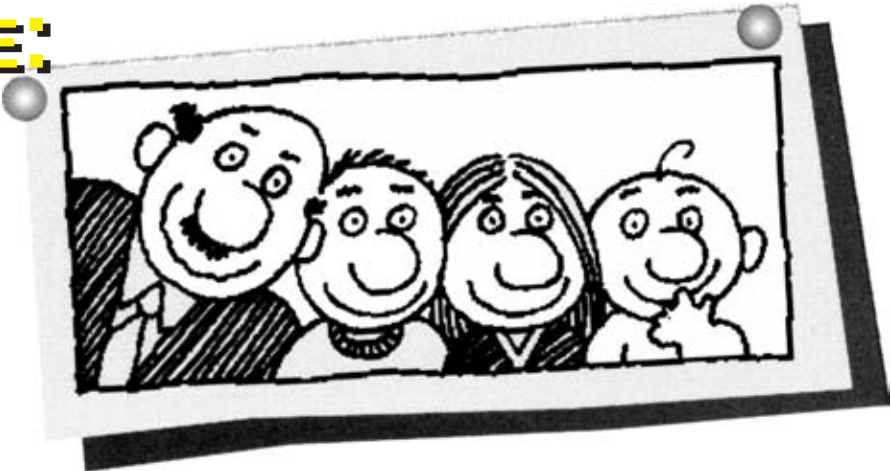


# UNIT ONE: FAMILIES



## WHAT ARE FAMILIES?

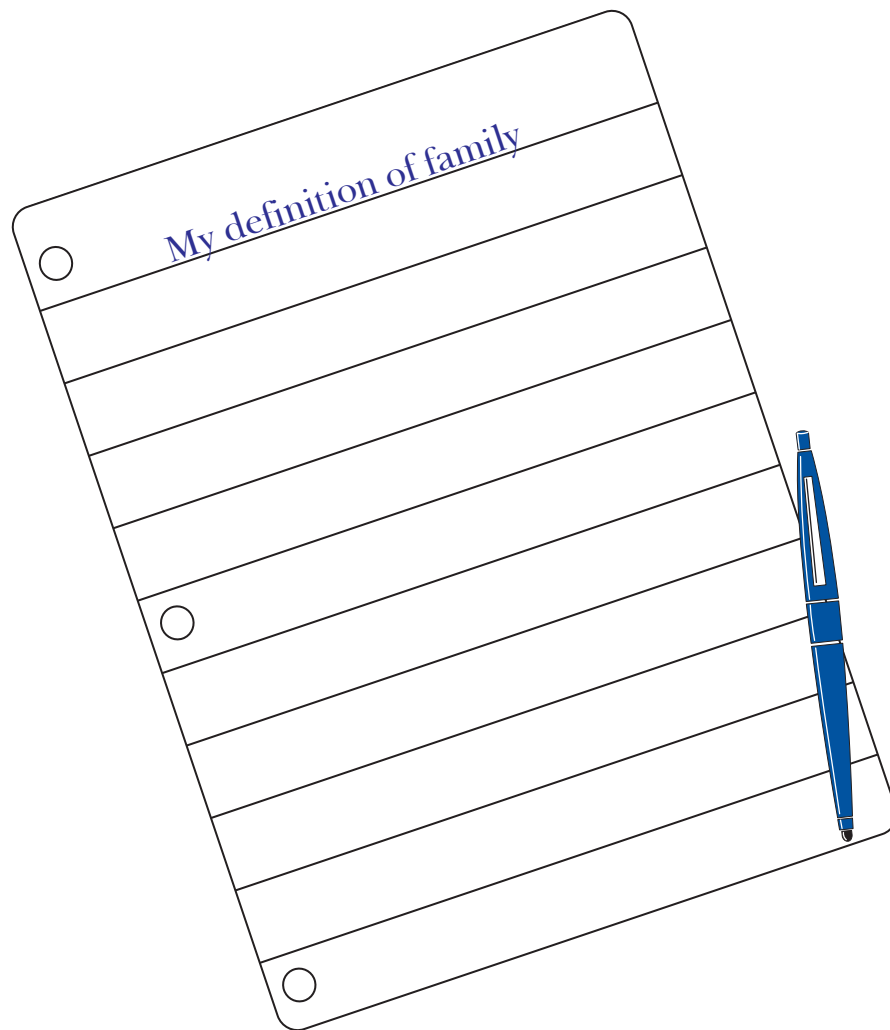
We all live in families. But, just what is a family and why do we live in them? For most of us, the word family means the kind of family that *we* grew up in. What does the word family mean to you? Take a few minutes and write your response in the notebook below.

*What family means to me*

If you had difficulty describing a family, you are not alone. Perhaps you live with two parents and brothers and sisters. Perhaps you included guardians, other relatives, friends or pets. Maybe you used words such as love, support, fighting, sharing or safety. Perhaps you included the activities that your family does—cooking, watching television, taking trips, working around the house. Think of other families that you know. Does your description of family describe them? Can you think of a definition of family that would describe **all** the families that you know? Write your definition in the notebook below.

Finding a definition that fits all families is a tall task, but some important organizations have tried to cover all the possibilities. Statistics Canada defines a family as:

*a now-married couple (with or without never-married sons and/or daughters of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (again with or without never-married sons and/or daughters of either or both partners), or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one never-married son or daughter living in the same dwelling.*



The Vanier Institute of the Family, a national voluntary organization dedicated to promoting the well being of Canada's families, defines a family as:

*any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth, and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibilities for variant combinations of some of the following:*

- *physical maintenance and care of group members*
- *addition of new members through procreation or adoption*
- *socialization of children*
- *social control of members*
- *production, consumption and distribution of goods and services*
- *affective nurturance—love*

In other words, families generate a lot of activity. A family does not necessarily need to be related by blood or marriage, but they do need to live together and share the day-to-day living—getting meals, doing housework, mowing lawns, sharing the bathroom, feeding pets, reading to the kids, and so on. They need to be committed to and care about each other for many years and contribute to each person's well-being and happiness. Here are some glimpses of family members as they fulfill the functions listed in the Vanier Institute definition of family.

#### PHYSICAL MAINTENANCE AND CARE OF GROUP MEMBERS

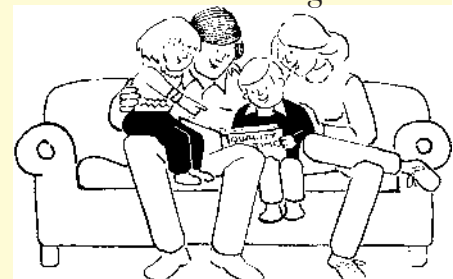
- tired single mom spending a sleepless night with a sick baby who can't fall asleep
- teenager going to the store for Uncle Arnold who fell off the porch and sprained his ankle
- father and daughter washing storm windows for winter
- young father making his kid's lunch before a mad dash for the school bus

#### ADDITION OF NEW MEMBERS THROUGH PROCREATION OR ADOPTION

- nervous, expectant parents attending birthing classes
- infertile couple mastering the fine points of basal thermometers
- childless couple waiting at the airport for the arrival of an adoptive baby from abroad

#### SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

- mother helping her 10-year old with a science project for school
- dad and mom taking turns getting their son to the 5 a.m. hockey practice
- 14-year old going with his folks to visit grandparents on Sunday when he'd rather be skateboarding



### SOCIAL CONTROL OF MEMBERS

- ↪ young girl apologizing—under parental orders—to neighbours for breaking a window
- ↪ teenager bringing her boyfriend home to meet the folks for the first time
- ↪ three adult siblings worrying over coffee about the woman their elderly father plans to marry

### PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES

- ↪ young father putting in a day on the production line
- ↪ single mom postponing buying new clothes so she can pay for piano lessons for her son
- ↪ family of five loaded down with bags of groceries, forgetting where they parked the car at the shopping mall
- ↪ elderly couple welcoming the working mom delivering meals-on-wheels

### AFFECTIVE NURTURANCE—LOVE

- ↪ new parents spending an entire afternoon gazing at their newborn—and leaving the phone unplugged
- ↪ middle-aged newlyweds spending an entire day in bed—and leaving the phone unplugged
- ↪ teacher calling in sick so she can take the day off to spend with her dying mother—and leaving the phone unplugged

**Source:** adapted from *Profiling Canada's Families*, Vanier Institute of the Family, 1994.

There are two types of family: family of orientation and family of procreation. A **family of orientation** is the family that has raised the individual. The **family of procreation** is the family that is formed by marriage and by having children.


No matter what the formal definition of a family is, a family is much more than you may have thought at first glance.



## WHY DO WE LIVE IN FAMILIES?

If you are still living at home, you may be looking forward to the day when you can get out on your own, away from your family. What do you think you will miss when you are out on your own? In the notebook at the top of the next page, make a list of all the things you have gained by living in your family.

○	<b>Things I've gained from my family</b>
○	
○	



relationships may be some of the strongest relationships you will ever develop.

4. Your family can be a source of love and affection. It is within the family that you first learn to love and be loved. Different families demonstrate their love differently—some families hug and kiss all the time; others don't show their affection as openly. Whatever the case, families still love, care about, and do special things for each other.
5. Your family can be a source of support and encouragement. Through the family you can learn to develop your own unique strengths, at the same time you know that someone will always be there when you need them.
6. Your family can play an important role in socializing you; that is, teaching you how to behave in a way that is acceptable, providing you with the values, beliefs and customs of your particular family.

There are many benefits of living in a family. These include:

1. Your family provides for your physical needs of food, clothing, shelter, and health care.
2. Your family can protect you from harmful or dangerous situations (provide a safe haven).
3. Your family can give you a sense of belonging through the life-long relationships you have with your family members. You will always be a sister, a son, a cousin, or a nephew. You share a lot in common with your brothers, sisters and parents, and these family

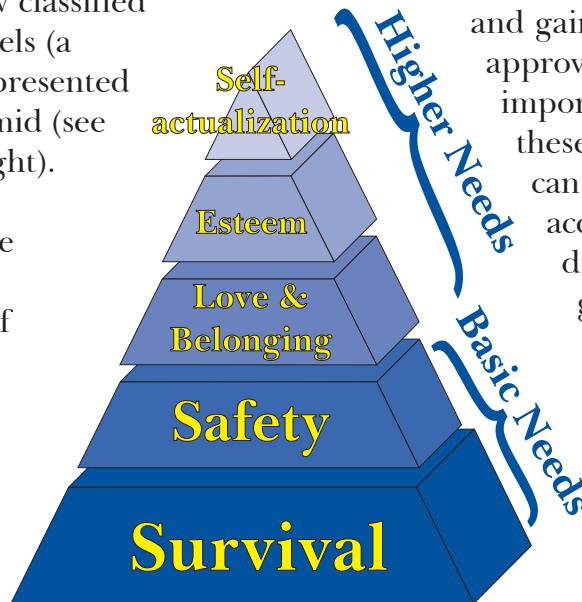
So, basically, all families perform the same functions. Families support one another physically, economically, and emotionally. Families share and work together. Family members are committed to one another, and their commitments are only broken under extraordinary circumstances. Within families, we can love, bicker, care, argue, defend, fight, sympathize, or envy, secure in the knowledge that the relationship is durable enough to withstand many trials. Together, families celebrate one another's big and little triumphs and successes.

## MASLOW’S HIERARCHY AND FAMILIES

Abraham Maslow, a noted psychologist, has given us a useful way to look at human needs. Maslow classified human needs into levels (a hierarchy) that he represented in the form of a pyramid (see the diagram to the right). According to Maslow, people must satisfy the lower or more basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid before they can have the energy to try to satisfy the higher needs on the pyramid. In other words, a child can’t concentrate on school work if he has not had anything to eat. A person can’t feel loved and accepted if he/she doesn’t feel safe from physical harm and danger.

