

## CHAPTER 1

### MARRIAGE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND FAMILY COMMITMENTS: MAKING CHOICES IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Address the complexities of defining the word *family* in our postmodern society.
2. Understand the concept of *family* as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
3. Discuss whether we are in an era of “family decline” or “family change.”
4. Explain the importance of current societal trends and their impact on the family.
5. Discuss the importance of making choices in relationships.
6. Address the difference between active, knowledgeable choices and choice by default.
7. Recognize that people’s decisions are both influenced by social constraint and at the same time can be sources of change in the social structure.
8. Know the tension between individual and communal values, and how this tension affects families.
9. Explain how change and development are a part of both individual and family life.
10. Understand the importance of the family in providing members a place of personal identity.

#### LECTURE OUTLINE

##### I. Overview

- A. Families are central to American society and to our everyday lives.
- B. Families are commissioned with a variety of tasks, including raising children and providing members with intimacy, affection, and companionship.
- C. Maintaining relationships today requires both commitment and knowledge.

##### II. Defining Family: The Postmodern Family

- A. Traditionally, both law and social science specified that the family consisted of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Some definitions of the family specified a common household, economic interdependency, and sexual/reproductive relations.
- B. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as two or more persons sharing a household and who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- C. America is increasingly postmodern. Ultimately, there is no typical family.
  1. Until the last fifty years, the nuclear family was considered the modern family.
  2. As families have become less traditional, the legal definition of a family has become much more flexible.
  3. The text defines family as any sexually expressive, parent-child, or other kin relationship in which people—usually related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption—form an economic unit and care for any children or other dependents; consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group; and are committed to maintaining that group over time.
- D. “Family Decline” or “Family Change?”
  1. A discussion on “Family Decline” or “Family Change” explores the debate as to whether current changes in the family are positive or negative according to the views of social scientists and researchers.

### **III. Three Societal Trends That Impact Families**

- A. Advancing Communication and Reproductive Technologies
  - 1. Communication by cell phones, internet sites and GPS facilitate constant and global access to children, parents and extended family.
  - 2. Internet access causes family boundaries more permeable.
  - 3. Reproductive possibilities broadened and complicate family possibilities.
- B. The New Faces of America's Families: More People of Color
  - 1. America is increasingly diverse ethnically due to immigration, refugees in America, and higher fertility rates among racial and ethnic minorities.
  - 2. Transnational and binational families add to America's diversity.
  - 3. President Obama symbolizes America's acceptance of interracial unity.
- C. Economic Uncertainty
  - 1. The recession that began in 2008 has increased unemployment and caused uncertainty and change in virtually all families.

### **IV. The Freedom and Pressures of Choosing**

- A. The best personal decisions are made knowledgeably. Social pressures, beliefs, and values influence personal decisions. People can and do influence society through individual and group opinions and participation.
- B. Personal Troubles, Societal Influences and Family Policy
  - 1. Because personal troubles often reflect societal influences, people must understand themselves in the context of the larger society.
  - 2. Individual choices largely depend on the alternatives that exist in society.
  - 3. Individual choices are influenced by the speed at which societal changes occur.
- C. Social Influences and Personal Choices
  - 1. Social factors limit choice options and make normative choices easier.
  - 2. Sometimes, decisions are made by default.
  - 3. Although social conditions limit choice options, conscious awareness of these forces allow for more knowledgeable decision making.

### **V. Making Choices**

- A. Choosing by Default
  - 1. People make decisions by default when they are not aware of all the alternatives or they choose the easiest options (e.g., when spouses focus on career success and neglect their family relationships, their decision is likely the result of default).
- B. Choosing Knowledgeably
  - 1. Choosing knowledgeably involves rational consideration of many alternatives and the recognition of the social pressures that influence choices.
  - 2. Knowledgeable decision making has respect for personal feelings and includes regular testing of decisions against those feelings (as well as the changes in the social environment).
  - 3. Today, adulthood is viewed as a time for continued personal development. Contemporary adulthood can be described as a life spiral in which individuals incorporate traditional and alternative roles and accommodate a variety of lifestyle choices throughout their lifetimes.

### **VI. A Family of Individuals**

Americans place a high value on the family. Family values such as family togetherness, stability, and loyalty focus on the family as a whole. Placing family well-being over individual interests and preferences is termed familism.

- A. Families as a Place to Belong
  - 1. Families create a place to belong by creating both physical and psychological boundaries between themselves and the rest of the world.
  - 2. Families create a place of individual and communal identity, or family identity.
- B. Familistic (Communal) Values and Individualistic (Self-Fulfillment) Values
  - 1. Family members must negotiate balance between individual separateness and family togetherness.
  - 2. Opposing values of familism (including togetherness and family loyalty) and individualism create tensions within individuals, between individuals and within society that must be resolved.
  - 3. Shifts in the balance of individuality and familism have meant that family members have become less predictable than in the past.

**VII. Marriage and Families: Four Themes**

- A. Personal decisions must be made throughout the life course.
- B. People are influenced by the society around them.
- C. Today's society is characterized by increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity where increased tension exists between family and individual values.
- D. Personal decision making feeds back into society and changes it.

