UNIT AIMS

READING SKILLS
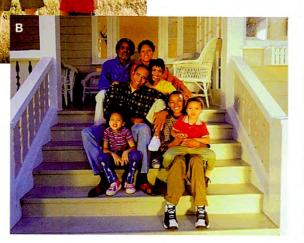Identifying main ideas
Identifying supporting ideas

EXAM PRACTICE
Multiple-choice questions
Completing sentences
Matching sentence endings

Predicting main ideas

1 Look at the photos and answer the following questions.
   a What can you see in the images?
   b What kind of information would you expect to find in an article about each of the photos?
   c Suggest a heading for an article about each photo.
   d What do you think the most important points of each article might be?
   e What kind of detail might support these points?

Skills

Identifying main ideas and supporting ideas

It is important to recognize the main idea in a paragraph and to distinguish it from the supporting ideas. Most paragraphs (but not all) start with a *topic sentence* that outlines the main theme of the paragraph. When the topic sentence is not the first sentence in the paragraph, you will need to read the text more carefully to find a sentence that gives a broad picture of the theme. Supporting ideas are often examples or explanations of the main idea.

2 Read the following sentences and decide whether they are likely to be main points or supporting points in a paragraph. Write *M* or *S* after each sentence.

Paragraph A

1   In early agricultural and hunting communities the social structure tended to be based on a tribal rather than a family pattern. _____

2   Although the family is the most common social grouping, it is not the only type of social organization. _____

3   One of the advantages of the tribal structure is that children can be cared for by a wide group of adults, thus increasing the community's prospects of survival and continuation. _____

4   This is still the case in social groups like the Amazonian and African tribes that maintain their traditional lifestyles. _____

Paragraph B

1   A case in point would be the one-parent, adoptive family, a relatively new category, resulting from recent changes in criteria for adoption. _____

2   Extended, nuclear and single-parent families are defined by their size, whereas foster and adoptive families are identified by their functions. _____

3   Families can be classified in a number ways, for example, by size or function or the origin of family members. _____

4   Furthermore, when a family fits into more than one category it creates a new classification. _____

5   Migrant and mixed-race families, on the other hand, are examples of families that are described by the racial or national origin of their members. _____

Paragraph C

1   This system allows the whole group to benefit from the experience of the older members of the family as well as the physical strength of their children and grandchildren. _____

2   Family structures across the world are determined by local culture, tradition and national economy. _____

3   By contrast, in urban populations, where space is limited and the cost of living higher, the nuclear family tends to be in the majority. _____

4   For instance, farming communities traditionally depend on the extended family to work on the land, sowing, harvesting and processing the crops. _____

3 Write the number of each sentence in Exercise 2 in the order you would expect to find them in a paragraph.

A: _____ , _____ , _____ , _____

B: _____ , _____ , _____ , _____ , _____

C: _____ , _____ , _____ , _____

4 Compare the following paragraphs with your answers in Exercise 3. If the sentence order is different in your answers, explain how you decided.

Paragraph A

Although the family is the most common social grouping, it is not the only type of social organization. In early agricultural and hunting communities the social structure tended to be based on a tribal rather than a family pattern. This is still the case in social groups like the Amazonian and African tribes that maintain their traditional lifestyles. One of the advantages of the tribal structure is that children can be cared for by a wide group of adults, thus increasing the community's prospects of survival and continuation.

Paragraph B

Families can be classified in a number of ways, for example, by their size or function or the origin of the family members. Extended, nuclear and single-parent families are defined by their size, whereas foster and adoptive families are identified by their functions. Migrant and mixed-race families, on the other hand, are examples of families that are described by the racial or national origin of their members. Furthermore, when a family fits into more than one category it creates a new classification. A case in point would be the one-parent, adoptive family, a relatively new category, resulting from recent changes in criteria for adoption.

Paragraph C

Family structures across the world are determined by local culture, tradition and national economy. For instance, farming communities traditionally depend on the extended family to work on the land, sowing, harvesting and processing the crops. This system allows the whole group to benefit from the experience of the older members of the family as well as the physical strength of their children and grandchildren. By contrast, in urban populations, where space is limited and the cost of living higher, the nuclear family tends to be in the majority.

Exam skills

Multiple-choice questions

In multiple-choice questions that ask you to complete a sentence from a list of options, remember to check that the match is grammatically possible.

5 Read the following passage and select TWO correct answers from the FIVE options (A–E).

1 Immigrant parents
   A belong to the local community.
   B feel isolated from the majority of society.
   C are bilingual.
   D learn to speak a second language.
   E are financially successful.

2 Learning the language of the host community
   A increases the possibility of integrating with the majority group.
   B guarantees well-paid employment.
   C increases employment opportunities.
   D improves the children's educational performance.
   E reduces family tensions.

3 The writer believes that immigrant parents
   A do not have deliberate language policies.
   B understand the advantages of bilingualism.
   C do not want to remember their past.
   D accept that they will lose touch with their children.
   E want to share their cultural background with their children.

It is widely documented that immigrant parents, who are typically members of minority groups, may experience stress, alienation, discrimination or inherent gaps with the majority group and find themselves raising children in the context of more than one language. Parents in these groups often attribute their decision or efforts to encourage L2* acquisition for themselves as well as for their children (parallel to L1* maintenance) to the potential economic benefits of bilingualism (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Guardado, 2008; King and Fogle, 2006), emphasizing the advantages of being absorbed into the wider society and the necessity of mastering the majority language for the sake of better work prospects in the future. This pattern can serve as an example of a coping mechanism. It is an explicit opinion frequently leading to an explicit decision, which protects family members (mainly the parents) from psychological disequilibrium. They consciously and purposefully decide to promote bilingualism in the family, pointing to its benefits and strengthening themselves as a system.