As Maslow’s theory relates to families, the family fulfills our physical **survival** needs by providing food, clothing, shelter and other biological necessities. The family then creates a **safe** environment for us to grow up in, one that is secure and

free from physical harm and danger. After that, the family provides lots of **love and affection** so that we feel we are accepted and belong. Once these needs are met, we are able to direct our energies towards our **esteem** needs. Achieving success and gaining the respect and approval of others are all important esteem needs. Once these needs are satisfied, we can go on to be creative, accepting, caring, unprejudiced, and to continue to grow and realize our potential as a **self-actualized** (self-filled) person.



<b>Maslow defines</b>	
survival .....	as having enough food, water, clothing and shelter
safety .....	as being secure and safe, out of danger
love and belonging .....	as being accepted by family, friends and community; receiving love and affection
esteem .....	as having confidence in oneself; gaining approval and recognition from others
self-actualization	as realizing one’s potential through personal growth and developing one’s talents

Few people ever reach their full potential. However, many of us see glimpses of it—when we push ourselves to get that college diploma, win the volleyball tournament, become employee of the month, organize the class reunion, or do a thousand other acts that prove we are all that we can be.

On the other side of the coin, it is possible to only

partially meet some of your basic needs and still strive to meet higher needs. There have been many great artists (Van Gogh, Mozart) who were highly creative,

yet struggled to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that a well-fed person who has a home is more likely to be secure and self-confident than someone who struggles every day to find a meal and a bed.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Members of a family have many roles to play. In your family there are roles that you have been given from birth, such as daughter/son, sister/brother, or niece/nephew. As time goes on, there are roles that you choose such as spouse (husband/wife), parent, worker, community member, friend. These roles may overlap and, from time to time, one role may take more importance over another. For example, when a new baby is born, the parenting role takes precedence over the role of spouse/partner.



You may have certain expectations about the roles you will play based on what you experienced in the home you grew up in. For example, if both your parents worked outside the home, you may expect that both you and your spouse/partner will also work. On the other hand, if you grew up in a household where one parent stayed home (or you wished that one parent had), you may expect that one in

your partnership will stay home to keep house and look after the children.

Your chosen career may also influence your role expectations. Jobs which require you to be away from home for long periods of time (Armed Forces, long haul trucking, offshore drilling) may dictate that you cannot take on the roles that require you to be there everyday (household chores, Little League coach, family chauffeur).

Personal suitability also plays a part in determining what roles you will play. Some people have better skills at cooking, plumbing, gardening, finances, nursing, and the multitude of other tasks it takes to keep a family functioning. As long as the role expectations have been discussed and agreed upon, it doesn't really matter who carries them out.

When family members fulfill their agreed upon roles and responsibilities, treat each other with respect and affection, and meet each other's needs, then the family is said to be **functional**. A father taking his daughter to dance lessons, a mother working to put food on the table, a husband consoling his wife after a bad day at the office, and a teenager building the backyard fence are all examples of a functional family.

A **dysfunctional** family is one where the main family functions—providing love and support, and sharing responsibilities—are absent. A dysfunctional family can occur when a parent is alcoholic or neglectful, a teenager steals to support a drug habit, or everyone in the family screams and is abusive to each other.

## ACTIVITY 1: WHAT ARE FAMILIES?

It's worth  
**60**  
points

1. Compare and contrast the Vanier Institute of the Family definition of the family with the Statistics Canada definition. How do these definitions compare to the definition of the family that you wrote on page 2 in this manual? (10 points)
2. Do **one** of the following two activities. (10 points)
  - a) Draw a logo which an organization such as the Vanier Institute of the Family might use to depict Canadian families. In **one** or **two** paragraphs, explain your logo and how it depicts all families.

**OR**

- b) Make a collage depicting Canadian families. Choose pictures, words and/or phrases from magazines, newspapers, flyers and/or catalogues. Give your collage a title. In **one** or **two** paragraphs, explain the significance of what you chose for your collage, and how it depicts all families.
3. Reflect back on your activities for the past week. Give **at least one example** of how you met each of Maslow's needs. Organize your information in a chart like the following. (10 points)

Need	How I Met That Need
Survival	Cooked breakfast every morning  Bought new pair of runners
Self-actualization	Practiced my guitar lessons

4. a) Family members have many responsibilities because of the various roles they fulfill in a family. Create an organizer like the example given below. In the left hand column, list each family member that presently lives in your home. In the right hand column, list the responsibilities that each family member presently performs in your family. Notes: You can use the list of responsibilities on page 9 to help you get started, but try to add other responsibilities that have not been listed. Some responsibilities may be listed for more than one member of your family.

**EXAMPLE:**

Family Member	Responsibilities
My brother	shovels snow  feeds pets  drives mom to the grocery store every week  fixes computer problems



**Responsibilities Performed in the Home**

shops for food	cooks meals
plans meals	does the dishes
shops for clothing	does the baking
picks up clutter	cleans the bathroom
dusts the furniture	vacuums the floors
washes/sweeps floors	repairs small items around the house
makes doctors' appointments	washes clothes
puts away clean clothes	pays bills
fills car with gas	takes car for repairs
mows grass	gardens
shovels snow	keeps peace in the family
listens to family's concerns	budgets money
plans vacations	sets family rules
enforces rules	reads to children
plays with children	chauffeurs children
feeds pets	takes out garbage
help kids with homework	

b) Discuss how the roles in your family came about (traditional gender roles, more time, better skill, agreed upon, likes doing it, . . .).

c) How is the assignment of roles working out in your family?

d) What are your expectations around roles in the family for your family of orientation? Do you expect the same family members to have the same roles as they did in the family that you grew up in (for example—your father maintained the car, so the father in your own family will do the same)? Explain. (20 points)

5. Do **one** of the following two activities. (10 points)

a) Imagine that you have grown up fighting with a sister or brother who you think has always gotten more love/attention/possessions from your parents. Now that you are an adult, you realize that this was not so. Compose a letter to your sister or brother about some of the beliefs that you held about your place in the family and some of the things you did that you are now sorry for. Write about your hopes for a better relationship in the future. Your letter should be at least **three** paragraphs.

**OR**

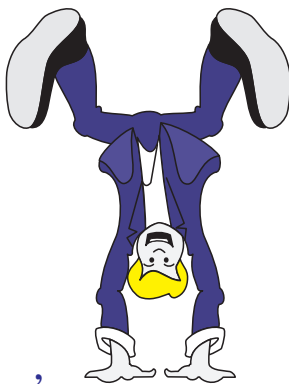
b) Respond to the following letter received by Ann Landers from a young teen. Give advice that you

think the writer needs to make the situation better. Your response should be at least **three** paragraphs.

Dear Ann,

I want to move out of my house and live on my own. Even though I am only 14 years old, I know I can get along without anyone's help. I don't need my family and I am tired of being told what to do—I have to look after my younger brother, cook supper when my Mom is not home and have my homework done before I can go out. And, I am always arguing with my sister. Do you think I am too young to be on my own? What do I need my family for anyway?

*Wanting To Leave Home*

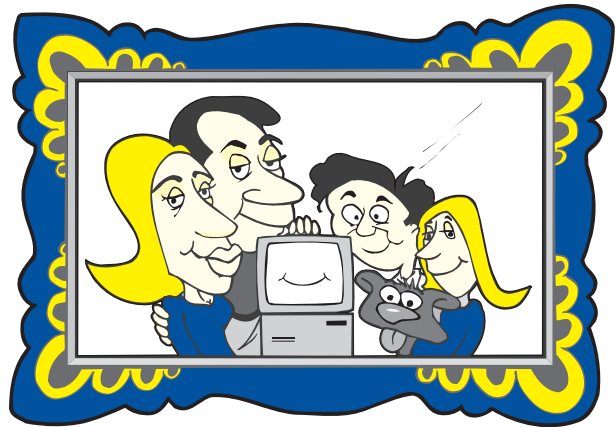


**DON'T SEND ANY WORK TO  
YOUR MARKER YET.**

Keep all your activities until you have finished Unit 1, then send all of them to your marker at the same time.

## FAMILY STRUCTURES— FAMILIES BY MANY NAMES

If you had difficulty coming up with a definition for family, it's little wonder. Today's families come in so many different forms, as they have changed to reflect the social and economic changes in society.



THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

Many people still have an image of the typical family as one which consists of the father, mother (traditionally a male breadwinner and stay-at-home mom) and their children. This arrangement, called the **nuclear** family, was the most common family type forty or fifty years ago, but now comprises only about half of all families. A nuclear family includes both biological and adopted children, but neither parent has children from a previous marriage.

When one parent is the main wage earner, the family is referred to as a **single-income family**. Families in which both parents work outside the home are called **dual-income families**.

Today it is very common to see both parents earn an income while they raise a family. In 1993, 55 per cent of non-elderly

couples in Canada saw both husband and wife employed. In 24 per cent of couples, the husband only was employed and 9 per cent the wife only was employed. In many cases, both parents work because one income is not enough to meet the needs of the family, or because neither partner feels secure that they won't suddenly be laid off from their job. In other cases, both parents want to pursue careers that are important to them.

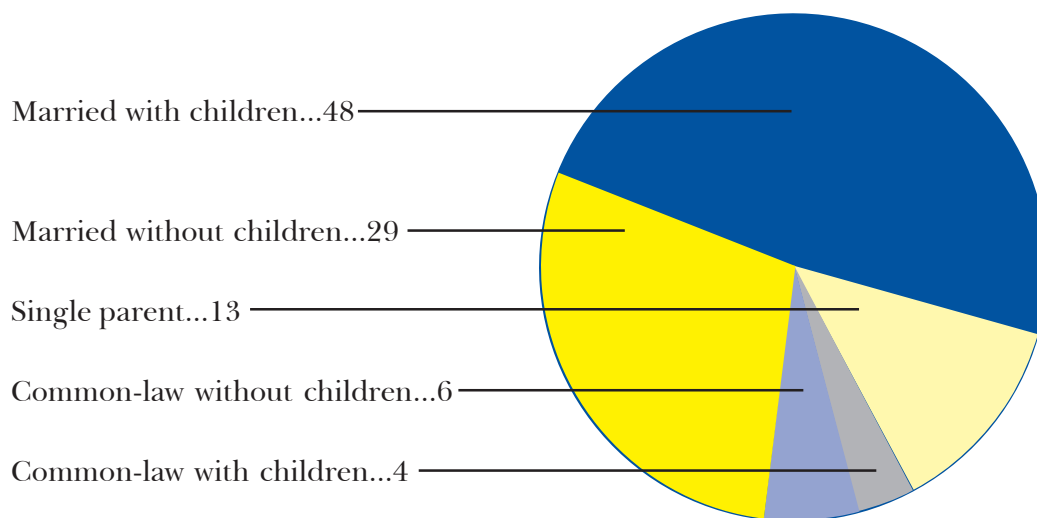
The strength of the nuclear family is that two parents can pool their talents and energies to share the responsibilities of maintaining the home, raising the children, and giving each other support. There may be more time and energy to

spend on family-centered activities. If two parents work, there is usually more money to purchase the things that the family needs and wants. Women in dual-income families often have higher self-esteem because they are able to pursue their own aspirations in a career.

Children in nuclear families have both male and female role models to look to and, in dual-income families, they have the opportunity to see their parents performing roles both inside and outside the home. Children in dual-income families are also often required to help with household chores and minding younger children, and they may learn independence and responsibility at an earlier age.

## CANADA'S CHANGING FAMILIES DIVERSITY IS NOW THE NORM

Family types "Out of 100 Families..."



Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics

Stressors that can be placed on single-income nuclear families include the working parent's need to earn sufficient income to support the family, and the at-home parent's responsibilities around handling most of the housework and child rearing. If the at-home parent did not willingly choose that role, he/she can become dissatisfied and resentful.

Dual income families are often very busy families and have to learn to juggle work demands and family responsibilities. While there are many employment benefits and working arrangements that help working parents, many workplaces still have not adequately taken into account the number of mothers who are in the workforce. And, while great strides have been made in many homes to share the workload more fairly, things are still not equal: most women still do more child care and housework than most men. This means that employed mothers often feel stressed from all sides—from a workplace that demands their full attention and a family that needs a cook, nurse, chauffeur, cleaner, counsellor, and so on.

Dual income families also have to be concerned about finding safe and loving care for their young children—whether that's a day care center, or the home of a reliable friend, relative or sitter. When children get older, they may become latchkey children, being given a house key to come home after school and care for themselves until their parents arrive home. Parents of latchkey children must ensure that their children are responsible enough and capable of taking care of themselves.

## SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

A **single (lone) parent** family is one parent raising his or her children. About one million, or 13 per cent of Canada's families are lone-parent families. More than four of every five lone-parent families are headed by a single mother.

Lone parenting is not a new phenomenon, although it is somewhat more common now than in the past. The major change is that the typical *reason* for lone parenting used to be when one parent died, whereas today most single parent families come about as a result of separation, divorce, or the birth of a child to an unmarried parent.

Single parents carry the responsibility of raising the child(ren) without the help of another adult in the home. This challenge leaves many single parents exhausted and feeling overwhelmed at being the sole wage earner, child caregiver, decision maker, and housekeeper, at the same time that they may be dealing with the effects of a divorce or spouse's death.

Children often have more responsibilities in a single parent family, having to learn to be more independent at a younger age, perform more household chores, and sometimes contribute financially to help support the family. Children have only one parent as a role model.



On the other hand, many single parents develop particularly strong, close relationships with their children. If the parent and children have left an unhappy or abusive family situation, the relief of being free from that turmoil can often outweigh the stressors of being on their own. Single parent families also often get assistance and support from the non-custodial parent, family, friends and community agencies.

#### BLENDED FAMILIES

A **blended family** is one that is made up of a biological father or mother, a step-mother or stepfather, and the children of one or both of the parents. The prefix *step-* indicates a family relationship by marriage and not by blood. In some blended families, the nonbiological parent will adopt his or her stepchild(ren). The couple may also decide to have children of their own.



These children will be half brothers or half sisters of the other children. The word *half* indicates that children are related to each other by blood through only one parent.

Today about 9 per cent of all Canadian families with children are step-families. The popularity of remarriage can lead to some confusing combinations: easily a child may have more than one home, more than two parents, more than four grandparents, step or half siblings in several homes, or family members living under the same roof with several different last names.

The blended family has the same advantage as the nuclear family in that there are two parents working together in the parenting role, and the children have the benefit of two role models. All the members in a blended family, however, face special challenges. Step-relationships take time to develop: there are new personalities, new roles, new rules, new homes that must be adjusted to. There may also be conflicts and issues that remain from the first marriage, and the other biological parent may disagree with the new arrangements or feel excluded from the children. For the newly married couple, they must learn the role of step-parent at the same time that they are adjusting to their new role as spouse. When blended families work out, they work well.

#### EXTENDED FAMILIES

The **extended family** is a household that can include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grown-up children. At the turn of the century, extended families were very common, with several generations of a family sharing in the economic, household and child rearing activities. While less common today, extended families are having a resurgence in popularity for a number of reasons. Grandparents may come to live with the family when

they become physically or financially unable to live by themselves. Young adults may return home (or never leave) if they are unable to find work to support themselves, or if they want to continue with their education. Divorcing couples may return home (with or without children) if they need time to recover from the divorce. The phenomenon of middle-aged parents who have aging parents *and* grown children simultaneously living with them has resulted in the coining of a phrase, the **sandwich generation**. In addition, the extended family is still popular amongst families who come to Canada from countries in Asia, Africa or the Middle East.



The benefits of the extended family may include having more wage earners to financially support the family unit, more hands to do household tasks and child care, and the presence of an older generation to pass on the family's stories and traditions and to act as an advisor and confidante to the children.

The challenge of the extended family is having so many people with different personalities, different expectations, and different routines under one roof. In the case of the sandwich generation, the parents caught in the middle may have been anticipating a life of retirement, with increased leisure, fewer responsibilities,

and more time for each other. The addition of unexpected family members, although they are loved, may place incredible strain on the marriage.

### CHILDLESS FAMILIES

Some 35 per cent of Canadian "families" (married or common-law) do not have children. One or both partners may be biologically unable to have children. In other cases, the couple may feel that they cannot afford to have children, that they may not be adequate parents, or that they do not want to bring children into a world that they view as violent, war-ridden, or an environmental disaster. Still other couples feel their life is fully satisfying as it is, and they simply do not want a child.

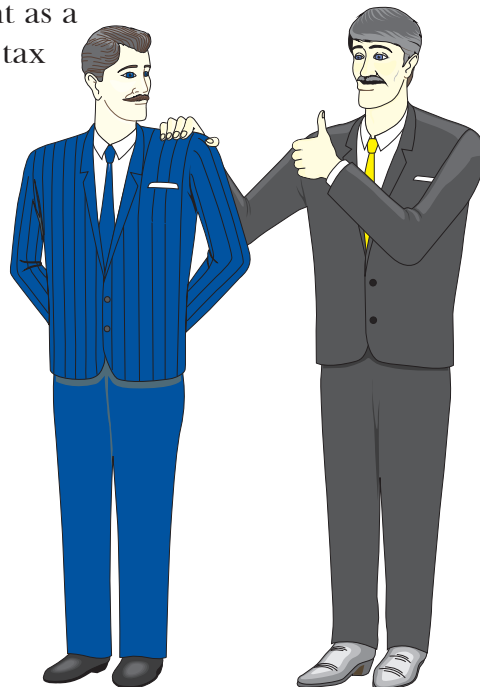


Childless couples have the advantage of having more free time and usually more disposable income to pursue whatever interests, hobbies, or activities they choose. They have more uninterrupted time to spend together, developing their relationship as a couple. They are better able to advance their careers, being able to spend more hours at work, move to different cities, or take on more challenging positions.

On the downside, there is the difference between choosing to be childless and not being able to have children. For those who want, but cannot have children, there can be the loneliness and heartache of a childless home. Some marriages do not withstand the stress of trying unsuccessfully to have children, or having one spouse wanting a child and the other equally opposed.

#### SAME-SEX COUPLES

Gay and lesbian couples, with or without children, have been recognized by the federal government as a couple for income tax purposes. Some companies also recognize same sex partners for company benefits in the same way that they recognize a married couple. While still not commonplace, growing numbers of gay



and lesbian couples are choosing to adopt children, become foster parents, or use surrogacy services. Critics of gay and lesbian parents contend that it is wrong to deprive children of the experience of having a traditional family with a mother and father. Proponents counter that it's love, commitment, and caring that really creates a family.

#### COOPERATIVE FAMILIES

Although all families should work together and cooperate, the **cooperative family** is made up of two divorced or single parents who move in together to share expenses, housework and the task of raising the kids. This makes good economic sense at a time when income may be reduced (after a divorce) and provides the support of a second adult. The downside can be the same as blended families where two families with different backgrounds and experiences have to learn to live together.

#### INSTITUTIONAL FAMILIES

An **institutional family** is a group of totally unrelated people who live together in a common facility or institution, such as a senior citizens' complex, group home, or boarding school. Because they have lived together for so long, sharing meals, activities and experiences, they feel like a family to each other.

## OTHER TRENDS IN FAMILY LIFE

**Postponed parenthood** is when a couple decides not to have children until the mother is in her thirties or forties. These couples may want to accomplish certain personal goals before they have children: get their careers established, purchase major items like a home or boat, travel, complete their education, or pursue other activities. Some couples want to spend time together as a couple to ensure that each partner is committed and mature, that the relationship is stable, and that they are ready for the challenge of parenthood.

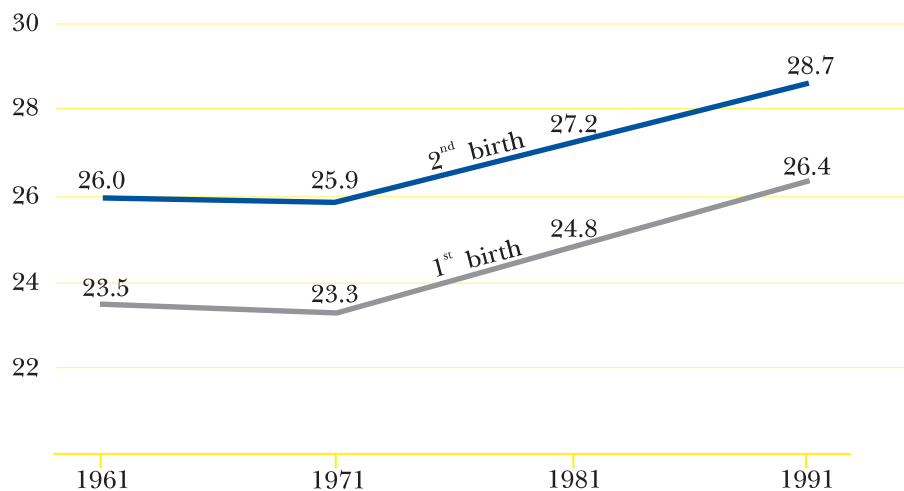
A **commuter marriage** is when one spouse works away from home during the week or for weeks at a time, commuting back home whenever possible. This type of arrangement is usually short term, for one or two years, as difficulties can arise the longer a spouse stays away (stress of single parenting, breakdown in the spousal relationship, alienation of the children, etc.). At some point these families either come back together in one location, or the family unit breaks apart.

**Cohabitation** is the term for living together. More people today choose to live together, either as a prelude to marriage, or instead of marriage. Many of them choose to have and raise children without benefit of marriage. 65 per cent of

## MOVE OVER, MOTHERHOOD

Canadian women increasingly postpone marriage and child rearing.

Average age of Mother for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Births



Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics



those who do live together eventually get married. This is a big change from forty years ago where most couples married, lived together, and then had children!

**Communes** are small groups of people who live together and share the responsibilities of running households, raising children, and earning incomes. Some communes are comprised of men, women and children living together in a kind of group marriage. Others are formed by religious orders of monks or nuns who wish to be removed from society so that they can be free to pursue their spiritual lives. Still others are based on social experiments where groups of people want to live a life free from materialism, private ownership, environmental pollution, government-legislated education, etc. Many communes are short lived. For example, few of the hippy communes that sprouted up in the 60s are still around.

At some point in life, most people experience **single living**. In the past, being single was looked on with pity; single women were given derogatory names like “old maid” and “spinster,” men were called “confirmed bachelors.” Today being single is just another life choice.

There are many reasons why someone may choose to be single. Some choose to delay getting married until they have established careers or reached a level of maturity to handle the responsibilities of marriage. Others cannot find a suitable marriage partner. Some are single due to divorce or death of a spouse. Some don't ever want the responsibilities of marriage and children, while others may have been

hurt in a previous relationship and do not want to be hurt again.

Single people have the same advantages as childless couples. They have more time to pursue interests and activities or be with friends, are more mobile to make career changes or move to new communities, and have more money to spend on themselves. While being single has become more acceptable, we still live in a coupled society where going to parties, the movies, restaurants, on vacation, or to family gatherings can still feel awkward if you are not part of a couple. And, as with any other life choice, a person is happier if they actually choose to be single, as opposed to being single as a result of some unfortunate circumstance.






## FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

The family life cycle is one way that social scientists have found to study the family. A family which follows this cycle starts as a couple and moves on to parenting. Their children grow up and eventually leave home. The couple gains new interests and gets ready for retirement. In the meantime, a new generation has begun the same pattern.

### STAGE 1 - NEWLY MARRIED PAIR

In this stage, a newly married couple gets to know each other and learns to work as a team. They need to depend upon each other yet maintain their individuality. They learn to communicate with each other and work out their relationships with others—friends, in-laws and extended family. They make decisions as a couple as to where to live, furnishing and

## THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

<p>Newly Married</p> 	<p>Early Parenthood</p> 	<p>Later Parenthood</p> 	<p>Empty Nest</p> 	<p>Retirement</p> 
<p>Married couple without children.</p>	<p>Couple with child(ren) up to elementary school age.</p>	<p>Couple with adolescent or teenage children who are still at home.</p>	<p>Couple with child(ren) who have left home.</p>	<p>Couple from time of retirement until death of both spouses.</p>

equipping their home, managing finances and planning careers. This is an exciting stage as a couple prepares for a life together.

### STAGE 2 - EARLY PARENTHOOD

The first part of this stage is the expectant parent stage where a couple prepares for the new baby during the nine months of pregnancy. This stage also includes the infant/toddler stage, the birth of subsequent children, the preschool years, when the first child begins school, and continues until this child finishes elementary school. The stage is characterized by major lifestyle changes, where the focus is on the children and less time is spent as a couple. This stage is also referred to as “the crowded years” when couples are juggling the demands of

parenting, role changes, career pressures, and financial concerns. These years are frequently considered to be both the most stressful and the most rewarding of the family life cycle.

### STAGE 3 - LATER PARENTHOOD

This stage of parenting begins when the oldest child begins adolescence and junior/senior high school. It involves raising a teenager, going through puberty, dating, peer pressure and testing independence. When the first child moves away from home, parents enter the launching phase. The later parenthood stage lasts until all the children have left home, with parents having to adjust to their new family size as they “let go” of their children.

## STAGE 4 - EMPTY NEST

This stage begins when the last child has left home and parents now have an empty nest like the mother bird when all her chicks have flown away. This stage gives parents an opportunity to renew their relationship; for some it is like a second honeymoon. Their careers have peaked and income pressures have decreased. They have time to take up new hobbies or interests. Some may have grandchildren to enjoy and others may have an aging parent to care for.

## STAGE 5 - RETIREMENT

This stage begins with retirement and includes the adjustments made when one stops working. Couples who look forward to retirement enjoy financial security, travel, hobbies, family and friends. At some point in this stage, one spouse loses his/her partner. Aging in the later part of this stage may require personal or medical care and changes in residence.

The family cycle describes the general stages of many families, but of course does not represent all families, nor do the stages always neatly follow one after another. For example, a family may have both very young children and teenagers. Single parent families may never go through the newly married phase. A middle-aged couple may never experience “empty nest” if their adult children remain at home, or their aging parents move in. But, the basic cycle of children growing up in a family and then raising their own families still continues in our society.

## ACTIVITY 2: FAMILY STRUCTURES

It's worth  
75  
points

1. Listed below are the family structures that you have been reading about, and a number of scenarios that describe different family situations. For each scenario, name the family structure that best describes it. You will use each family structure at least once. (15 points)

### Family Structures

Nuclear family  
Single parent family  
Extended family  
Postponed parenthood  
Blended family  
Single person  
Cooperative family  
Sandwich generation  
Commuter marriage  
Childless couple

### Scenarios

- a) Susan lives with her father, her grandmother and her aunt.
- b) Matt and his mother have lived alone since his parents divorced.
- c) Tina was thrilled when she had saved enough money to move out of her parents' home and into an apartment of her own.
- d) Jenny and Brian were excited when their son, Thomas, was born.
- e) Since Owen got a job working on offshore drilling rigs, he spends three weeks of the month away from home and one week at home.

- f) When his ex-wife died unexpectedly, Richard found himself in charge of his two children.
- g) When John lost his job, he, his wife and daughter moved in with his parents temporarily.
- h) Janet and Troy found themselves looking after her aging parents while having their twenty-three year old son live at home.
- i) Carrie and Sandra, both single parents, have teamed up to share the expenses of an apartment and a babysitter.
- j) Natalie and Phil have decided to postpone starting a family until their careers are more stable and they have gone on a dream vacation.
- k) When Shawna married Bill, her daughter and his son lived with the newlyweds.
- l) Karen and Tony have decided that they do not want any children in their marriage.
- m) Sue and Pat have three daughters between the ages of two and six.
- n) Besides being a new parent to her own daughter, Rebecca is a step-mother to her husband's four-year old son.
- o) David lives with his wife, Marie, and their two daughters and one son in a small rural community.

2. Describe each of the following family structures in **one** or **two** sentences. Then give **two** or **three** strengths of each family structure, and **two** or **three** challenges for each. Use the course notes, as well

as your own knowledge or experience with these types of families. (25 points)

Organize your information as follows:

Description:

Strengths:

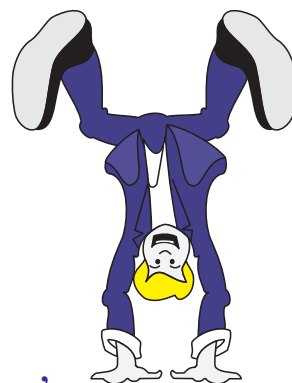
Challenges:

- a) Nuclear family
- b) Single parent family
- c) Blended family
- d) Extended family
- e) Childless family

3. Watch closely a television program or movie where a family plays a prominent role, or read a story where a family plays a prominent role. Write a report in which you discuss the way the family was depicted. Give the name of the movie, TV program or book and discuss the following aspects: (15 points)

- what kind of family was depicted?
- how did the family members interact with one another?
- who was the breadwinner? who looked after the children?
- what messages were relayed regarding different family roles?
- how realistic were the portrayals of the different members of the

- family? how stereotypical are the portrayals?
4. For each of the following situations, which stage of the family life cycle is being described? Write your answer beside the number of the question on your notepaper. (10 points)
- a) Brianna's parents come to see her in the school play.
  - b) Marie and John spend a week at the beach on their honeymoon.
  - c) Norman has stopped working and is now a volunteer at his municipal library.
  - d) Sherry and Charles have a new baby named Jesse.
  - e) In their first year of marriage, Gloria and Steve have saved enough money to move to a larger apartment.
  - f) Amber enjoyed a month of free time at home after high school graduation, but reports to the navy tomorrow.
  - g) Victoria and George enjoy having their grandchildren come for overnight visits now that neither of them are employed.
  - h) Ruth's daughter is in the first grade, while her husband Noah's son is a freshman in high school.
  - i) After 23 years of married life, Stan and Julie are a couple again now that their youngest daughter has left for college.
- j) Sarah is helping her daughter Dana furnish her apartment by going through the attic to find items that might be usable.
5. Answer the following questions about the family life cycle. (10 points)
- a) In what stage(s) of the family life cycle is *your* family now?
  - b) What stage of the family life cycle do you think will be most difficult for *your* family? Explain why.
  - c) Which stage do you think will be the most enjoyable for *your* family? Explain your answer.
  - d) If a couple postponed parenthood, how would this affect the remaining stages of the life cycle?
  - e) How would having children as a teenager affect the life cycle stages?



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YOUR MARKER YET.**

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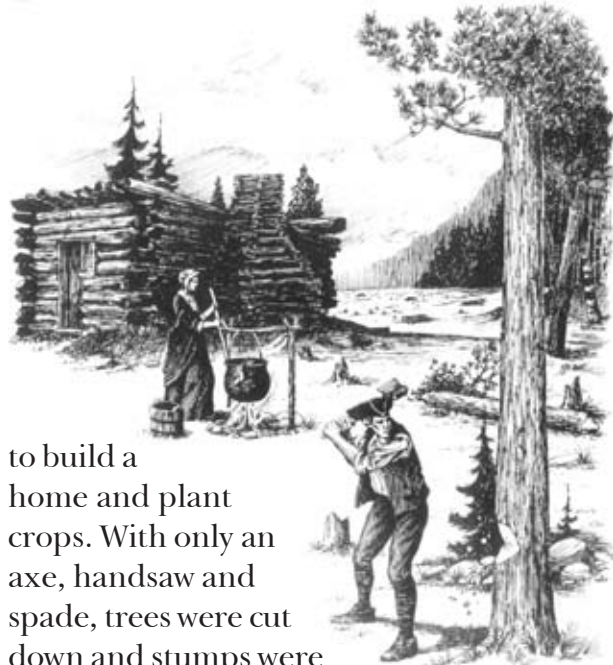
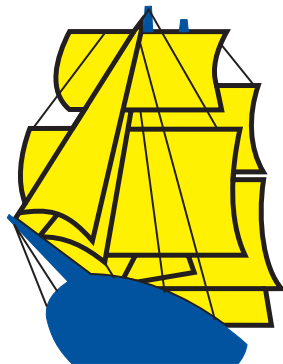
## CANADIAN FAMILIES IN THE PAST

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to be a pioneer in Canada? Perhaps you have visited one of the historic homes or villages in Nova Scotia or some other province. Perhaps someone in your family has traced your family tree, or there's an amateur historian in the family who has lots of stories about your ancestors.

Everyone in Canada is either an immigrant or a descendent of an immigrant. Many historians believe that even our First Nations peoples came here from elsewhere—across the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. Four per cent of Canadians today report Aboriginal origins. Sixty-nine per cent of Canadians today claim some British or French blood.

Most pioneer families came to Canada to make a better life for themselves. Many came to escape poverty, or religious or political persecution, or crowded cities or unproductive farms. The voyage to their new home took several weeks in cramped, over-crowded wooden ships. They usually came with few personal possessions, the bare essentials. When they arrived to their grant of land, they had to make their first home from the virgin forest. The very first settlers to Canada came to the Annapolis Valley area in Nova Scotia in the early 1600s.

The pioneer's first task was to clear land



to build a home and plant crops. With only an axe, handsaw and spade, trees were cut down and stumps were left to rot over a period of years. The first years were filled with unimaginable hardship and backbreaking labour. When storms or frost killed crops, pioneers had to survive on fish, berries and wild game. Many pioneers died from the cold, hunger, or disease, or were killed by Indians, wild animals, fallen trees or axe cuts.

The first cabins of the pioneers were crude and small due to the limited time that they had to make a shelter before the cold weather set in. Cabins were made of roughly hewn logs fitted together at the corners, with mud and clay packed in to fill the openings. There was a hole in the roof for a chimney and a hard packed mud floor. Doorways were covered with blankets or animal skins. In the winters, snow blew in through the cracks in the walls and the door opening. The cabins could be very cold, heated only by a log fire.

Later, when a pioneer had cleared more land, he could build a better home. This home would have a floor of split pine

logs, a roof covered with tamarack bark or cedar shingles, a fireplace with a chimney for heat and cooking, doors, and oiled paper in the window openings. Over time, homes became larger with more rooms, glass for windows, and clapboard siding.

Pioneers had large, extended families which could include grandparents, unmarried aunts and uncles, and a hired hand. Pioneer families were large because they needed family members to work the land and not all children were expected to live past infancy. Many died of poor living conditions and disease.

Because homes were often isolated from one another, pioneer families had to be as self-sufficient as possible, with all family members working together for the survival of everyone. Each person had essential tasks to perform and knew exactly what was expected. Women raised the children. Women and children made the



clothes, spinning the sheep's wool and making linen from the flax plant.

