

Cambridge AS & A Level · Sociology 9699 · Notes

Age and family life

AS

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Read first: [Perspectives on the role of the family](#), [The process of learning and socialisation](#)

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What you need to know

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

1. **Explain the social construction of childhood:** why childhood is shaped by society rather than by biology alone, and how the role and social position of children in the family have changed.
2. **Explain the role and social position of grandparents** in the family, compare it across cultures, and explain how longer life expectancy affects families.
3. **Explain how social class, gender and ethnicity** shape what children experience in their families.
4. **Explain how the ideas of motherhood and fatherhood have changed**, and how far.

Conjugal roles and the domestic division of labour belong to the note on gender equality and experiences of family life; family forms such as the beanpole family are also in the note on diversity and social change. This note uses them only where they concern age, children, grandparents and parenthood.

Understand it

Childhood is socially constructed

Being young is biological, but **childhood** (what children are expected to do, what they are kept away from, how long the stage lasts) is decided by each society. That is what sociologists mean by a **social construction**. Evidence:

- **It varies across cultures.** In many modern Western societies children are kept out of paid work and spend years in school. **Punch** found that children in rural Bolivia took on work for the household from about five years old, and **Hecht** studied street children in Brazil who earned their own living. Child marriage and child soldiers exist in parts of the world today.
- **It varies across history.** **Aries** used paintings and diaries to argue that in medieval Europe children joined adult work and social life soon after infancy, dressed as small adults; the modern idea of a separate, precious childhood grew later. **Shorter** argued that when many babies died, parents could not afford strong emotional attachment to each one.
- **It varies within one society**, by class, gender and ethnicity (see below).

Pilcher says the key feature of modern Western childhood is **separateness**: children are set apart from adults by laws, dress, products, media and spaces made for them. Examples you can use:

- **Age laws**: minimum ages for paid work, marriage, drinking, driving, voting and criminal responsibility.
- **Compulsory schooling**, which keeps children economically **dependent** rather than earners.
- **Child protection laws** and welfare services, and bans on smacking in some countries.
- **Child-targeted goods and media**: toys, clothes, games, television channels and apps.

Why childhood changed: the march of progress view

The **march of progress** view (Aries, Shorter) says children's position has steadily improved:

- **Lower infant mortality rates** and **smaller families**: parents can invest more care and money in each child.
- **Laws and the welfare state** protect children from harm and exploitation; schooling replaced child labour.
- **Child-centred families**: family life, spending and leisure are organised around children's needs; children have a say in decisions and are protected for longer.
- **Children as consumers**: advertisers target them directly, and **pester power** gives them influence over what the family buys.
- **Rights**: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) treats children as people with rights of their own.

The conflict view: children are controlled

Conflict sociologists (**Firestone**, **Holt**, **Gittins**) say the march of progress hides inequality:

- **Age patriarchy** (Gittins): adults hold power over children's **time** (bedtimes, school), **space** (where they may go), **bodies** (what they wear, how they are touched) and access to **resources** (pocket money, food).
- What looks like care can be control: **Firestone** and **Holt** argue that "protecting" children keeps them dependent and excluded from adult life.
- Some children are still **abused or neglected** in the family, and **Furedi's** "paranoid parenting" and **helicopter parenting** can leave children closely watched and little trusted.
- Not all children benefit equally: class, gender, ethnicity and the society they live in still divide them.

Is childhood disappearing?

- **Postman**: printed books once kept adult knowledge (sex, violence, money worries) away from children, because children had to learn to read first. Television, and now the internet, show everything to everyone, so the **information hierarchy** between adults and children has collapsed and childhood is disappearing.
- **Palmer's toxic childhood**: rapid technological and cultural change (junk food, screens, testing, marketing, little outdoor play) damages children's physical and emotional development.

- Signs of blurring: children and adults share clothes, music and games; children are exposed early to sexualised images and adult worries; **kidults** (adults who keep childish tastes) blur the line from the other side.

Against the disappearance: laws keep children legally separate and dependent; families are more child-centred than ever; children's own play culture survives (**Opie**); and the idea assumes one Western form of childhood, when in many societies children have always worked and the line was never sharp.