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND LECTURE SUGGESTIONS**

- 1. You may benefit from four articles that have recently appeared in the American Sociological Association journal, *Teaching Sociology*. The first three articles deal with different teaching strategies that you may wish to utilize in your classroom: Cheryl D. Childers' "Using Crossword Puzzles as an Aid to Studying Sociological Concepts" (April, 1996: 231-135); Janet Cosbey's "Using Contemporary Fiction to Teach Family Issues" (July, 1997: 227-233); and Stephen J. Scanlan and Seth L. Feinberg's "The Cartoon Society: Using *The Simpsons* to Teach and Learn Sociology" (April, 2000: 127-139). The fourth article discusses the impact of a family sociology course on undergraduate students' family values: Lynn Magdol, "Liberal Values and a Liberal Education: The Effect of a Family Sociology Course on Undergraduate Students' Family Values" (January, 2003: 95-109).
- 2. If you have a non-traditional, "baby boom generation" student in your class, ask that person to describe American society's attitude toward marriage during the 1960s. If your class consists of traditional students only, you can begin this discussion by highlighting the atmosphere that existed in high schools and on college campuses during that time period: the popularity of "going steady" and being "lavaliered,"; the phenomenon of women attending college in order to get their "Mrs." degree; and the feeling that getting married was the last step toward full, adult responsibility. After this "stage" has been set, ask the students to think about contemporary attitudes toward marriage. How are these attitudes different from those that existed four decades ago? Are there any similarities? If so, what are they?
- 3. Students usually have not thought *analytically* about how their marriage- and family-based decisions may be made *by default*, rather than *knowledgeably*. Ask them whether they have known anyone personally who may have married a person who was favored by parents or other family members, or whether they are familiar with a situation where a person chose to have children because of social pressures rather than an *individual* desire.

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4. Students who have never studied marriage and the family are likely to view kinship in terms of consanguineal and legal relationships, rather than as sociologically significant relationships. You can enhance students' understanding of kinship by emphasizing that consanguineal ties are usually created through legal arrangements (principally marriage). The concept of "fictive kin" ("She's like a sister to me;" "Uncle Harry," etc.) can be employed to an advantage in illustrating how the most important dimension of kinship lies in the importance that we assign to such arrangements.
5. Engage your students in discussion about the various myths that surround marriage and family. Ask them to list their three favorite television shows (not counting sports or shows that would not include a portrayal of marriages or families). Second, tell them to make note of how family issues are portrayed in these shows. Ask them to vocalize how their own families are similar to or different from what they see on television. Finally, pose the question, "How do television images contribute to myths about the family?"
6. Divide your class into three groups. Have each group take one of the perspectives on the changing family as presented in the text ("The family is deteriorating;" "The family is changing, not deteriorating;" "The family is stronger than ever.") Discuss it in detail, and then make a brief, joint presentation to the entire class about that particular perspective/approach.
7. Ask each person in class to write their personal definition of family on a 3x5 note card, without including their names. Collect the cards, mix them up, and pass them out randomly. Have each student read the definition on the card in front of them, and make a comment about it. Allow each to expand on the definition or to challenge it.
8. Have students discuss the traditional nuclear family model, where the father works and the mother stays home with the children. How many were raised in this environment? Does our society value these roles? Which parent worked more, and made a higher salary, if both worked? Did anyone have a stay-at-home caretaker other than a parent? Did extended family members live at home?

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Have your students address the question "What is a family?" In some instances, this query has no particular *legal* implications: For example, some people may not regard a childless couple as a "family," but there's nothing *legal* or *illegal* about having or not having children. In many other cases, however, some confusing legal issues are involved: Should homosexual couples be permitted to legally marry? Should cohabitating couples have legal obligations to each other, especially in the event that they terminate their relationships?
2. Students tend to have an ethnocentric point of view about the family: They have preconceived notions about what *family* is. Diane E. Levy offers an interesting assignment for students in her article "Teaching Family Ritual: Sunday, Sausage, and Solidarity" (*Teaching Sociology*, October, 1992: 311-13). The project consists of asking students to recount *rituals* in their own families; not any connected to official holidays, but, rather, family events that were spontaneously originated and have developed their own tradition. Levy describes how this can be a valuable activity for each student individually, and also an excellent vehicle for class discussion. Another possibility involves the use of novels in teaching about family issues: Janet Cosbey's "Using Contemporary Fiction to Teach Family Issues" (*Teaching Sociology*, July, 1997: 227-33). Yet another prospect involves the use of *electronic mail* in helping students to develop a cross-cultural perspective on

families. Sara C. Hare offers an interesting strategy, whereby students are matched with international students on campus who have signed up for an e-mail pen pal: "Using E-Mail to Promote Cross-Cultural Understanding of Families" (*Teaching Sociology*, January, 1999: 67-73).

3. Have students interview married couples regarding the factors that contributed to their choice of spouse. Include couples of varied ages, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic (SES) groups. Students should structure their questions so that they can obtain information on:
  - a. the degree to which social factors contributed to the decision (i.e., age expectations, race, historical events, social class, religion, etc.), and
  - b. the extent to which their marriage decision was the result of knowledgeable or default decision making (i.e., were alternatives explored, values clarified, gut factor recognized, etc.?).