They made household items such as candles and soap, planted and tended the gardens, and preserved the food for winter. This was done by drying (apples, fish), pickling

(vegetables), and salting and smoking (meat).

The oldest girl helped to look after her younger siblings and with the cooking, gardening and cleaning. Boys were expected to chop wood, carry water, hunt, and help their fathers in the fields. The oldest boy slept by the fire at night and kept it going. He had the most responsibilities and had hope of taking over the land some day.

In the early days, education occurred in the home where children learned skills such as gardening, spinning and land clearing from other family members and, if they were lucky, basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. When schools were set up (after 1830), children only went to school when they could be spared from farm chores. Often the older boys were needed to work in the fields, and the older girls were needed to help raise the younger children. When children grew up, they usually married someone nearby and started their own farm. When a young man was looking for a wife, he was interested in finding someone who could work on the farm with him.

For any project that was too big for the family to accomplish—building a house or barn, clearing a tract of land, quilting or moving—there would be “bees” in which a group of people would gather to help each other out. A barn-raising usually ended with a feast prepared by the women and a dance which often lasted into the next day. In a time where there were few organized forms of entertainment, bees also provided a chance for neighbours to get together and socialize. It might be one of the few places where a future wife and husband could meet.

Religion played a big part in pioneer life. If a household had no other book, it usually had a Bible. The first church services were held in a home and family members frequently had daily prayers. Later, when churches were built, they became the center of the community and were used for study groups, socials, concerts, and picnics. As Sunday was the one day of rest for the pioneer family, the time after church services was used to chat with friends and neighbours and exchange news.

As more families moved into an area, a village developed. In a village, there might be a general store, a blacksmith shop, a harness maker's shop, a wheelwright (fixed wheels, carriages and wagons), perhaps a lawyer, a doctor, and a school. There was very little actual money, and farmers would exchange their produce for goods and services. Once manufactured goods such as candles, soap and fabric could be shipped from overseas, women had more time for other activities.

By the 1880s and 1890s Canada's population had reached the point where we needed manufactured goods to be produced right here in Canada, not imported from abroad. The Industrial Age had come to Canada. Farm machinery was invented to do many tasks that had previously been done by hand; therefore, fewer people were needed on the farms to

grow crops. On the other hand, the growth of factories and businesses required large numbers of people to work in them, and many farm labourers, looking for a better life, left the farms for work in the cities.



*Women and men work on mill looms, 1907.*

Urban families changed as a result. Men and women working in ill-lit, hot, sweaty factories worked 10 to 12 hours, six days a week, for little pay. Many of the workers were new immigrants to the country. Their homes were small, if they owned a home at all. Many of them rented rooms in boarding houses. Children as young as eight worked



*A fourteen-year-old coal miner.*



### A CLOSER PEEK AT THE PAST

If you are interested in knowing more about pioneer life, you can visit one of the following historic homes or villages in Nova Scotia.

Perkins House Museum, Liverpool

Ross-Thompson House Museum,  
Shelburne

North Hills Museum, New Ross

Prescott House Museum, Starrs Point

Shand House Museum, Windsor

Haliburton House Museum, Windsor

Uniacke Estate Museum Park, Mount  
Uniacke

Lawrence House Museum, Maitland,  
Hants County

McCulloch House Museum, Pictou

Cossit House, Sydney

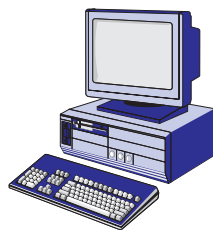
Sherbrooke Village, Sherbrooke

Fisherman's Life Museum, Jeddore/  
Oyster Ponds

Fortress of Louisbourg, Louisbourg

Port Royal, Fort Anne, Annapolis  
Royal

For more information and dates that these historic sites are open, check the website



<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/museum>

### TRACING YOUR ROOTS

Many people are interested in genealogy, or tracing their ancestors. People want to know who they are related to, where their ancestors came from, what they were like, and where they lived. They may also be looking for names passed down in families, or links to hereditary diseases.

If you are interested in tracing your roots, you can start by seeing if someone in your family has already done a family history. Often one person in the family is more interested in history than others. You can find more about your ancestors by asking older relatives (for example, grandparents, great-grandparents, great aunts and uncles). You can look at family records that may be found in a family Bible, in church records, or on headstones in cemeteries.

Terrence M. Punch has written a book entitled *Genealogical Research in Nova Scotia* (Nimbus Publishing Limited, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1998) which may help you with your research. The Public Archives of Nova Scotia in Halifax can be another important source of family historical information. You can create your own family tree by hand, use a customized geneological computer program, or buy a book specially designed to hold your family documents and record your family history.

alongside adults in workshops, mines and factories.

Women were expected to have babies (lots of them), and still keep family and home together while their men were at work. In the late 1800s Canadian women began working to achieve equal rights. Their main goal was to gain the right to vote (which was not gained until 1920).

Family members were more likely to move around the country in search of work. The extended family, where multi-generations lived in the same area, began to break down. It became more common for people to marry someone they had not known their whole life. Living in cities and towns, families had to depend on others outside the family to provide them with the consumer items they required.

In most provinces in Canada, children only had to go to school until they were 12 or 14 years old. Many children were needed at home to work on the farm or to bring in extra money with a factory job.



*Classroom of an urban school at the turn of the century*

### ACTIVITY 3: CANADIAN FAMILIES IN THE PAST

It's worth  
45  
points

1. Compare the roles of pioneer family members (mothers, fathers and children) with the roles these members play in today's family. Describe the similarities and differences. Your answer should include **one** to **two** paragraphs for each family member. (15 points)
2. The pioneers were very courageous to come to a new land and start a new life. How does this idea appeal to you? Would you want to be an inter-galactic pioneer and live in a space station? Explain why or why not. (10 points)
3. Do **one** of the following three activities. (20 points)
  - a) Trace your family roots for three generations to your great-grandparents. Complete your family tree on the sheet provided on page 29 in this manual. For each person on your family tree, print the complete name—first, middle and last—in the appropriate place. Begin with your name and then **above** that put both your parents' names. **Above** each of your parents, put the names of their parents (your grandparents), and **above** this put the names of their parents, (your great grandparents). **Under** each person's name, include dates of birth and death (if applicable) and their

*Continued on page 28*

### THE AMISH—NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED

In our own time, the Amish continue to live like our pioneers did. More than 100,000 Amish live in Ontario and the United States. They live in extended families and make a living by farming. They have strong beliefs in the family unit and in their religion. They do not have electricity, radios, televisions, computers, VCRs, cars, or farm tractors. They believe that having modern technology goes against the Bible's teachings and that it separates family members. They do all their work by hand—farming, cooking, cleaning. The evenings are spent with the family, often with father reading the Bible, talking, and sharing stories, all by candlelight.

Amish men dress very simply in plain, dark coloured suits, and grow beards after they marry. Women usually wear plain, dark coloured dresses



*This photograph was taken in St. Jacob's outside Guelph, Ontario. The Amish in the area come to this village to get supplies.*

**Source:** C. Harris

with long sleeves, bonnets and aprons. They do not wear jewelry, not even a wedding band. They fasten their clothes with hooks and eyes, and pins.

The Amish travel by horse and buggy. They believe having a car may encourage the younger members to leave the community. They attend one-room school houses until grade eight, which is all the education that they believe a Amish child needs. They marry within their group. Children are taught obedience which is very important in preserving their culture. They do not take photos.

Want to know more about the Amish?  
Check out the following Internet site

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bpl/mennocon.html#amish>



birthplace. If you are unable to find this information, write a short note stating this so your marker will know it is not an omission.

If you have a stepparent, you can decide if you want to complete a family tree for that parent. If you decide to do so, make a copy of the family tree sheet for their tree.

List all the sources where you found your information—people you talked to, records you looked at, histories you read, headstones you went to see, etc. Do this on the back of the family tree sheet.

What did you learn as you worked on your family tree? Were there any surprises? Write your observations on the back of the family tree sheet.

**OR**

b) Visit one of the historical homes or sites in your province. Based on a tour of the site, any tourism literature you picked up, and any information you received from the tour guides, do a write-up of your visit. Your write-up should include the following:

- i. name and the location of the historical home or site
- ii. background information about the home or site including such things as the date it was built, description of the building(s) and its furnishings, who the first inhabitants were, where they came from, etc. You

can include your own sketch of the home or site in your report.

- iii. description of how families lived at that time
- iv. **two** or **three** things that you learned from your visit that you did not know before

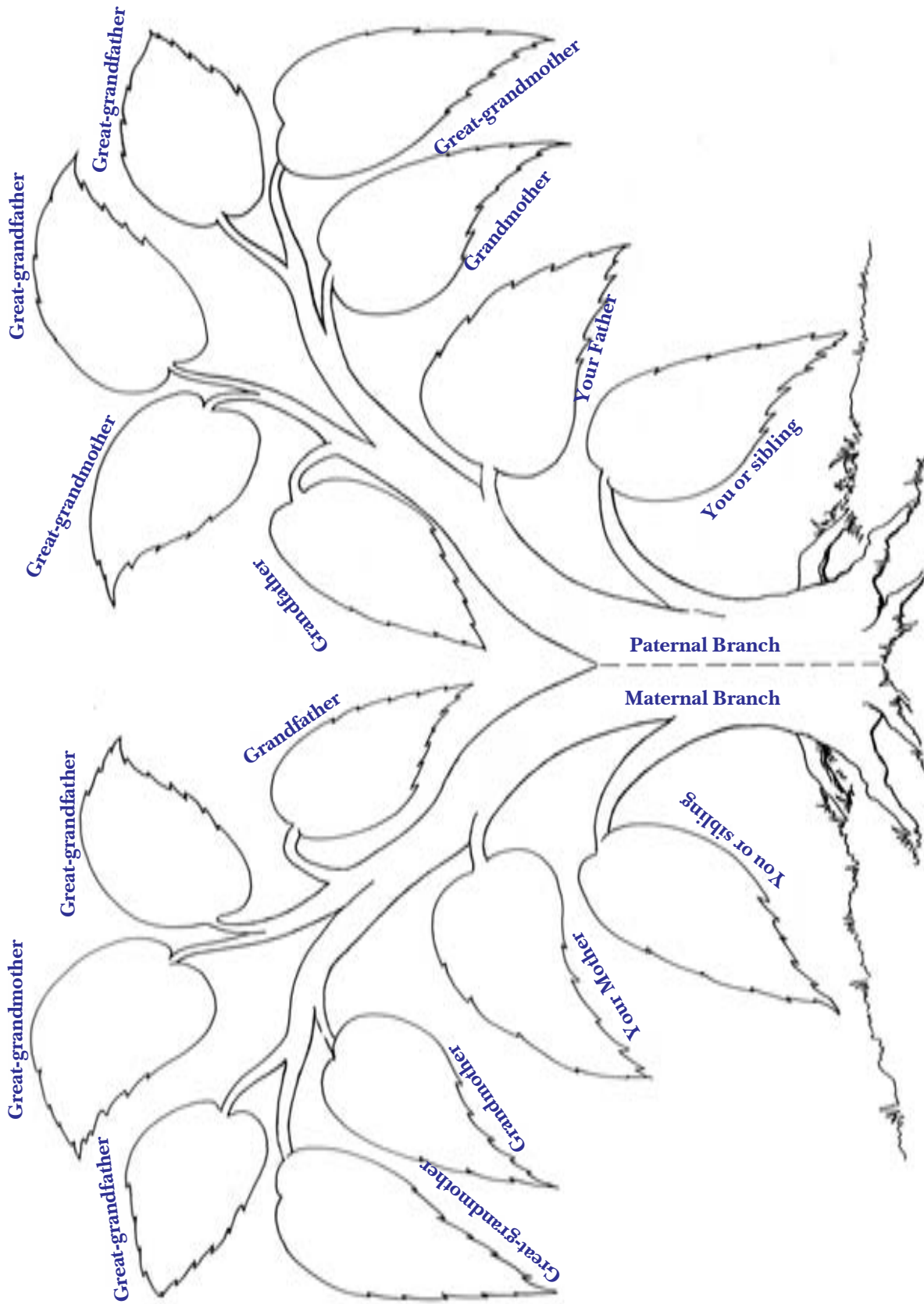
Your write-up should be **400-500 words** in length.

