

A basic understanding of English is required to begin Level 2 of the “Academic E.S.L. Preparation Program” at the Kelowna campus. The following is an example of materials used in Level 2 class. If you do not have the basic English vocabulary needed to read and understand the following, the “Intensive English Communication Program” at the Vernon campus may better suit your needs.

Changes in the Family

Sociologists study **society** and how it is organized. They study what a society believes and how it is changing. They explain how people behave, but not how they ought to behave.

Almost every society is based on the family. Some societies have **nuclear** families. In the nuclear family, the parents and children live together in one house. Other societies have **extended** families. In this kind of family, there are grandparents, parents, children, uncles, and other **relatives** all living together. In some societies, there are **tribes**. A tribe is a group of extended families that have the same **ancestors**. In North and South America, the **members** of each Indian tribe speak the same language. Each tribe in Africa has its own language too. In Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries, the tribes all speak Arabic.

Sometimes the power of the extended family or the tribe is based on the land that it owns.

Everybody in a family knows how to behave as a family member. Children learn how to act like grownups by watching the adults in their family. They learn how a father or mother should behave. Everyone knows what the correct behavior is, and relatives like to talk about this. “Is Kumiko acting the way a mother should act?” “Does Abdullah behave in the right way for a husband?”

It is hard to look at research about the family with our minds instead of our feelings. Each person is part of a family and a society and knows what a family should be like. It is hard to realize that one kind of family can fit a society well, even if it is very different from the family in our society.

Throughout history there have been slow changes in the family and in family life, but today the family is changing quickly. This change causes many problems for the society and the individual.

One of the major reasons for this fast change in the family is the change in how people **earn** their money. Today more and more people work in **factories** that make automobiles, furniture, clothes, and thousands of other products. Fewer people work on farms or make products at home. People work in **industry** instead. This change is called industrialization. The ownership of land in an industrial society is not as important as it was when people lived in villages.

For decades young people have been leaving farms and small towns to go to cities and work in factories. They often find a wife or husband in the city instead of marrying someone from their village. They start their own family away from their old home. These young people often have more money than the old people in their family.

In village life, young people went to the old people with their questions and problems. The old people had lived a long time and had more knowledge. However, as young people moved to cities, got more education, and learned technology, they discovered that the old people in their family did not have all the answers to their questions about life. Their new lives in the city were too different from village life. Also, in some countries, the government started making laws about things the tribe used to decide.

Life continued to change, and the children of these young people discovered that their city parents didn't always have the answers either. Life was changing too fast.

Since the end of World War II, industrialization has been increasing very fast throughout the world. This is causing family life to change faster too. Societies are losing their extended families. More **married couples** want their own homes where they can live with their children.

The West has had nuclear families instead of extended families at least since the Industrial **Revolution**. The Industrial Revolution started in England around 1760, when people changed from making things by hand to making them in factories.

Western families are changing too. When people get a good education and good jobs, they can improve their lives. They realize that if they have fewer children, they can give the ones they have a better life. Now more women work outside the home, and they delay having children. The size of families gets smaller. In the United States, some of these small nuclear families move several times, each time earning more money and improving their lives. Some young couples don't see their parents very often. They don't think it is necessary to invite their parents to live with them when the parents grow old. Many of the old parents don't want to live with their grown children either.

As Third World countries industrialize, they find they are having the same problems that Western families have. If a country modernizes and industrializes fast, the family changes fast. Many old people want life to continue as it was. Young people want to move ahead and change. These different ideas can cause problems in the family.

We can learn about these changes in the family from sociologists and understand why problems are developing. It is helpful for us to understand what

is happening to our societies, but each individual family must try to **solve** its problems for itself.

True/False/Not enough information (T, F, N)

- ___ 1. Sociologists tell us how people should behave so they can improve their society.
- ___ 2. Members of a tribe all have the same ancestors.
- ___ 3. Each individual learns how to fit into the family and society by copying the people around her or him.
- ___ 4. The family is changing fast because of industrialization.
- ___ 5. In many countries, the lives of young people are very different from the lives of their grandparents.
- ___ 6. The West had extended families until the 20th century.
- ___ 7. When a country modernizes fast, the family changes fast.
- ___ 8. The Industrial Revolution was a civil war in England.
- ___ 9. As countries industrialize, the family size decreases.

Comprehension Questions

- 1. What is a nuclear family?
- 2. What is a tribe?
- 3. Why can't the old people in a family always help young people solve their problems?
- 4. When did industrialization start increasing throughout the world?
- 5. Why do many American families move several times?
- 6. Is your country already industrialized, or is it now developing industries?