Findings from interviews (conducted in or out of class) can be reported by students or summarized by instructor.

4. Provide an opportunity for students to practice making personal and group decisions and to feel the effects of social factors on that decision making. Ask students to describe on paper various characteristics of their ideal marriage partner. After completing their own personal descriptions, arrange students into groups of four or five. Ask them to reach a group consensus of what would be the ideal marriage partner. Students in many cases will see their own descriptions challenged and will argue in support of them, while others will go along with whatever the group decides. After each small group achieves consensus and shares their descriptions, incorporate into a discussion:
  - a. whether a class consensus is possible
  - b. the extent to which students feel their individual decisions are influenced by the group
  - c. the extent to which students feel the group's decision is influenced by individuals
5. Divide your class into small groups of five or six students. Ask them to address the question of how domestic and international terrorism have affected the family as an institution in American society. Remind them that incidents like that at Columbine High School may be regarded as acts of domestic terrorism. Are some family members more likely to be influenced by the specter of terrorism than others? If so, how? Is the relationship between parents and children affected by terrorism? How? What about children's level of trust in the social institutions they depend upon to protect their welfare?

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is there so much disagreement concerning the definition of "family?" Do you think there is a "normal" family? Why or why not? What makes a family?
2. Do you think that you make *knowledgeable* decisions? Give a few examples that relate to marriage and family concerns in your personal life.
3. Do you think your personal values align with *familism* or *individualism*? What kinds of influences have shaped your values in one direction or the other?

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4. Do you think the American family is “declining” or “changing”? What is the basis for your answer?
5. How do increased economic, ethnic, and family diversity affect the tension that exists between family and individual values? Cite some examples.
6. What are some examples of a personal or family problem that is at least partly a result of problems in the society?
7. What are some changes in law and social policy that you would like to see put in place to enhance family life?
8. Perhaps the greatest concern Americans have about contemporary family change is its impact on children. What do these family data tell us about the family lives of children today?

## USING POPULAR FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

### ***The Family Stone (2005)***

**Content:** An uptight, conservative, businesswoman accompanies her boyfriend to his eccentric and outgoing family’s annual Christmas celebration and finds that she’s a fish out of water in their free-spirited way of life.

**Assignment:** Note the particular diversity of this family (single, gay, hearing-impaired, rich, etc.) and discuss how each member responds to each other and to an ‘outside threat’ to their common life together.

### ***Brokeback Mountain (2005)***

**Content:** Based on the ‘E. Annie Proulx’ story about a forbidden and secretive relationship between two cowboys and their lives over the years. This film can be graphic at times and emotionally disturbing; it is a very personal and heartbreaking look at dysfunction, homosexual love, family betrayal and hidden affairs.

**Assignment:** Explore the attitudes in current culture about homosexuality; how it is portrayed by the media, whether our current definition of family includes same-sex relationships. Examine personal stereotypes towards homosexuality.

### ***Mrs. Doubtfire (1993)***

**Content:** After a bitter divorce, an actor (who is first and foremost a father) disguises himself as a female housekeeper to spend secret time with his children held in custody by his ex-wife. This film shows the pain of divorce and the struggle of custody issues in a humorous yet powerful way.

**Assignment:** Talk about the reasons for divorce in our culture, and the effects divorce has on children. For students who have been through a parents’ divorce (and who are willing to share), ask about custody arrangements, whether the student had adequate time with each parent, and whether the student ever felt caught in the middle.

## CHAPTER ONE REVIEW SHEET

As a tool to help students review the major content of the chapter, they can complete the chapter review questions by themselves (as a class or homework assignment) or together in small groups. The questions may also be used as an activity or quiz and students may or may not use their texts.

1. How do Americans define family today?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How does the text choose to define the concept of “family?”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some current societal trends which impact the family?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Give two examples of how individuals influence their society.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Social factors greatly influence adult options and decisions. Give an example of how each of the following social factors could influence a marital decision.
  - a. a recession \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. more women working outside the home \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. longevity \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. social class \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. racial discrimination \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. religion \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. age expectations \_\_\_\_\_
6. When are personal decisions made by default?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Name four characteristics of knowledgeable decision making.
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is another name for family values? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do individualistic values of American society impact the family?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
10. What are the four themes that are stated explicitly in the text?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## INTERNET AND INFOTRAC EXERCISES

### Internet Exercises

1. Sociologist Paul Rosenblatt works in the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. He has recently completed an intensive, qualitative interview study of couple experiences of sleeping together, from first learning how to share a bed through various challenges that emerge over the life cycle (for example, changes in physical health, changes in body size, menopause, and onset of snoring). His research shows “what couple bed sharing reveals about human needs, the complexities of couple life, culture, and life in modern America.”

