couples marry, some civil partner and some cohabit; parenting, care and kinship can cross addresses. Chosen-family ties may be significant for some people, but should not be assumed to replace all ties of descent. A shared category does not erase differences in class, age, ethnicity or belief.

D3

How can personal-life concepts illuminate relationships across family forms?

D4

Why should chosen family not be treated as a universal replacement for relatives?

Change without a single template

Same-sex relationships can make conventional assumptions about roles visible: duties cannot be reliably inferred from the sex of partners. This creates questions about negotiation, resources and power rather than proof of automatic equality. Institutional forms may change while daily recognition varies between workplaces, relatives or services. To investigate, combine dated legal evidence with accounts of practices and treatment. Do not infer orientation or gender identity from appearance, or ask learners to disclose private identities and relationships.

D5

Why does a same-sex couple not automatically demonstrate equal domestic roles?

D6

Design a question about recognition that avoids personal disclosure.

Apply the evidence

Fictional comparison: Erin and Jo marry in England and Wales and share care for Jo's parent, who lives nearby. Sam and Lou cohabit and describe a close friend as family because of years of mutual care. A service form recognises only 'husband' and 'wife'; another invites people to name a partner and relevant carers. Erin and Jo divide tasks unevenly because their paid-work hours differ. All four are described in the scenario as members of same-sex couples; no identity is inferred from appearance.



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 comparison: Erin and Jo marry in England and Wales and share care for Jo's parent, who lives nearby. Sam and Lou cohabit and describe a close friend as family because of years of mutual care. A service form recognises only 'husband' and 'wife'; another invites people to name a partner and relevant carers. Erin and Jo divide tasks unevenly because their paid-work hours differ. All four are described in the scenario as members of same-sex couples; no identity is inferred from appearance.

A2

Apply connectedness and displaying family to the cases.

A3

Explain why the care detail does not settle a claim about equality.

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

How far has legal recognition changed family life in these cases?

C2

Improve: Same-sex couples always divide responsibilities equally.

Prove and improve

Complete retrieval, then write independently for eight minutes.

P1

Explain two differences between legal recognition and everyday family practices. [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 22

Read the three short passages and answer the preparation questions.

A category is not a biography

Lone parenthood can follow separation, bereavement or having a child without living with a partner. The route and duration may differ, and a later transition may change the arrangement again. The statistical category concerns who lives together; it does not tell us whether another parent is involved across addresses or whether relatives and friends provide support. Lone-parent families may contain dependent or non-dependent children. Treating every case as the same biography obscures both life-course change and differences in responsibility.

Two connected concepts

Lone-parent family: A parent living with one or more children without a co-resident partner in the statistical family unit. Household: One person or people sharing an address and the specified living facilities.

A question to bring

Give two different routes into lone parenthood. Accept separation, bereavement or parenting without a co-resident partner. Explain that a route does not determine every subsequent experience.

F1

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

F2

Define lone-parent family 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 legal recognition?

A Acknowledgement of a relationship or status through law. B Relationships understood as family through care and commitment rather than only descent or marriage. C Responsibilities worked out between people rather than simply inferred from a category.

Q2

Which meaning best fits heteronormativity?

A Responsibilities worked out between people rather than simply inferred from a category. B An assumption that heterosexual relationships form the standard or default. C An organisational rule or practice that restricts access or recognition.

Q3

Which meaning best fits family practice?

A Persistence of features alongside other changes. B Acknowledgement of a relationship or status through law. C An activity through which people sustain family relationships.

Q4

Which meaning best fits intersectionality?

A Attention to how social positions and inequalities combine in experience. B A person's sense of gender; it cannot be inferred from appearance or relationship category. C A legally registered partnership distinct from marriage.

Q5

A service form lists only husband and wife. What can be examined?

A Whether the wording assumes one relationship pattern and limits recognition. B The actual orientation of every person who uses the service. 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: A. Q6: B.