**OR**

c) Interview a senior citizen who is willing to talk to you about their life. This could be a grandparent, a family relative, a neighbour, or a senior in your community. Before you interview this person, plan your questions in advance (based on the suggestions we have given you below) and write them down so that you are organized. Take notes during the interview or tape record the interview. Find out the following types of information:

- i. Family roots—where he/she was born; when; where his/her parents came from; how many brothers and sisters he/she has; why he/she came to this country/province (if born somewhere else)
- ii. Family of procreation (the family that he/she had)—number of children; when born; where
- iii. Schooling—when he/she went to school; level of educa-

Tear out and send to your marker with Activity 3





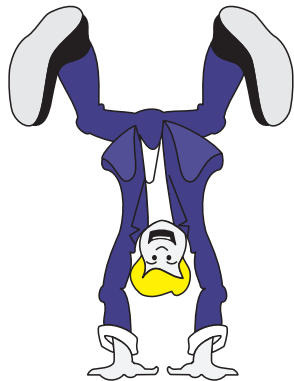
tion obtained; how education differed from today

iv. Growing up—chores/responsibilities; leisure activities; dating practices

v. Work—types of jobs; what work was like

vi. Changes over a lifetime—what the person’s life is like now; what was good/not so good about the past; what have been the biggest changes

Write up your interview in essay style, and include a conclusion that discusses **two** or **three** things that you learned by interviewing this senior. Your write-up should be **400-500 words** in length.



**DON'T SEND ANY WORK TO  
YOUR MARKER YET.**

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## MODERN CANADIAN FAMILIES

What we think of as the “traditional” nuclear family of mom, dad and two kids was really only the most common family form for a few decades in the mid-20th century. Families have been continually adapting to changes in our world, especially to changes in the economy and to our social systems. The following are some of the major socio-economic upheavals that occurred in the past forty years that have had a profound effect on the modern Canadian family.

### THE ETHIC OF INDIVIDUALISM

The ethic of individualism was a viewpoint that focused on “me” rather than the family in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. In the 60s it was “do your own thing,” where hippies and flower children pursued personal freedoms and self-expression, and were against such institutions as big corporations, governments, organized religions and marriage. The 70s “me generation” lead people to fulfill their own needs and goals, without a lot of thought to others, society, or the environment. In the 80s, it was the “cult of self improvement” where people looked to self-help books, self-awareness programs, recovery groups, and spiritual gurus to find more meaning in their lives. The cumulative effect of three decades of individualism was that family members lived separate lives, often great distances apart from one another, doing their own activities, seeking their own self-fulfillment, with little connection or communication to each other.

### THE BIRTH CONTROL PILL

The birth control pill was developed and introduced in 1960. Coupled with other social changes happening at the time, the pill led to a revolution in sexual attitudes. For the first time in history, women had an effective means to control unwanted pregnancies. Couples participated in sex outside of marriage and common-law relationships became far more accepted. And married couples, now able to control family size, began to make decisions around delaying marriage and childbearing.

### LIBERALIZATION OF DIVORCE LAWS

Divorce and separation used to be difficult to obtain and socially frowned upon. In the past, the only legal grounds a couple had for seeking divorce was to prove adultery or abuse. In 1968, a new era dawned when the divorce laws in Canada were liberalized. A couple who had lived apart for three years could now be granted a divorce. It was little wonder that the divorce rate skyrocketed through the 70s and 80s. About forty per cent of marriages entered into today can be expected to end in separation or divorce. The effects on the family unit included an increase in the number of single parent families, a rise in custody battles in the courts, and a rise in blended families where remarrying couples had to merge families from previous unions.

### CHANGING WOMEN'S ROLES

The change in the status and role of women in our society since the 1960s can only be described as revolutionary. Women began attending post-secondary institutions (colleges and universities) in

large numbers beginning in the 1960s and now constitute the majority of students in many undergraduate programs and fields. Having invested significantly in their education, many women expected to move into the labour force and stay there throughout their working lives, having the right to have both a career and a family life. The women's movement of the 60s was really a movement about choice: the choice to have a career along with the more traditional role of homemaker and mother; the choice not to have children at all.

As with any important social change, the mass movement of women into the marketplace created challenges for both society and the family. Women began to demand access to jobs traditionally restricted to men and to demand equal pay for equal work. Men had to adjust to changing gender roles in the home where housekeeping, child rearing, financial management and decision making duties were shared more equitably. Children were looked after by paid caregivers or, when they were older, became responsible for looking after themselves until their parents came home from work. Families often had more money to spend, but less leisure time to spend together as families.

### DECLINE OF THE "FAMILY WAGE"

The idea of a family wage was based on the assumption that the average industrial wage paid to male employees should be sufficient to support a number of dependent children and a spouse whose primary responsibility was to care for the children and the household. In the 1950s and 60s, most men were able to boast that "No wife of mine will ever have to get a job."



**WAS IT REALLY THIS WAY?**

*Following is from an actual 1950s home economics textbook intended for high school girls, teaching them how to prepare for married life.*

1. Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal—on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him, and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.
2. Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.
3. Clear away clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.
4. Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces if they are small, comb their hair, and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.
5. Minimize the noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad to see him.
6. Some DON'TS. Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.
7. Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lay down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.
8. Listen to him. You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.
9. Make the evening his. Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment; instead try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his need to be home and relax.
10. The Goal: try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax.

The cost of raising a family began to escalate, particularly from the 1980s onward. In 1992, Manitoba’s Agricultural Ministry estimated that it cost \$150,000 to raise a child to age 18, not including post-secondary education. (This is close to the average Canadian cost although it may be lower in some rural areas.)

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF RAISING A CHILD FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 18

Child care (unsubsidized, licensed day care, age 0-11) .....	\$52,000
Shelter, furnishings, household operation .....	37,000
Food .....	30,000
Clothing (includes cloth diapers for 2 ½ years) .....	16,000
Recreation, reading, gifts to others, school needs.....	13,000
Health care .....	5,000
Personal care .....	3,000
Transportation .....	3,000
Total costs .....	\$159,000

**Source:** Adapted from “The Cost of Raising a Child: 1998” Manitoba Agriculture.

Notes: Child care costs vary widely from family to family.

A second child does not automatically double all the costs. (Clothes, toys, baby equipment may be handed down, big brother or sister may babysit a younger sibling.)

The effect on the family has been multi-fold: faced with the the rising costs of living, couples are choosing to delay having children, are deciding to have fewer children, or are deciding to have no children at all. Today, the national fertility rate in Canada—the number of children per woman aged 15-49—is about 1.6,

well below the rate of 2.1 which is needed to replace ourselves.

For those who choose to have children, the average wage paid to today’s employee—whether male or female—is no longer enough to meet a family’s financial needs, and most families depend on two incomes just to make ends meet. Today in Canada, the dual wage-earning family far outnumbers the so-called traditional male breadwinner model of family (55 per cent of Canadian couples have both husband and wife employed).

AGING OF SOCIETY

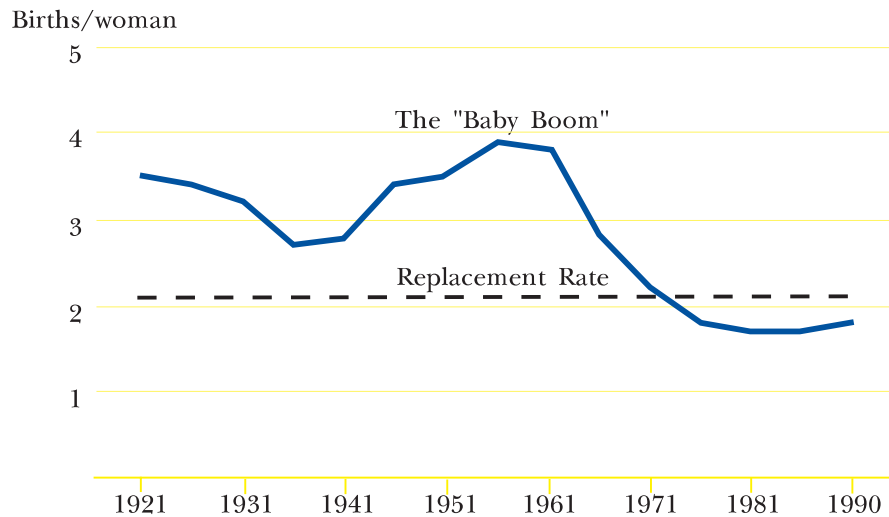
So many children were born after World World Two in the prosperous times of the 1950s and early 60s that they were given the name baby boom generation. The boomers are getting older and living longer. The oldest boomers will reach age sixty-five by the year 2030.

The sheer size of this group will have profound effects on society and the family. These aging Canadians will be richer, better educated, and more politically active than any of their predecessors. They will demand and expect services such as housing, healthcare, recreation and continuing education that cater to the unique needs of a senior population. At the same time, weaker family ties, smaller families who may not live in close proximity, and governments trying to cope with the demand for many services, may give rise to serious issues. Who will care for so many seniors? Will pension plans support seniors in later years? Will families be able or willing to care for their own seniors in later years? How will we, as a society, accomplish this?

## FROM BOOM TO BUST

Fertility rates sagged to record lows before staging mini-rally in late '80s

### Total Fertility Rate



**Source:** Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics

### ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Technological advances have had significant effects on the family. By the early 1960s, machines were doing much of the repetitive, dangerous, or back-breaking work that people once did. With advancements in electronics, computers and robotics, this process has accelerated at dizzying speeds and shows no signs of slowing down. As a result, the workplace in general has become healthier and a more satisfying place for workers than during the industrial era.

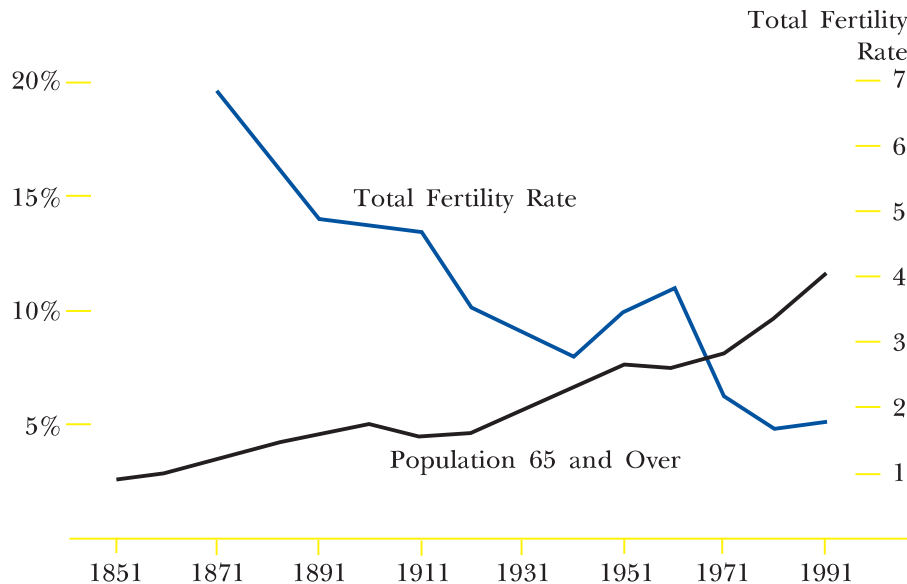
Technology has improved the quality of our lives in so many ways. We live in houses with central heating, indoor plumbing, and modern labour-saving devices. Medical advances and improved

nutrition have extended our lifespans and enhanced the quality of our lives throughout the span. We can replace a hip, have a heart transplant, or operate on a fetus before birth. Sophisticated transportation and communication systems mean that we now live in a global village (rather than the isolated village of 200 years ago), and we can keep in regular touch with family even if they live half-way around the world.