Here is the link to his video: <http://fsos.che.umn.edu/researchdiscovery/familydiversity.htm>

2. One of the dominant themes in Chapter 1 is the recognition that the modern family is *diverse*. The concept of the *stepfamily* is one illustration of how contemporary family settings are often very different in comparison with “traditional” definitions. Go to the following web address and read any of the articles written by Ron Deal: <http://www.successfulstepfamilies.com/view/370> After you have read the article, respond to the following questions:
  - a. What are the principal challenges of stepparenting?
  - b. Do you think that stepfamilies can be as “close” in comparison with more traditional family configurations? Why or why not?
3. One of the most common “variations” on traditional family organization is the *single-parent family*. **Single Parents Network** is a website devoted to the consideration and analysis of issues pertinent to single parents and their family relationships. Check out their website at: <http://www.singleparentsnetwork.com> . Here, you will find a variety of facts and statistics about single parent families. After you have examined this presentation, summarize what you have learned in a short essay.
4. How should parents talk to their children about war and terrorism? Go to <http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/childdevterror.html>, where you will find a very interesting and informative article on this topic. After you have read the article, summarize what you have learned in a short essay. Do you agree with the author’s sentiments? If you disagree, describe your personal point of view in some detail.

### InfoTrac Exercises

1. The text points out that there is no “typical” family and that a variety of nontraditional family forms are emerging in contemporary society. Examine the diversity of family types using the keywords *family forms*. Read over the selections identified and briefly summarize the different family forms that are discussed.
2. The text discusses *cohabitation* as one of the nontraditional family forms that has emerged in American society. A related topic is *domestic partnerships*, which includes homosexual unions. In the InfoTrac “Search” box, enter the keyword *unmarried couples*; then click on “Periodicals.” Browse the articles that are listed and select two or three that you find particularly interesting.

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What social controversies are linked to the issues surrounding cohabitation and domestic partnerships? What are your reactions to these controversies?

3. Throughout the text, the issue of *income inequality* will be involved in many discussions. Using this keyword, browse the articles that are available through InfoTrac and try to find several that relate directly to marriage and family concerns. For example, see if you can locate articles that deal with gender differences in income, or look for articles that focus on the elderly regarding income differences.
4. The *Issues for Thought* box in this chapter is entitled “Pets as Family.” Use the key words *family pets* and browse the articles that are available through InfoTrac on the subject of “pets as family.” There are a number of articles that address this issue directly. What are your reactions to the perception of a pet as a member of one’s family?

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. *W* The goal of this text is to help you do all of the following EXCEPT
- appreciate the variety and diversity among families today.
  - understand your past and present family situations and anticipate future possibilities
  - prepare you for a particular occupation.
  - be aware of both your personal life decisions and the influence society has on you.

ANS: C      PG: 4      TYP: fact      LO: 1

2. Which of the following is NOT listed by your text as a major family function?
- raising children responsibly
  - meeting sexual desires
  - providing members with economic and other practical support
  - offering emotional security

ANS: B      PG: 5      TYP: concept      LO: 1

3. Traditionally, both law and social science specified that the family consisted of people related by
- blood, marriage, or adoption.
  - symbolic definition.
  - nuptial contracts.
  - temporary agreement.

ANS: A      PG: 6      TYP: fact      LO: 1

4. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as
- any conjugal union.
  - two or more persons sharing a household and who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
  - several roommates or cohabitators.
  - those having the same last name.

ANS: B      PG: 6      TYP: fact      LO: 2

5. What is meant by the term *postmodern family*?
- Families today exhibit a multiplicity of forms.
  - Any family formed after 1960.
  - A family which is on the cutting edge of technology and current trends.
  - Families today are more philosophical and reflective.

ANS: A      PG: 7      TYP: fact      LO: 1

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6. The number of households maintained by individuals living alone is \_\_\_\_\_ those maintained by married couples with children.
- significantly less than
  - slightly less than
  - more than
  - about the same as

ANS: D      PG: 7      TYP: concept      LO: 2

7. Until about 50 years ago, the \_\_\_\_\_ family was considered the traditional American family.
- blended
  - nuclear
  - extended
  - modified-extended

ANS: B      PG: 6      TYP: fact      LO: 1

8. *W* As families have become less traditional, the legal definition of a family has
- remained the same.
  - become more rigid.
  - narrowed to include only married couples and children.
  - become much more flexible.

ANS: D      PG: 5      TYP: fact      LO: 1

9. Today, only \_\_\_\_\_ percent of American households fit the 1950s nuclear family ideal of a married couple with children, where only the husband is employed.
- 7
  - 10
  - 25
  - 3

ANS: A      PG: 7      TYP: fact      LO: 1

10. The concept of “household” is broader than that of “family” as it includes
- pets.
  - material possessions.
  - any person residing in the home.
  - relatives who live far away.