Social class and children's experiences

- **Concerted cultivation (Lareau)**: middle-class parents treat childhood as a project, filling the week with organised lessons, sport and music, and teaching children to talk confidently with adults. Working-class parents more often follow the **accomplishment of natural growth**: children have more unstructured time with relatives and friends.
- **Material deprivation**: poorer children are more likely to lack books, a quiet place to study, a healthy diet or good housing, which affects health and school results. **Cultural capital (Bourdieu)** gives middle-class children knowledge and tastes that schools reward.
- **Deferred gratification**: middle-class children are said to learn to put off rewards for future success, working-class children to value immediate rewards (avoid treating this as true of every family).
- Poorer children may take on **responsibilities** early: paid work, or caring for siblings or a sick parent (young carers).
- The richest families can buy a different childhood altogether: a child at **boarding school** sees their parents mainly in the holidays and is looked after day to day by teachers and house staff.

Gender and children's experiences

- **Oakley**: parents shape gender through **manipulation** (praising or discouraging behaviour as fitting a boy or girl), **canalisation** (steering children towards "suitable" toys and activities) and **verbal appellations** (calling girls "pretty", boys "brave").
- Girls usually face **stricter control** of their time and movement: **McRobbie** described girls' **bedroom culture**, and **Hillman** found boys were allowed to go out alone at younger ages.
- Girls often do more housework and caring; in some societies families invest more in sons' education, and girls may be married young.
- Children copy the roles they see their parents perform, so gendered housework passes to the next generation.
- Against: **gender-neutral** parenting is growing in some families, and girls now outperform boys in school in many countries.

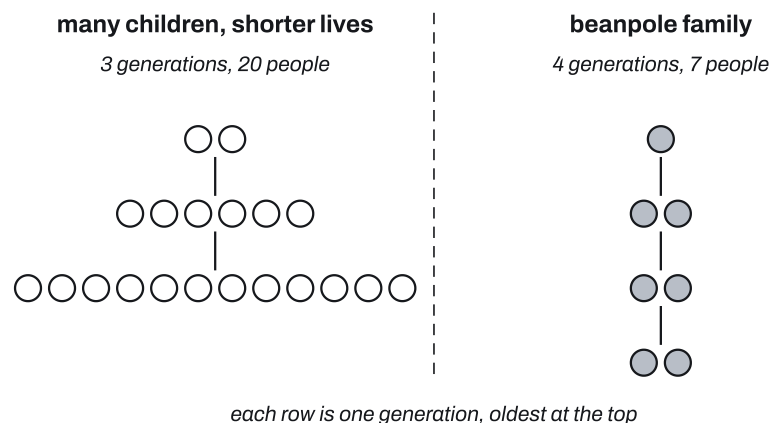
Ethnicity and children's experiences

- **Family structure**: a child in a three-generation household, common in many South Asian and Middle Eastern communities, may be fed, collected from school and taught prayers by a grandmother as much as by a parent; some African Caribbean children grow up in mother-headed households.

- **Values:** Chinese children raised with the Confucian ideal of **filial piety** learn early that honouring, and later looking after, their parents is a lifelong debt; religion can shape a child's diet, dress, rituals and rules.
- **Educational pressure:** "**tiger mother**" parenting (**Chua**) sets very high academic expectations, which can bring high achievement and also stress.
- **Gender expectations** differ: **Brannen** found that Asian parents in Britain were stricter with daughters than sons.
- **Conflict between generations:** children of migrants may take on the host society's values and clash with parents' traditions.
- **Poverty:** in Britain, for example, Bangladeshi and Pakistani households have had well above average rates of low income, so a child's ethnic background and class position often go together.

Grandparents and longer life expectancy

People in most societies now live much longer, so more families have three or four generations alive at once. With fewer births, each generation is small: **Brannen** called this the **beanpole family**, long and thin.