Technology has changed the way that we entertain ourselves and keep informed. Where once we relied on home grown entertainment—family and friends swapping tall tales or fiddling and singing at the kitchen table—today 99 per cent of Canadian households have a television, 75

## THE GREYING OF CANADA

## The Aging of the Population



**Source:** Prepared by The Vanier Institute of the Family

per cent have VCRs, and many have satellite dishes, computers and other technologies. At the flick of a button, we can select our favorite entertainment program, or keep current on the latest developments in science, health, business, world events and social issues.

But technology is a “double-edged sword.” While computers have relieved us from much of the drudgery workers once faced, we don’t seem to have gained a lot of extra leisure. We still seem to be working long hours—some of us at several jobs—and many of us are connected 24-hours a day to the office or plant through faxes, cell phones, email and laptop computers. While household gadgets have made life more pleasant and convenient,

it has also allowed family members to lead more separate lives (microwaved meals, multiple family cars, computers and televisions in every bedroom, etc.). Many complain that television and computers have turned us into a nation of “couch potatoes” where we would rather be entertained by strangers than create our own activities or interact with people.

Where our forefathers barely had enough to eat, we have to diet and exercise to keep weight off and stay healthy. Where people in the past cherished every “extra” they were able to scrimp and save for, we seem to be able to buy whatever we want, whenever we want. Many people are concerned about how materialistic and greedy we seem to have become. And our

fascination with technology has had disastrous effects on the environment. We are using up non-renewal resources at a frightening pace, creating air, water and soil pollution around the globe, and triggering a host of previously unknown diseases that we are just now starting to comprehend.



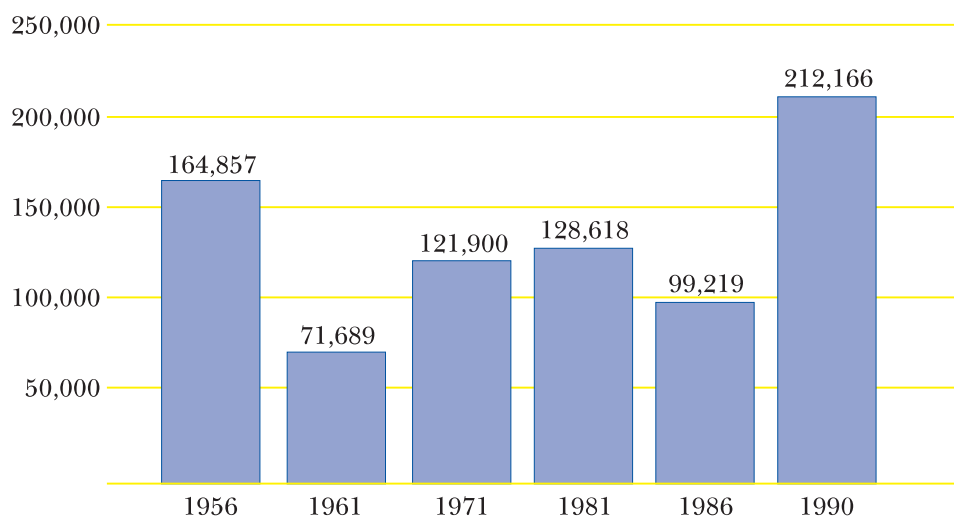
**INCREASED IMMIGRATION**

From Canada’s very beginnings, we have always been a country that welcomed newcomers who were escaping hardships in their own country, or seeking a better life in a new land. In the early days, immigrants typically settled in the less populated regions of the country, starting out as farmers or small tradespeople. Today, most immigrants live in the largest cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver where there are more job opportunities and larger ethnic communities to help them settle into their new environment.

Because Canada’s birth rate is so low, it is only through immigration that our population is able to grow at all.

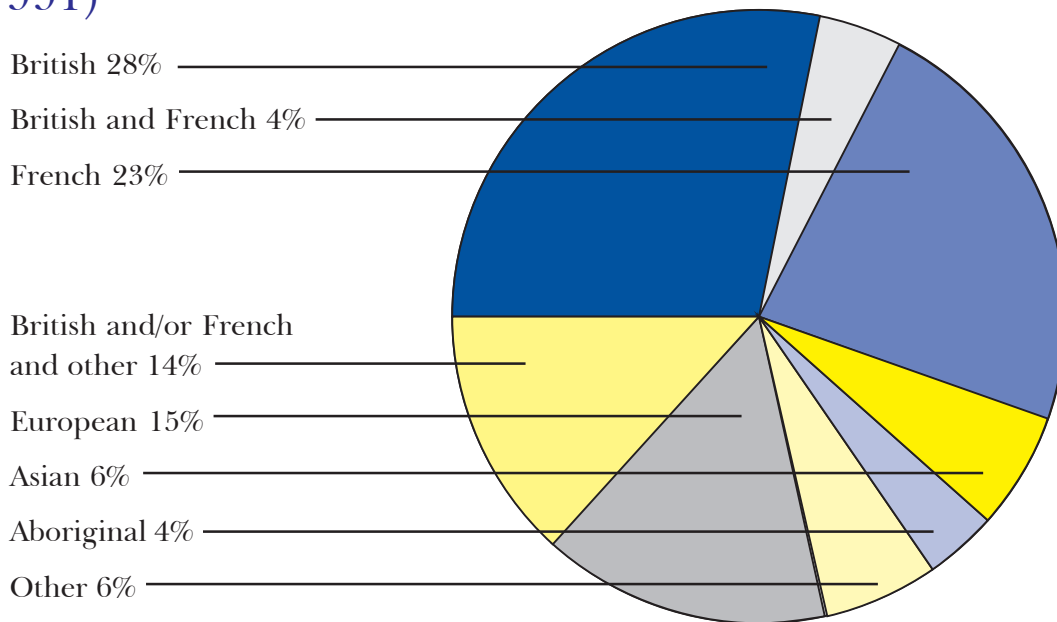
Canada’s multicultural make-up is both a source of strength and a source of tension. The rest of the world sees us as an example of a place where people from diverse races and religions can live together in relative peace, harmony and mutual respect. Immigrants have brought their energies and talents to this country

**TOTAL NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED TO CANADA**



Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics

## ETHNIC ORIGINS OF CANADIANS (1991)



**Source:** Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics

and built Canada's economy and standard of living to one of the best in the world. They have also introduced us to new foods, celebrations, languages, music, customs, and ideas, and made Canada a culturally rich, exciting place to live.

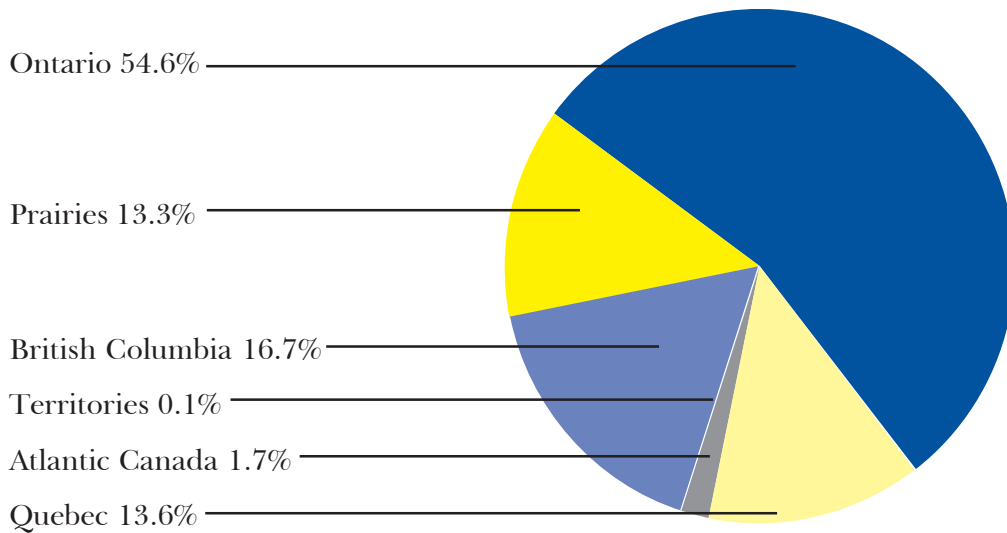
However, immigration can also breed racial tensions, when people mistakenly believe that immigrants take away their jobs, or abuse our health care and social services. For the immigrants themselves, tremendous stress is placed on the family as they adjust to a new culture, learn a new language, find jobs, deal with isolation and loneliness, and generally figure out how things work.

Some children of recent immigrants feel trapped between two traditions. On the one hand, they want to absorb and fit into the Western culture they are exposed to through the media, school or work. On the other hand, the parents may be opposed to their children taking up with Western fads, fashions and values (dating, living independently, consumerism, etc.) that they feel are inappropriate or disrespectful.

*I'm two different people really. At school I speak English, at home I keep my Russian.*  
(14-year old female, born in Russia)

*I get along with my mother OK, we just get into arguments sometimes. I like my privacy, she's so curious, like if a friend calls, she asks them where they live, how old they are . . . She's*

## DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY REGION



**Source:** Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics

*scared that I hang out with bad people, but it's embarrassing.*

(17-year old male, born in Lithuania)

New immigrant parents tend to want their children to succeed in their new country and many try to influence their children's educational and career choices. Many teens feel the strain of living up to high parental expectations. In addition, some immigrant children are pushed into major decision making roles in the family, particularly if they are the only ones who can speak English. This

*They always have expectations for the first born, but my first brother, it didn't work for him, so everything came down to me. Basically, they want me to go to college, they want me to be somebody.*

(17-year old male, born in Honduras)

can upset the natural family roles between parents and child.

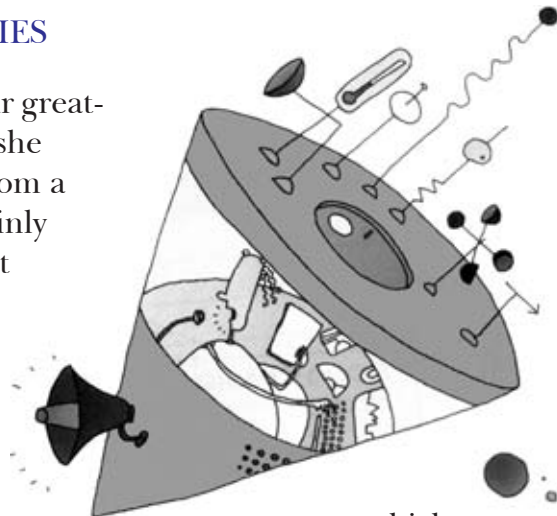
Inter-racial dating and marriage are very common amongst second or third generation immigrants and this can cause distress for both sides of the family who may prefer that their child marry within their own ethnic group. Generally speaking however, as families assimilate (become absorbed into a larger group) to their new home and culture, the stresses ease and they come to see themselves as Canadian, while continuing to preserve and take strength from their traditional heritage.