ANS: C      PG: 6      TYP: fact      LO: 2

11. What is assisted reproductive technology (ART)?
- a new style of painting that is highly sexualized
  - a counseling course for couples who want to get pregnant
  - helping parents know how to use technology with their future children
  - the manipulation of sperm and/or egg in the absence of sexual intercourse that may involve a third party
- ANS: D      PG: 13      TYP: fact      LO: 4
12. What is the name for a current technology which can be installed in family vehicles to tell parents where their children have driven?
- e-mail
  - Skype
  - GPS
  - LSD
- ANS: C      PG: 12      TYP: fact      LO: 4
13. According to the text, which of the following is NOT a current societal trend impacting families?
- new communication and reproductive technologies
  - changes in America's race/ethnic composition
  - a great increase in the number of pets in the family
  - economic uncertainty
- ANS: C      PG: 12      TYP: concept      LO: 4
14. *W* The Census Bureau uses which of the following terms to describe a person or a group of people residing together?
- family
  - nuclear family
  - extended family
  - household
- ANS: D      PG: 6      TYP: fact      LO: 2
15. According to the text, in recent years, people have been
- marrying earlier in life.
  - avoiding marriage.
  - postponing marriage and parenthood.
  - cohabiting more than marrying.
- ANS: C      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

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16. Cohabitation has emerged as a lifestyle
- that is stigmatized as unhealthy and immoral.
  - that is much more common than marriage.
  - that continues to be illegal.
  - that can be intermediate between marriage and singlehood or an alternative to marriage.

ANS: D      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

17. The text reports that \_\_\_\_\_ percent of marriages were preceded by cohabitation.
- less than 10
  - about 15
  - 25
  - over 50

ANS: D      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

18. President Obama's family background is cited in the text as an example of what current societal trend?
- the development of ART
  - new communication technologies
  - changes in America's race/ethnic composition
  - economic uncertainty

ANS: C      PG: 15      TYP: concept      LO: 4

19. According to the text, marriage remains an \_\_\_\_\_ experience; 91 percent of adults have been married or plan to marry.
- important
  - unimportant
  - unusual
  - unreal

ANS: A      PG: 9      TYP: concept      LO: 1

20. Over the past four decades, fertility in the United States has
- stayed about the same.
  - increased dramatically.
  - declined.
  - fluctuated substantially.

ANS: C      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

21. In 1957, the total fertility rate was about 3.6 children per woman. For the last decade and a half, it has been \_\_\_\_\_ child/children per woman.
- a. less than one
  - b. one
  - c. around two
  - d. about three

ANS: C      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

22. The text reports that rates of childlessness among women ages 40-44 has \_\_\_\_\_ over the past 30 years.
- a. increased slightly
  - b. doubled
  - c. decreased
  - d. fluctuated

ANS: B      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

23. The text reports that between \_\_\_\_\_ percent of recent first marriages will end in divorce.
- a. 5 to 10
  - b. 10 to 20
  - c. 40 to 50
  - d. 80 to 90

ANS: C      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

24. The divorce rate
- a. has been in decline for more the last three decades.
  - b. continues to increase over time.
  - c. will probably never level off.
  - d. will always remain at 50 percent of first marriages.

ANS: A      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

25. Economic uncertainty caused by \_\_\_\_\_ is a current societal trend impacting families.
- a. global warming
  - b. assisted reproductive technologies
  - c. the recession that began in 2008
  - d. increased immigration during the last decade

ANS: C      PG: 16      TYP: fact      LO: 4

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26. About \_\_\_\_\_ same-sex couple households existed in the United States in 2008.
- 10,000
  - 500,000
  - 2 million
  - 10 million

ANS: B      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

27. *W* The definition of *family* adopted by the authors of this text includes those who do all of the following EXCEPT
- form an economic unit and care for any young.
  - consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group.
  - have the same name and background.
  - commit to maintaining that group over time.

ANS: C      PG: 4      TYP: fact      LO: 1

28. The text concludes that the best way to make decisions about our personal lives is to make them
- by default.
  - knowledgeably.
  - unconsciously.
  - following the path of least resistance.

ANS: B      PG: 20      TYP: application      LO: 6

29. According to the text, over time, cohabitation has become
- “mainstream.”
  - “secondary.”
  - “prohibited.”
  - “unlikely.”

ANS: A      PG: 17      TYP: fact      LO: 1

30. Through the lens of social scientific research, individual choices are shaped by
- unknown forces.
  - deep, inner drives.
  - the social context in which they are made.
  - schooling.

ANS: C      PG: 17      TYP: fact      LO: 5



31. Which is the phrase used to describe economic and social forces which limit personal choices?
- a. media overload
  - b. mass confusion
  - c. structural constraints
  - d. cultural baggage

ANS: C      PG: 17      TYP: fact      LO: 7

32. Compared with today, in the 1950s and early 1960s, people tended to
- a. marry earlier.
  - b. marry later.
  - c. marry someone from a different ethnic background.
  - d. marry after cohabitation.

ANS: A      PG: 9      TYP: application      LO: 4

33. According to the text's discussion of how social factors influence people's personal choices,
- a. it is always more difficult to make the common choice.
  - b. social factors can limit people's options.
  - c. social factors never limit people's options.
  - d. some people do not make choices.

ANS: B      PG: 17      TYP: fact      LO: 7

34. Unconscious decisions are called
- a. thoughtful decisions.
  - b. superego decisions.
  - c. choosing by default.
  - d. knowledgeable decisions.

ANS: C      PG: 19      TYP: concept      LO: 6

35. *W* Choices made \_\_\_\_\_ are ones that people make when they are not aware of all the alternatives or when they pursue the proverbial path of least resistance.
- a. by default
  - b. knowledgeably
  - c. wisely
  - d. responsibly

ANS: A      PG: 19      TYP: concept      LO: 6

## Chapter 1

36. Although most people have made at least some decisions by default, almost everyone can recall having the opposite experience, which is
- not being able to make a decision.
  - choosing knowledgeably.
  - being confused.
  - allowing someone else to make the choice.

