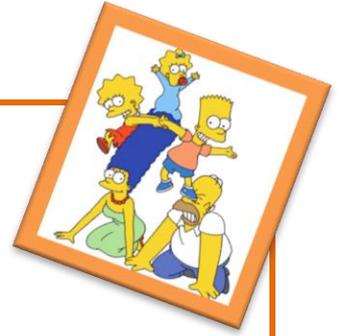


Family changes

1 a) You are going to read an article on the changing state of the family. Read the following statements and discuss the meaning of the words in **bold**.

- More young people are **moving away** from home and leaving their family roots.
- **Marriage** is becoming less important to many young people.
- Families are **spending** less time together.
- The **divorce rate** is **rising**.
- More parents are **bringing up** their children alone without a partner.
- More women are having **careers** rather than starting families.

b) Does it happen in your city?



2 While reading, check the topics above if they are mentioned.

A quiet revolution?

As divorce rates rise and fewer couples bother with marriage, we ask if the traditional nuclear family is becoming a thing of the past.

While you are reading this article, somewhere in the United States two couples will get married and another will get divorced. One in three American children now live with only one parent, and the United States is not alone in this: in Canada and France the divorce rate has doubled in the last twenty-five years, and in Hungary and Greece it has increased by 50 per cent. Even in Japan, where the traditional family is still strong, divorce went up by 15 per cent between 1980 and 1995.

What is more, the nature of the family is changing in Sweden and Denmark, around half of all babies are now born to unmarried parents, and in the United Kingdom and France more than a third. Even in Ireland, traditionally the most Catholic country in Europe, the rate of births outside marriage is 20 per cent.

Families are also getting smaller. The average Turkish family had seven members in 1970; today it has only five. And in Spain and Italy, where families were always traditionally large, the birthrate was the lowest in the developed world in 1995. This fall in the birthrate is due in part to the fact that, as more women have careers, they are waiting longer and longer to start a family. The age at which the average woman has her first baby is now 28 in Western Europe, and it is getting later.

So the nuclear family is clearly changing, but is it in danger of disappearing completely?



3 Check if these statements are true or false.

- Although there is not very much divorce in Japan, there is more than before.
- While Ireland is strongly Catholic, quite a lot of Irish people are now having children without getting married.
- Families in Spain were often big in the past, but these days they are becoming smaller.
- In France, marriage is becoming more popular again.
- There are lots of divorces in the USA, but not as many as fifteen years ago.