

Chapter 1, Family

Answer the following questions in details.

1. How many people are there in your family? What are their roles?
2. Is it better to have brothers or sisters or is it better to be an only child?
3. What age is best to start a family?
4. Is there a tendency to stay single and not to leave the family home?
5. How was family life different in your area a hundred years ago?
6. How should parents teach their children family values?
7. Are traditional family roles outdated? What roles do members of your family have?
8. Should children be the primary caregivers of elderly people or should society have the primary responsibility?
9. Have family traditions changed over the past decades? How?
10. Is the generational gap widening with the advent of new technologies?
11. How do family and friends keep in touch?
12. Has the Internet improved or diminished interpersonal relations?
13. What are the problems with an aging society?
14. How could the government motivate people to have more children?
15. Are there times when corporal punishment is necessary?
16. Should gay couples have the right to raise children?
17. How will families be different in a hundred years?

Give detailed reasons why you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. Family members should put family first, friends, jobs, etc. second.
2. Children should focus only on learning, so they shouldn't do chores.
3. Having friends is not important for social life.
4. Retired grandparents should take primary roles in raising their grandchildren so that parents could work and earn more money.
5. A husband should stay at home with a newborn baby.
6. In a family a man should wear the pants.
7. The only way to get the divorce rate down is if people don't marry.
8. School is more important in teaching good behaviour than family.
9. Parents and grandparents always spoil children.
10. A baby-sitter has all special moments with a child.
11. A healthy family role can be learned from TV shows.
12. Society needs to set up more child support programs.
13. Children are of paramount importance for the future of the country.
14. Women should not be allowed to be surrogate mothers.
15. Young adults should spend a few years abroad to learn about other societies and gain professional skills.
16. There will be no state pension by the time I retire so I will depend on my children.
17. Elderly people should save up for their funerals.

Writing

1. Your pen-friend wants to know more about your family. Write her a letter in which you introduce your family. How many people are there in your family? How typical is that? What tasks/roles do members have? How do you spend your free time? What family celebrations do you have?
2. You have just read a blog entry on the internet about shallow interpersonal relationships. Write an entry in which you either agree or disagree whether new developments in communication have contributed to the problem. Is Facebook more important than meeting friends personally?
3. As the saying goes, you can choose your friends but not your family. Are family more important than friends? Should members of a family stay close to each other or should they move to cities far away for school or better jobs? What is typical in your area? 
4. Your English friend sent you a survey by British researchers in which they found that most people in the UK believe that the generation gap is widening. What can be the reasons behind? Is it similar in your country? Has life changed significantly in the past decades?
5. Abuse/domestic violence is a serious issue. Experts say that very often family members don't even report such problems as they think that those are private matters. Are they really a private matter? What should those people do who experience abuse or violence in their family?
6. Your mother-in-law causes you a lot of problems. You decide to write to Dr. Phil. Explain the situation. What is she like? What are her habits you hate so much? Why dare you not talk with your partner about it? Ask for advice on how to save your marriage.
7. A distant relative has recently had a miscarriage. Write her a short message in which you explain your sympathies and encourage her.
8. Is it important to save up for one's own funeral or elderly people can just let their children take care of everything after they die? What are some typical ways of burying people? Is it better when the ashes are cast into the local river? What are the trends in your area?
9. Jill, your 17-year-old high school pen-friend in America, was at a wild party, got drunk and got pregnant somehow. She might have been raped. She is openly gay and has a partner she would like to marry later on. She doesn't even know who the father is. She doesn't know what to do. She asked your advice. Should she abort or should she keep the baby? Is adoption the best solution perhaps? Why or why not?
10. Is gay marriage allowed in your country? Should it be or not? Should gay couples be allowed to raise children? Are the traditional forms of marriage and family hopelessly outdated? 