ANS: B      PG: 19      TYP: application      LO: 6

37. Which of the following is NOT one of the steps involved with making knowledgeable choices?
- Try to avoid making a decision if possible.
  - Recognize the social pressures that may influence personal choices.
  - Consider the consequences of each alternative.
  - Attempt to clarify your own values.

ANS: A      PG: 20      TYP: fact      LO: 6

38. Which of these does NOT contribute to young adults continuing to live with their parents or to move back home?
- extended education
  - delayed marriage
  - financial pressures like high housing costs
  - personal decorating preferences

ANS: D      PG: 20      TYP: fact      LO: 5

39. *W* The emotional dimension of decision making is referred to in the text as the
- craziness gene.
  - gut factor.
  - ga-ga principle.
  - no-think dimension.

ANS: B      PG: 20      TYP: concept      LO: 5

40. The text observes that once a choice is made and a person acts on it, the process is not necessarily complete. This component of decision making is called
- default.
  - panic.
  - rechecking.
  - emotion.

ANS: C      PG: 20      TYP: concept      LO: 6

41. Children learn social roles by imitating the behaviors of parents, siblings, and family members through a type of play called \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. externalization.
  - b. mocking caregivers.
  - c. secondary education.
  - d. role-taking.

ANS: D      PG: 21      TYP: fact      LO: 10

42. *W* Life in American families reflects a tension in American culture between family solidarity and
- a. individual freedom.
  - b. the prenuptial contract.
  - c. divorce.
  - d. childlessness.

ANS: A      PG: 21      TYP: fact      LO: 8

43. Family togetherness, stability, and loyalty are all examples of
- a. proscriptive norms.
  - b. familistic (communal) values.
  - c. self-fulfillment values.
  - d. outdated norms.

ANS: B      PG: 21      TYP: concept      LO: 8

44. Placing kin group needs and goals over individual interests and preferences is termed
- a. marriage priority.
  - b. the kinship orientation.
  - c. the family-focused approach.
  - d. familism.

ANS: D      PG: 22      TYP: concept      LO: 8

45. When persons think in terms of seeking primarily personal—as opposed to communal or group—happiness and goals, this reflects which orientation?
- a. familistic
  - b. individualistic
  - c. kinship
  - d. negotiated

ANS: B      PG: 22      TYP: concept      LO: 8

## Chapter 1

46. Parents, especially, and siblings and other relatives are usually highly influential in developing a child's \_\_\_\_\_, or that child's sense of worth and value.
- a. self-concept
  - b. genetic code
  - c. nickname
  - d. temperament

ANS: A      PG: 21      TYP: concept      LO: 10

47. *W* \_\_\_\_\_ is made up of the ideas and feelings about the uniqueness and value of one's family unit, which often emerges in family traditions, rituals and celebrations.
- a. Individualism
  - b. Knowledgeable decisions
  - c. Family identity
  - d. DNA pool

ANS: C      PG: 21      TYP: application      LO: 10

48. Scholars and advocates with a "\_\_\_\_\_" perspective point to what they see as a negative cultural change accentuated by excessive individualism and self-indulgence.
- a. family change
  - b. boomer fat
  - c. familistic
  - d. family decline

ANS: D      PG: 10      TYP: fact      LO: 3

49. Scholars and advocates with a "\_\_\_\_\_" perspective point see constant evolution as normal.
- a. family change
  - b. pessimistic
  - c. familistic
  - d. family decline

ANS: A      PG: 10      TYP: fact      LO: 3

50. A majority of children live in \_\_\_\_\_ households.
- a. divorced
  - b. single-mother
  - c. single-father
  - d. two-parent

ANS: D      PG: 5,11      TYP: fact      LO: 1

51. About \_\_\_\_\_ of American children live in single parent families.
- a. 10 percent
  - b. 25 percent
  - c. 50 percent
  - d. 90 percent

ANS: B PG: 11 TYP: fact LO: 1

52. Compared to the recent past, children are \_\_\_\_\_ likely to live with a grandparent today.
- a. somewhat less
  - b. far less
  - c. equally
  - d. more

ANS: D PG: 11 TYP: fact LO: 1

53. Many households containing grandparents are \_\_\_\_\_ family households, which include other relatives besides parents and children.
- a. modern
  - b. nuclear
  - c. extended
  - d. blended

ANS: C PG: 11 TYP: concept LO: 1

54. Children are \_\_\_\_\_ likely than the general population or the elderly to be living in poverty.
- a. more
  - b. far less
  - c. somewhat less
  - d. equally

ANS: A PG: 11 TYP: fact LO: 1

55. In 1950s, the nonmarital pregnancy rate was \_\_\_\_\_ in comparison with today.
- a. higher
  - b. slightly lower
  - c. much lower
  - d. the same

ANS: C PG: 9 TYP: fact LO: 1

## Chapter 1

56. Data from a longitudinal study suggest that, since the 1970s, an earlier trend in individualism has
- a. stabilized.
  - b. reversed.
  - c. not changed.
  - d. increased.