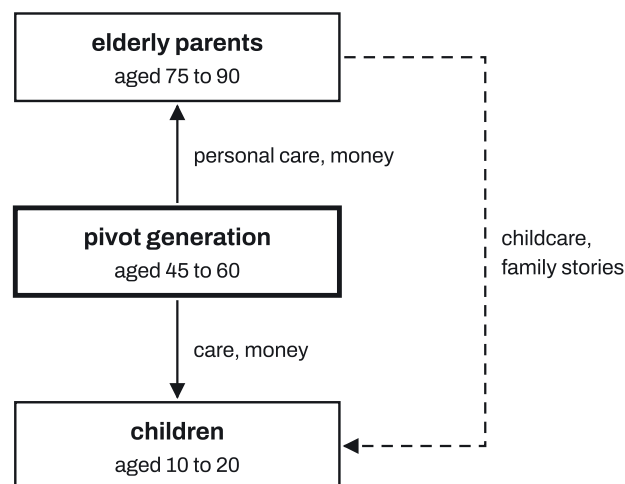
Positive effects (what grandparents give):

- **Free childcare**, so both parents can work; the benefit runs both ways, as a retired grandparent who does the school run gains company, routine and a sense of being needed.
- **Money:** help with school fees, clothes, housing or bills.
- **Socialisation:** passing on family history, language, religion, skills and stories, and acting as a **bridge to the past**.
- **Emotional support:** a confidant for grandchildren, a **mediator** between parents and teenagers, and a refuge after divorce or abuse.
- **Substitute parents:** China's **left-behind children** are raised by grandparents while their parents work in distant cities; similar patterns follow migration from the Philippines.

Negative effects (burdens):

- The **pivot** or **sandwich generation (Brannen)**: middle-aged adults, usually women, care for their children and their own frail parents at the same time.

- **Money and housing:** care and medical costs, lost earnings when a carer gives up work, smaller inheritances.
- **Gender inequality:** the extra caring falls mostly on daughters and daughters-in-law.
- **Conflict:** a grandmother who smacked her own children may object loudly when her son's family bans it, and rows like this are hardest to escape when three generations share a home.
- **Isolation** of older people, especially widowed women, and **ageism** in Western societies that lowers their status.
- **Longer marriages:** a couple who married at 25 may now face fifty years together rather than thirty; once the children leave, some find little left in common, and "silver splitter" divorces among people over 60 have grown.



Cross-cultural comparisons: in many East and South Asian societies, older people have traditionally kept authority and respect, and adult children are expected to care for them at home; in many Western societies older people more often live alone or in care homes, and grandparents' role is more voluntary. Even within Asia this is changing as young people migrate to cities. Divorce can cut grandparents off from grandchildren, while remarriage can add step-grandparents.

The dependency ratio compares the number of people of non-working age (children and older people) with the number of working age. A common version is $\text{dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{under 15} + \text{over 64}}{\text{aged 15 to 64}} \times 100$. A country with 1.8 million under 15, 1.2 million over 64 and 6.0 million aged 15 to 64 has a ratio of $\frac{1.8+1.2}{6.0} \times 100 = 50$: fifty dependants for every hundred people of working age. An ageing population pushes the ratio up, so each working family member supports more people.

Motherhood

- **Then:** the **expressive** role (Parsons); full-time caring at home, financial dependence on a husband, motherhood seen as a woman's natural destiny and main source of identity.
- **Now:** most mothers combine children with **paid work** and some are the main earner; women have fewer children and have them **later**; motherhood is more a **choice** (contraception, more women childfree by choice); more mothers raise children alone, which carries less **stigma**; fathers share more of the care.

- **Intensive mothering (Hays)**: the expectation that a good mother pours time, money and emotion into each child has grown, so pressure on mothers has risen even as their lives changed.
- **Continuity**: mothers still do most of the routine childcare (the **dual burden**); it is usually mothers who take time off when a child is ill; a **motherhood penalty** in pay and promotion persists; in many cultures and religions motherhood is still seen as women's first duty, and maternity leave is far longer than paternity leave.