## FUTURE FAMILIES

If someone told your great-grandmother that she could get money from a machine, she certainly would have thought that they were pulling her leg. Nor would she believe that she could cook in an oven without any heat source, or talk to someone across the world and even see them on a screen by the phone. Life has certainly changed since your great-grandmother's day, and even since you have been born.

The nineties were a period of rapid change in families. The ethic of commitment of the 90s predicted that people would have more commitment towards families, relationships and for the environment. After three decades of individualism, there were signs that people were finding the single-minded search for self-fulfillment boring, lonely and impractical. Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people seem to be trying to recommit to relationships, trying harder to make marriages work, to put family needs before their own, and to reach out and reconnect to people in their communities.

What does the future hold for families? What form(s) of families will be common? Will families have the same functions as they do now? Will every home have a robot



which makes housework, childcare and grocery shopping obsolete? Of course, we will have to wait and see the answer to these questions.

One thing for certain is that families will continue to be important. Families have been, and continue to be, the basic unit of society. They nurture us and provide an environment in

which we can grow and develop. They provide us with our basic needs of companionship, support and sharing. They socialize us as human beings. They give us roots, connections and ties. In a survey asking what is most important, the majority (77 per cent) of people responded that their family is the most important aspect of their life. Only 17 per cent said their work was.

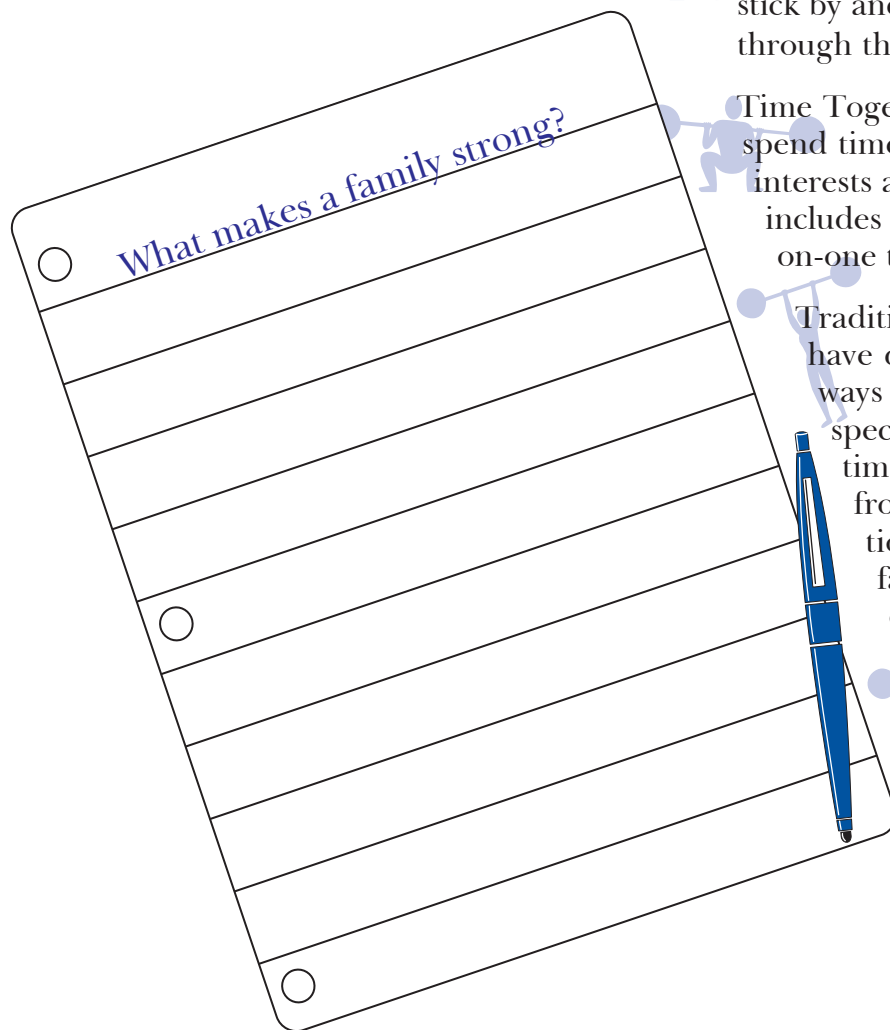
We, Canadians, do value our families. It's true that families no longer look or behave like families in the "good old days," and far too many families are marred by violence and poverty. But, despite all this, families are still central to who we are, to our very well-being and survival. We may say we can make it on our own, but the truth is that, as the world around us becomes less certain and secure, we need each other more than ever. So, in one form or another, the family will continue to survive.





## WHAT MAKES STRONG FAMILIES?


What comes to your mind when you think of a strong family? In the notebook below write down some of the characteristics that describe families that work and function well together.

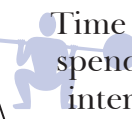
Compare your list to the following characteristics that social scientists have identified to describe strong families. Not every family will have all of these traits, but the more that they have, the more likely the family will have healthy functioning relationships.

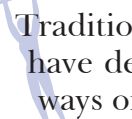



 **Affirmation**—saying “I love you” is important as we often take for granted and forget to show our family members that we care and love them. Just give a hug or do a favour for a family member!

 **Trust**—strong families can trust and depend upon each other. Children learn to trust early in life when their needs are met. We earn trust and when we make a mistake deserve a second chance to try to regain trust that was lost.

 **Commitment**—strong families are committed to each member, and stick by and support each other through the good and bad times.

 **Time Together**—strong families spend time together, sharing interests and activities. This also includes a parent spending one-on-one time with a child.

 **Traditions**—strong families have developed traditions, ways of doing things that are special to that family. Sometimes these are passed down from generation to generation. Traditions give a family a sense of stability, of belonging and being connected.

 **Communication**—strong families keep the lines of communication open among all its members, even when there are difficulties or disagreements.



Shared beliefs—strong families share beliefs about the meaning of life and in a higher power that gives the family support and hope especially in times of need. This may be a religious belief, or it may a commitment to some ideal beyond the individual or family (for example, commitment to the environment; tolerance for all people, etc.).



Respect—strong families have respect for each other’s individual differences, opinions and privacy.



Responsibility—in a strong family, everyone assumes some responsibility for the many tasks and functions it takes to make a household and family run smoothly. No one should be a guest in their own home!



Morality—strong families teach their children and practice the principles of right and wrong.



## ACTIVITY 4: MODERN CANADIAN FAMILIES

It's worth  
**115**  
points

1. Select the **three** trends from the list below that you believe had the greatest impact on the Canadian family in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Explain why you think these trends have greatly affected the structure and function of marriage, the family, and society as a whole. (20 points)
  - more liberal attitudes towards divorce
  - more women working outside the home
  - fewer children in the average family
  - more permissive attitudes towards premarital sex
  - more single parents
  - decreased participation in organized religion
  - more intercultural marriages
  - flexibility of male/female roles within the home and workplace
2. Choose **two** technologically advanced products your family uses (for example, the computer, microwave, television, electronic banking, answering machine). For **each** product, give **two** advantages of using this product and **two** drawbacks for your family. How would your daily life be different without

### MAKING FAMILY NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

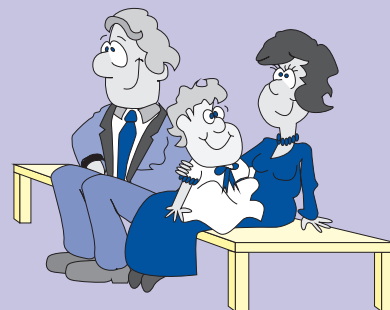
Routine family activities can give a child a sense of security, stability and family life. However, in the rush of everyday life, it is more difficult to keep in place the small, daily routines that provide family continuity. Repetitive acts within a family send your child the message that the family exists and is supporting the child.

The following are examples of family routines that reinforce family bonds:

- Reading to your child at bedtime is a peaceful, soothing way to close out an active day. Even 10 or 15 minutes of reading aloud can become an anticipated ritual that children will learn to use as a way to relax, share some time with a parent, and feel special.
- Sit down at meals together. This gives a family time to communicate about the day. It does not have to be an elaborate meal or have to be every night of the week. Designate one night of the week as family night: take the phone off the hook and spend time together. Breakfast may be easier to have together if evenings are busy.
- Reinforce the parent-child connection with simple words and actions that are unique to your family. Saying “I love you” to your child before sleep or as the first greeting of the day tells your child how special he is.
- Play games with your child. This gives your child the sense that you

enjoy spending time with him or her. The games can be simple ones invented by you—a board game, a singing game, or sports.

- Cook with your child for a fun, easy way to spend time together and establish routines. Helping in the kitchen also teaches responsibility and develops skills. Children love to be in a helping role and you are creating memories at the same time.
- Storytelling is an activity that can be done anywhere. The story can be about a parent’s childhood or can include the child as one of the characters. Children can enjoy contributing part of the story or guessing at the ending. Storytelling can be done in the car, waiting for an appointment, or at bedtime.
- Performing family chores and errands can make a child feel as if he or she is making a significant contribution to the family. Take one child with you as you do errands. This gives both of you a chance to have individual time together if there are siblings in the family.
- Going on family outings is a way to build memories and routines.



each product? What could you use or do instead? (15 points)

3. Do **one** of the following three assignments. (20 points)

a) Interview someone who is from another culture other than your own to find the following information:

- What adjustments and changes in his/her lifestyle did he/she make to fit into our culture?
- What challenges did he/she experience in making these changes?
- What customs of his/her own culture does he/she still maintain?
- What does he/she like best about the Canadian culture?

Your write-up should be **400-500 words** in length.

**OR**

b) Find out more about one of the cultures in Canada other than your own. Research on the internet, your local or school library, newspapers and magazines, or interview someone from that culture. Consider: religion, foods eaten, clothes worn, type of housing, roles for men and women, types of families, rituals and customs. Your write-up should be **400-500 words** in length.

**OR**

c) Imagine that you are from a foreign country visiting the commu-

nity in which you currently live in real life. Describe some of the unique qualities that make up the culture of your community. Would these qualities be typical of other communities in your province? Why or why not? Your write-up should be **400-500 words** in length.

4. a) Make **five** predictions for the future, for the year 2050. What do you think the future holds for us? Consider what will be new in the fields of technology, medicine and health, transportation, education, foods and nutrition, housing, or entertainment. What forms of families will be common? Will they have the same functions as they do now? Be creative! (10 points)

b) What **ten** items would you put in a time capsule to represent life now? Why did you put each of these items? (20 points)

5. Do **one** of the following two assignments. (10 points)

a) Recount some of the routines that helped create special bonds between members of your family of procreation. Name and describe **two** of these routines, and discuss how you felt when you participated in or were on the receiving end of these routines.

**OR**

b) Describe **two** routines that you would like to establish in your own family of orientation (or have already established) to create

strong bonds between family members. Why did you choose these routines? Explain.

6. a) **Reread** the article “Was It Really This Way?” on page 33 in this manual. In the same format as that article, write a magazine-style article for a couple considering a

permanent relationship in the 2000s. Give at least **eight** recommendations that will help the couple have a satisfying relationship.

- b) How do your recommendations differ from those in “Was It Really This Way?” How are they the same? (20 points)



CONGRATULATIONS!!

YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED UNIT 1.



Send the following activities for Unit 1 to your marker:

- Student Background Form
- Activity 1 - What are Families? (60 points)
- Activity 2 - Family Structures (75 points)
- Activity 3 - Canadian Families in the Past (45 points)
- Activity 4 - Modern Canadian Families (115 points)

Do not send partial assignments. Do not wait to get Unit 1 back from your marker. You can go on to Unit 2 right away.