Birth rate

Distinguish birth rate, fertility and family size, then explain UK change through economic, cultural, gender and policy factors.

Core knowledge

- Birth rate counts live births relative to population; fertility focuses on births per woman.
- A falling fertility rate does not have one cause: education, work, contraception, housing, partnership and values can interact.
- ONS reported England and Wales total fertility at 1.39 children per woman in 2025; use this as evidence, not a complete explanation.

Studies / perspectives

- Demographic transition: Industrialisation, welfare and health change family size incentives.
- Feminist lens: Women's education, employment and control over fertility reshape childbearing decisions.
- New Right / policy lens: Family policy, childcare costs and housing can encourage or constrain fertility choices.

Assessment focus

- Outline and explain two reasons for changes in the birth rate. [10 marks]
- Build claim → evidence → mechanism → evaluation → judgement.

Indicative guidance: reward accurate definitions, explanation of the mechanism, application to family life and evaluative qualification of evidence.