Fatherhood

- **Then**: the **instrumental** role (Parsons): the **breadwinner** and **disciplinarian**, often emotionally distant and rarely involved in daily care.
- **Now**: the **new father**: present at the birth, involved in feeding, bathing and school runs, and emotionally close (**Dermott's intimate fatherhood** stresses the quality of the father–child relationship); **Burghes** found fathers spending more time with children; **paternity** and **shared parental leave**; **stay-at-home** fathers; lone fathers who do both roles; and **same-sex** couples raising children, whose arrangements show that the jobs once labelled "a father's" need not belong to a man.
- **Continuity**: **Warin et al.** found that fathers still saw providing money as central to being a good father; **Ferri and Smith** found that fathers rarely took the main childcare role even when mothers worked; studies of who does what find a split, in which a father's extra hours often go on football in the park or a trip to the cinema, whereas dentist appointments, laundry and homework checks still sit with the mother; a man who asks his manager for paternity leave or shorter hours risks being seen as less committed to the job, so many never take up what the law allows; **Hatter et al.** found a range of father types, from the traditional **enforcer** to the fully involved father; when parents split up the children usually live with their mother, so the **non-resident** father may see them only at weekends or in the holidays; migrant fathers working abroad may be providers only.

Key facts and formulas

There is no formula list in Sociology. "Learn it" means you must remember it.

Key term	Status
Social construction of childhood: varies by culture (Punch in Bolivia, Hecht in Brazil), history (Aries, Shorter) and social group	Learn it
Separateness of modern childhood (Pilcher): age laws, compulsory schooling, child protection, child-targeted goods and media	Learn it
March of progress (Aries, Shorter): lower infant mortality, smaller families, laws, child-centred families, pester power, children's rights	Learn it
Conflict view (Firestone, Holt, Gittins): age patriarchy over time, space, bodies and resources; paranoid parenting (Furedi)	Learn it
Disappearing childhood: Postman (information hierarchy, television), Palmer (toxic childhood), kidults; against: laws, child-centredness, Opie	Learn it

Key term	Status
Class: concerted cultivation versus natural growth (Lareau), material deprivation, cultural capital (Bourdieu), young carers	Learn it
Gender: manipulation, canalisation, verbal appellations (Oakley), bedroom culture (McRobbie), Hillman	Learn it
Ethnicity: extended households, filial piety, tiger mothers (Chua), Brannen on Asian daughters, generational conflict	Learn it
Grandparents: childcare, money, socialisation, mediator, left-behind children; beanpole family and pivot (sandwich) generation (Brannen)	Learn it
Dependency ratio = $\frac{\text{under 15} + \text{over 64}}{\text{aged 15 to 64}} \times 100$	Learn it
Motherhood: paid work, later and fewer births, choice, intensive mothering (Hays); still the dual burden and motherhood penalty	Learn it
Fatherhood: new father, intimate fatherhood (Dermott), Burghes, paternity leave; still the provider (Warin et al.), Ferri and Smith, Hatter et al.	Learn it
Question 1: $2 \times 2 = 4$; Question 3: $10 + 6 = 16$; essays AO1 8, AO2 8, AO3 10	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 41 questions for this topic (2021–2026, Papers 21–23, plus one old-syllabus Paper 14 data-response question in 2021), 36 different (Papers 21 and 23 of a November session share questions). 10 of them mix types (every Question 3 has parts (a) and (b), and the Paper 14 question has three parts on this topic), so the counts add up to 52.

Question type	Questions
Evaluate a view on childhood, parenthood or grandparents	18
Describe two ways	14
Explain a view	10
Give one argument against the view	9
Define a term	1

Every essay (26 marks) is marked **AO1** knowledge and understanding 8, **AO2** interpretation and application 8 and **AO3** analysis and evaluation 10, so $8 + 8 + 10 = 26$.

1. Evaluate a view on childhood, parenthood or grandparents (18 questions)

Questions 4 and 5, 26 marks. Asked about childhood (changed, distinct from adulthood, a time of innocence, children's position improved, the family child-centred: 7), parenthood (fatherhood, motherhood or parenthood changed, or little difference between mothers and fathers: 5), grandparents or longer life expectancy (3), gender or class as the main influence on children (2) and, on the old syllabus, how family roles changed since the 1960s (1).

1. **Introduction** (two or three sentences): define the key term (childhood as a social construction, the new father, the beanpole family) and say who holds the view.
2. **For the view**: four or five developed paragraphs, each with a sociologist, concept or named law, and each tied to the question's key word (changed, distinct, innocent, positive, main).
3. **Against the view**: four or five more, but **evaluate as you go**: after each point say how far it weakens the view and why. A block for and a block against with no weighing (**juxtaposition**) is held in the middle AO3 bands.
4. **Conclusion**: a judgement that depends on something: for which class, gender or ethnic group, in which societies, at which stage of childhood?