ANS: B      PG: 11      TYP: fact      LO: 8

57. Over the past several decades,
- a. the divorce rate has declined somewhat.
  - b. the rate of nonmarital childbearing has increased.
  - c. there has been a dramatic increase in teen birth rates.
  - d. changes in the family have basically accelerated.

ANS: A      PG: 9      TYP: fact      LO: 1

58. *W* The text points out that the social institutions of marriage and the family have become \_\_\_\_\_ since the 1960s.

- a. more predictable
- b. more functional
- c. less predictable
- d. less functional

ANS: C      PG: 10      TYP: fact      LO: 8

59. Those with a “family change” perspective view the family as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. declining rapidly
- b. “an adaptable institution”
- c. “a rigid institution”
- d. slowly and steadily getting worse

ANS: B      PG: 11      TYP: fact      LO: 3

60. Family change is attributed to which of the following influences?

- a. declining mental health
- b. individuals who do not wish to live in families
- c. hopelessness
- d. economic trends and cultural changes

ANS: D      PG: 10      TYP: fact      LO: 3

61. Which of the following is attributed to the U.S. by “family change” scholars?
- a. patriotism as a source of family pride
  - b. declining values in family matters
  - c. inadequate support for families, when compared to other advanced industrial countries
  - d. rigid traditional ideas of family

ANS: C      PG: 11      TYP: concept      LO: 3

62. *W* A person who believed in the “family decline” theory might say the following:
- a. “There has been a serious breakdown in marriage and family values.”
  - b. “Family life isn’t getting worse, it just adjusts to the times.”
  - c. “Families today are better off than in the past.”
  - d. “There is no marriage crisis.”

ANS: A      PG: 10      TYP: application      LO: 3

63. Someone who is a “family change” advocate might say the following:
- a. “Our nation is in a crisis; marriages aren’t surviving like they used to.”
  - b. “The family is better than ever at adapting to new challenges.”
  - c. “Times were much better for families in the ‘50s and ‘60s.”
  - d. “Before long, marriage won’t even be around as an institution.”

ANS: B      PG: 11      TYP: application      LO: 3

64. If you wanted to make a knowledgeable decision about choosing which class to take,
- a. take the first class which is open and will fit your schedule.
  - b. find out what your friends are taking, and do the same.
  - c. wait until the last possible minute, and then let your advisor find a class.
  - d. look through the catalog at all the possibilities, consider what will benefit you in the future, and register early to get the class you consider best.

ANS: D      PG: 19-20      TYP: application      LO: 6

65. What factor may cause a father to make choices about his family “by default”?
- a. Careful consideration of family needs and personal time.
  - b. Strong day-to-day pressures on the job cutting into time at home.
  - c. Remembering how important his wife and children are to him, and acting on it.
  - d. Ignoring the phone, television and computer in order to talk at the dinner table.

ANS: B      PG: 19      TYP: application      LO: 6

## Chapter 1

66. Family diversity has progressed to the point that there is
- a breakdown in communal values and family bonds.
  - ethnic differences in most family members.
  - no typical family form today.
  - confusion and distress among sociologists about what to study.

ANS: C      PG: 23      TYP: concept      LO: 1

67. Because adults change, marriages and families are
- not static.
  - falling apart.
  - hoped to be always stable and reliable.
  - hard to study.

ANS: A      PG: 22      TYP: fact      LO: 9

68. Which of the following is NOT one of the four themes of the textbook?
- Personal decisions must be made throughout the life course.
  - People are influenced by the society around them.
  - We live in a society characterized by considerable change.
  - Personal decision making has little impact on society.

ANS: D      PG: 4-17      TYP: fact      LO: 1,4,5,7

69. People are influenced by the society around them. Societal or structural conditions can negatively limit or positively \_\_\_\_\_ our options.
- dismiss
  - expand
  - destroy
  - belittle

ANS: B      PG: 10,18      TYP: application      LO : 7

70. We live in a society characterized by \_\_\_\_\_ change, including increased ethnic, economic, and family diversity.
- little
  - slight
  - considerable
  - negligible

ANS: C      PG: 23      TYP: concept      LO : 7



**TRUE/FALSE**

1. Maintaining a family requires *both* commitment and knowledge of what you're doing.  
ANS: True                      PG: 4                      TYP: concept                      LO: 5
2. Functional definitions of the family refer to what the family *is*, while structural definitions emphasize what the family *does*.  
ANS: False                      PG: 4                      TYP: concept                      LO: 1
3. Today, about 50 percent of families fit the model of intact marriage, children, and husband-breadwinner and wife-homemaker.  
ANS: False                      PG: 7                      TYP: application                      LO: 1
4. The most common household type today is that of married couples *without* children.  
ANS: True                      PG: 7                      TYP: fact                      LO: 1
5. Single-person households now represent a quarter of American households.  
ANS: True                      PG: 11                      TYP: fact                      LO: 1
6. Embryo screening is a technology which allows prospective parents the possibility of choosing the gender and certain characteristics of their future child.  
ANS: True                      PG: 14                      TYP: fact                      LO: 4
7. People have been postponing marriage in recent years.  
ANS: True                      PG: 9                      TYP: concept                      LO: 1
8. Racial and ethnic minorities make up about one-tenth of the U.S. population today.  
ANS: False                      PG: 14                      TYP: fact                      LO: 4
9. As families have become less rigidly structured, people have made fewer choices "once and for all."  
ANS: True                      PG: 17                      TYP: concept                      LO: 5