Material by theme:

- **Childhood changed, improved or child-centred** — for: march of progress, Aries, lower infant mortality, laws and schooling, child-centred families, pester power, children's rights, involved fathers, diverse families. Against: age patriarchy (Gittins), Firestone and Holt, child abuse, toxic childhood, Postman, Punch and Hecht (child work continues), class and gender inequalities, coming-of-age rituals such as the bar or bat mitzvah that still mark the old boundary.
- **Childhood distinct from adulthood or a time of innocence** — for: Pilcher, age laws, compulsory schooling, child protection, parental controls on devices, helicopter parenting. Against: Postman, Palmer, sexualisation, children as consumers, kidults, cross-cultural child workers and soldiers, children's stress over exams.
- **Parenthood changed** — use the Motherhood and Fatherhood sections: for, the new father, Dermott, Burghes, paternity leave, working mothers, lone and same-sex parents; against, Warin et al., Ferri and Smith, the fun tasks, the dual burden, cultural and religious traditions, workplace cultures.
- **Grandparents or life expectancy positive** — weigh the positive list against the negative list in the grandparents section, with cross-cultural examples.
- **Gender or class the main influence** — set the named factor against the others (class, gender, ethnicity, religion, media and peers). Overlap is strong evaluation: a poor girl in a strict religious household is shaped by all three at once.

Keep the focus on **children in the family** (or on **fathers**, or **grandparents**). Examiners note answers that drift into men and housework in general, or that tell the history of medieval childhood without saying what it shows about today.

2. Describe two ways (14 questions)

Question 1, 4 marks: two bullet points, each **identified** (1) and **described** (1). No introduction, definition or theorist needed. Asked about grandparents or longer life expectancy (5), how ethnicity, class or gender shape childhood (4), how childhood is kept separate from adult life (distinct, protected, child-centred, policies restricting children: 4) and how fatherhood has changed (1).

- **Grandparents:** childcare, money, socialisation, mediator, substitute parent. Keep each point about **grandparents**, not older people in general.
- **Longer life expectancy:** effects on the **family** (pivot generation, beanpole family, care costs, grandparent childcare, longer marriages). Don't explain why people live longer, and don't confuse it with lower infant mortality.
- **Class, gender or ethnicity:** each way must name how the factor changes the child's experience (concerted cultivation, canalisation, filial piety), not general points about childhood.
- **Separate or protected:** name two different laws or practices and how each keeps children apart from adults. Childhood is not the same as youth.
- **Fatherhood:** describe **how** it has changed, not why.

Two **different** points: the same idea reworded scores only half.

3. Explain a view (10 questions)

Question 3(a), 10 marks. Views asked: one factor (class, ethnicity or gender) matters most for children's experiences (4), childhood is distinct, disappearing or changed (3), grandparents or longer life expectancy (2), and, on the old syllabus, the consequences of an ageing population (1).

1. Write **two** clear, developed points that **agree** with the view. Do not evaluate: that is part (b).
2. Each point is a paragraph: the point, how it supports the view, then **sociological material** (a sociologist, theory, concept or named law) and how it backs the point.
3. Stay on the exact claim. For "class is the most important factor", both points must be about class (concerted cultivation, material deprivation, cultural capital), not gender.
4. Two developed, supported points reach the top level (8–10); one developed and one thin point stays in 4–7.

4. Give one argument against the view (9 questions)

Question 3(b), 6 marks.

1. Give **one** argument only; a second earns nothing.
2. Name it, develop it with material, and say clearly **why it contradicts** the view (5–6 marks).
3. Typical arguments:
 - Against "a factor is most important": another factor matters more (gender through canalisation, ethnicity and religion, postmodernist individual choice), with material.

- Against "childhood is disappearing or blurred": laws, compulsory schooling, child-centredness, Opie; or childhood is socially constructed, so it is changing rather than vanishing.
- Against "childhood is distinct" or "different from the past": Postman, toxic childhood, cross-cultural child workers (Punch, Hecht).
- Against "longer life expectancy is harmful": grandparent childcare lets both parents work; financial help; socialisation; older people working longer.
- Against "grandparents are positive": the pivot generation, conflict, ageism, loss of contact after divorce.

Don't argue for the view (that was part (a)), and don't say how childhood **should** be.

5. Define a term (1 question)

Only on the old syllabus (Paper 1 data response, 2 marks): the **dependency ratio**. One precise sentence: the number of people of non-working age (children and older people) compared with the number of working age, often given per hundred. Learn the formula above.

Worked examples

Example 1

Describe two ways grandparents may cause difficulties for family life. **[4]**

- **Disagreements over bringing up children (1)**: a grandparent living with the family may criticise how the parents discipline or dress the children, so arguments break out between the generations **(1)**.
- **The need for care (1)**: as a grandparent becomes frail, an adult daughter may have to cut her working hours to look after them, which lowers the family's income and adds to her workload **(1)**.

Two ways, each identified and described: **4 marks**.

Example 2

"Children have more power in the family than in the past."

(a) Explain this view. **[10]**

(b) Using sociological material, give one argument against this view. **[6]**

(a) Point 1. The march of progress view says children's status has risen because families are now **child-centred**. With lower infant mortality and fewer children per family, parents invest heavily in each child and increasingly ask for their opinions on holidays, food and schools. Children's wishes therefore shape decisions that parents once made alone, which is a real gain in power within the family.

Point 2. Children have also gained power as **consumers**. Advertisers aim directly at children, and through **pester power** children push parents to buy particular brands of food, clothes and technology. Many children also receive pocket money they can spend as they choose. Influence over family spending was once held only by adults, so this supports the view that children's power has grown.

Two clear, developed points, each supported by a concept and applied to power: **Level 3 (8–10 marks)**.

(b) Gittins' idea of **age patriarchy** says that adults still dominate children. Parents decide when children go to bed and go to school, where they may go alone, what they wear and how much money they get, so children's time, space, bodies and resources stay under adult control. Even pester power only works if parents agree to pay. So the apparent rise in children's power hides continuing dependence on adults.

One clear, developed argument against, with focused material: **Level 3 (5–6 marks)**.

Example 3

Evaluate the view that childhood is a social construction. [26]

Introduction. To call childhood a social construction is to say that its length, meaning and treatment are set by society, not by biology. Most sociologists accept this; the debate is about how far biology still matters.

For the view (AO1/AO2).

- **History:** Aries argued that medieval children joined the adult world soon after infancy; a separate childhood with its own clothes, toys and schooling developed only in modern times.
- **Culture:** Punch found that rural Bolivian children worked for the household from about five, and Hecht studied Brazilian street children supporting themselves; their childhoods look very different from those of Western children kept in school.
- **Law:** the age of criminal responsibility, the school-leaving age and the minimum marriage age differ between countries, showing that society, not nature, decides when childhood ends.
- **Social group:** within one society, class (Lareau), gender (Oakley) and ethnicity give children very different experiences.

Against the view (AO3).

- **However**, babies and young children do depend on adults for food, shelter and protection in every society, so some features of childhood are biological and universal. This limits the view but does not overturn it, because what adults do with that dependence still varies widely.
- Aries' evidence (paintings, diaries of the wealthy) may not show how ordinary families felt; historians such as Pollock argue medieval parents did see children as different and loved them. This weakens one strand of the case, though the cross-cultural evidence still stands.
- Some writers see a **global** model of childhood spreading through international law (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), which suggests one standard is replacing variety. Yet the gap between the law and children's lives in poorer countries shows that local conditions still shape childhood.
- Postman's claim that childhood is disappearing actually supports the view: if technology can erode childhood, it was a social creation all along.

Conclusion. Childhood is mainly a social construction: its timing, rights and duties vary between societies, periods and social groups. Biology sets a minimum of dependence in the early years, but beyond infancy it is society that decides what being a child means.

How it would be marked. A range of detailed points with sociologists and concepts (AO1 7–8), consistently applied to "social construction" (AO2 7–8), with each counter-argument weighed and a justified conclusion (AO3 9–10). In the exam, make each bullet a full paragraph.