## Chapter 1

10. Structural constraints (economic and social forces) cannot influence personal choices.  
ANS: False                      PG:17                      TYP: concept                      LO: 7
11. According to the text, personal decisions must be made throughout the life course.  
ANS: True                      PG: 17                      TYP: fact                      LO: 5
12. Societal or structural conditions can both limit and expand people's options.  
ANS: True                      PG: 19                      TYP: concept                      LO: 7
13. Unconscious decisions are called "choosing by default."  
ANS: True                      PG: 19                      TYP: fact                      LO: 6
14. Choosing by default can occur when we choose the path of least resistance or do the easiest thing.  
ANS: True                      PG: 19                      TYP: fact                      LO: 6
15. According to the text, you should never listen to the emotional dimension of decision making, sometimes called the "gut-factor."  
ANS: False                      PG:20                      TYP: concept                      LO: 5
16. In a family setting, development and change involve more than one individual.  
ANS: True                      PG: 23                      TYP: application                      LO: 9
17. The text points out that the best way to make choices is by default.  
ANS: False                      PG: 20                      TYP: fact                      LO: 6
18. In a family, one of the things that must be negotiated is personal privacy.  
ANS: True                      PG: 21                      TYP: application                      LO: 9
19. Research shows that parents, siblings, and other relatives influence a child's self-concept, having a profound influence on personal identity.  
ANS: True                      PG: 21                      TYP: concept                      LO: 10

20. According to the text, married life is far more complex and difficult than the traditional image commonly portrayed.

ANS: True                      PG: 23                      TYP: concept                      LO: 1

21. Personal decision making feeds back into society and changes it.

ANS: True                      PG: 17                      TYP: concept                      LO: 7

## COMPLETION

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ family exhibits a multiplicity of forms, and new or altered family forms continue to emerge and develop. (postmodern, p. 7)
2. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption who share a(n) \_\_\_\_\_. (household, p. 6)
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ family consists of husband, wife, and children in one household. (nuclear, p. 17)
4. \_\_\_\_\_, or economic and social forces, can limit personal choices. (Structural constraints, p. 9)
5. Our individual choices can have an influence on \_\_\_\_\_. (society, p. 17)
6. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is any sexually expressive, parent-child, or other kin relationships in which people—usually related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption—form an economic unit and care for any young, consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group, and are committed to maintaining that group over time. (family, p. 4)
7. Unconscious decisions are called choosing \_\_\_\_\_. (by default, p. 19)
8. Although most people have made at least some decisions by default, almost everyone can recall having the opposite experience: \_\_\_\_\_. (choosing knowledgeably, p. 20)
9. Family togetherness, stability, and loyalty are all \_\_\_\_\_. (communal values, p. 22)
10. Placing family well-being over individual interests and preferences is termed \_\_\_\_\_. (familism, p. 21)
11. Individualistic values are also referred to as \_\_\_\_\_ values. (self-fulfillment, p. 22)
12. The family \_\_\_\_\_ refers to ideas and feelings about the uniqueness and value of one's family unit, which emerges from traditions and rituals. (identity, p. 18)
13. Self-indulgence and self-interest has led to family \_\_\_\_\_. (decline, p. 10)

14. Some family experts do not believe the family is in decline, but focus instead on family \_\_\_\_\_. (change, p. 10)

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. The text points out that what we think of as “family” has changed dramatically. Explain this statement. (p. 4)
2. First, distinguish between *personal troubles* and *societal influences*. Give an example of each. Second, distinguish between *social influences* and *personal choices*. Give an example of each. (p. 17-19)
3. The text points out that some choices are made *by default*, while others are made *knowledgeably*. Explain the difference and provide at least one illustration of each category. (p. 19)
4. Using the text’s discussion as a guide, address the question, “Is the family *declining* or is the family *changing*?” (p. 10)
5. What is the difference between *individualism* and *familism*? Provide an illustration of each. (p. 22)

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the traditional definition of the family with the postmodern definition preferred by the authors of your textbook. Give examples of how the legal system, government, and business community have struggled to make decisions about who can be considered part of the family. (pp. 4, 7-8)
2. Write an essay in which you compare *nuclear family* and *the postmodern family*. How might each of these impact children? (pp. 4-7)
3. How does the definition of *family* have practical and economic consequences for individuals in everyday life? Provide at least two examples utilizing the issues involved. (pp. 4-8)
4. Suppose you were faced with a decision about an unplanned pregnancy. Explain the process you would use to *choose knowledgeably*. Include in your discussion the major components of knowledgeable decision making. (p. 20)
5. What is family identity? Using your own family, or one with which you are familiar, provide several examples of this phenomenon. (p. 21)