Common mistakes

- **Writing a history lesson.** Long accounts of medieval childhood or traditional mothers, with little on today, miss questions about change. Use the past only to show what has (or hasn't) changed.
- **Drifting from the question's group.** Grandparents are not the same as all older people; fatherhood is not the same as men's housework; motherhood is not women's lives in general; childhood is not youth.
- **Explaining why instead of how.** "Describe two ways motherhood has changed" wants the changes, not the reasons for them; "longer life expectancy" wants effects on the family, not better healthcare.
- **Confusing life expectancy with infant mortality.** They are different measures; falling infant mortality concerns babies surviving their first year.
- **Common sense and personal opinion.** Stories about your own grandparents, or claims that working-class parents don't care about education, earn little. Use studies and concepts, and avoid sweeping generalisations about social groups.
- **Moral judgements.** "Parents should protect children" or "childhood should be innocent" is opinion, not sociology.
- **Evaluating in Question 3(a),** or giving more than one argument in 3(b). Neither earns marks; in 3(a) some candidates even argue the opposite view, which belongs in (b).
- **Juxtaposition in essays.** A list for and a list against, with no weighing, keeps AO3 in the middle bands. Many answers also give only one side.
- **Introductions, definitions and a third way in Question 1.**

How to get the marks

- **"Describe two ways..." (4 marks):** two bullet points, each identified then described in one sentence about the exact group asked.
- **"Explain this view" (10 marks):** two developed points that agree, each supported with material; no evaluation.
- **"Give one argument against" (6 marks):** one developed argument with material, clearly contradicting the view.
- **"Evaluate..." (26 marks):** AO1 8 for a range of detailed points with concepts and theory or evidence; AO2 8 for applying them to the exact question; AO3 10 for evaluation that is clear, explicit and sustained.

- **Sociological material** here means a sociologist (Aries, Postman, Palmer, Pilcher, Gittins, Lareau, Oakley, Brannen, Dermott, Warin et al.), a theory (march of progress, conflict view, functionalism, feminism, postmodernism) or a concept or named law (age patriarchy, toxic childhood, concerted cultivation, canalisation, pivot generation, new father, paternity leave, child labour laws).
- **Use examples from more than one society:** left-behind children in China, child workers in Bolivia and Brazil, filial piety. Cross-cultural points are some of the strongest evaluation in this topic.
- **Answer the essay first** if time is tight: it carries 26 of the 60 marks.

Quick check

1. Name the four areas of children's lives that adults control under Gittins' age patriarchy.
2. A country has 400 000 people under 15, 600 000 over 64 and 2 500 000 aged 15 to 64. Work out its dependency ratio.
3. Which sociologist is linked with each idea? (a) Concerted cultivation. (b) The disappearance of childhood through television. (c) The beanpole family. (d) Intimate fatherhood.
4. A student answers "Describe two ways longer life expectancy affects the family" with "better medicine and healthier diets." Why does this score nothing, and what would be better?
5. Give one argument, with sociological material, that fatherhood has changed less than it seems.

Answers

1. Their **time**, **space**, **bodies** and access to **resources**.
2. $\frac{400\,000 + 600\,000}{2\,500\,000} \times 100 = 40$: forty dependants for every hundred people of working age.
3. (a) Lareau. (b) Postman. (c) Brannen. (d) Dermott.
4. It gives **causes** of longer lives, not **effects** on the family. Better: more middle-aged women become a pivot generation caring for children and parents at once; or grandparents live long enough to give years of free childcare.
5. Warin et al. found that fathers still saw earning money as the heart of good fathering, and Ferri and Smith found fathers seldom took the main childcare role even when mothers worked; a father may coach the Saturday football team, yet it is usually the mother who remembers the vaccination dates and packs the school bag.

Past questions to try

- **9699/21/M/J/24 Q3**: (a) explain the view that childhood as a separate stage is disappearing; (b) one argument against.
- **9699/23/M/J/24 Q3**: (a) explain the view that grandparents benefit family life; (b) one argument against.
- **9699/22/M/J/24 Q1**: two ways the family has become child-centred.
- **9699/23/M/J/24 Q5**: essay on whether gender is the main influence on a child's family life.