Another common finding when exploring FLP* is the insistence on language maintenance so as to facilitate the children's communication with members of the extended family, to promote family cohesion and to enable free and spontaneous communication between parents and children (e.g., Pavlenko, 2004; Smolicz et al, 2001; Tannenbaum, 2005; Tannenbaum and Howie, 2002). This too is an instance of a coping mechanism, since it involves explicit, conscious ideas about language and family dynamics to increase adaptiveness. It could also, however, be a defensive one. Many immigrants are not aware that, by promoting language maintenance, they are applying defensive strategies that often serve to protect the integrity of the family system ... These strategies involve, *inter alia*, maintaining strong emotional contact with the past, with childhood memories, parents and grandparents via language maintenance; or witnessing children developing competency in the parental language, which in turn may lead to further identification with the children, and/or prevent alienation and remoteness when children develop mastery only in L2; or maintaining symbolic links with the parental heritage.

* **L2** – second language
* **L1** – first language, native language, mother tongue
* **FLP** – family language policy

Exam skills

Sentence completion questions

This type of question requires you to complete a sentence with a certain number of words taken from the reading text. You do not need to change the words or write your own. Remember to use the exact number of words given in the question. You will lose marks if you use more.

6 Read the passage again and complete the sentences with ONE WORD from the passage.

1 Immigrant families frequently learn the language of their adopted country in order to take full advantage of their potentially improved _____ situation.

2 The family's decision to integrate with the host country is a means of preventing _____ instability.

3 The children of many migrant families maintain effective _____ with the older generation by continuing to speak their native language.

4 First language maintenance can be seen both as a coping and a _____ mechanism.

5 By continuing to use their mother tongue, immigrants can strengthen their children's _____ with their cultural background.

Exam skills

Matching sentence endings

In this type of question you will be asked to match the beginning of a sentence with an ending. There are more optional endings than beginnings and the questions are in the same order as the information in the text.

Skills

7 Before you select a sentence ending, look carefully at the:
- subject-verb agreement.
- verb tense.
- possible meaning of each part of the statement.

Match the beginning of each sentence (A–E) with the correct ending (i–vii).

A The relationship between the younger and older members of the family
B The number of households in the UK containing more than one family
C When marriage was more common, the number of children living with a single parent in the UK
D In 1996, 73 per cent of dependent children
E Since 1996, there

i were unusual.
ii is influenced by the size of the family.
iii has risen noticeably in the last 15 years.
iv was lower.
v has been an increase in the number of single-parent households.
vi have been improving in recent years.
vii were living with a married couple.

Reading Passage 6

You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–13, which are based on Reading Passage 6.

Parental roles

One of the most enduring elements of social and behavioural science research in the last half of the 20th century was the scholarly re-examination of traditional ideas about fatherhood and motherhood. For over 200 years maternal behaviour had been considered paramount in child development (Kagan, 1978; Stearns, 1991; Stendler, 1950; Sunley, 1955), and fathers were often thought to be peripheral to the job of parenting because children throughout the world spent most of their time with their mothers (Fagot, 1995; Harris, Furstenberg and Marmer, 1998; Munroe and Munroe, 1994). Some argued that fathers contributed little to children's development except for their economic contributions (Amato, 1998), and others believed that fathers are not genetically endowed for parenting (Belsky, 1998; Benson, 1968). Indeed, even though Margaret Mead concluded that fathers were important contributors to childcare, and that '(a)nthropological evidence gives no support … to the value of such an accentuation of the tie between mother and child' (Mead, 1956, pp.642–643), Mead (1949) perceived basic differences between fathers and mothers. The mother's nurturing tie to her child is apparently so deeply rooted in the actual biological conditions of conception and gestation, birth and suckling, that only fairly complicated social arrangements can break it down entirely … But the evidence suggests that we should phrase the matter differently for men and women – that men have to learn to want to provide for others, and this behaviour, being learnt, is fragile and can disappear rather easily under social conditions that no longer teach it effectively (pp.191–193).

However, many contemporary scholars now cite a growing body of empirical evidence that parental behaviours are not simply the consequence of biology and human nature, but rather are informed by cultural, historical and social values, circumstances and processes. In fact, as gender ideologies shifted in the last half of the 20th century, so too did researchers' exploration of variations in men's and women's behaviour generally, and fathering and mothering specifically (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001; Sanchez and Thomson, 1997). Moreover, contemporary perspectives on fatherhood and motherhood are in large part derived from research that concurrently studied fathers and mothers, rather than earlier research that focused almost exclusively on mothers.

Similarities and differences in fathers' and mothers' interactions with offspring

Much of the research into parent-child relations has been informed by the belief that mothers influence children's physical, emotional, psychological and social well-being through expressive and affective behaviours, including warmth and nurturance (Bowlby, 1969; Hojat, 1999; Mahler and Furer, 1968; Phares, 1992; Stern, 1995), whereas fathers have often been viewed as influencing children's development through the instrumental roles of provider and protector, and as role models for social, cognitive, psychological and gender-identity development (Bronstein, 1988; Gilmore, 1990; Lamb and Oppenheim, 1989; Mackey, 1996; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Radin, 1981b). However, contemporary research suggests that maternal behaviour is not situated exclusively in the expressive sphere any more than paternal behaviour is situated exclusively in the instrumental one. Indeed, multivariate research in the 1990s demonstrated the importance of paternal expressive and affective behaviours despite the fact that mothers are often characterized as 'superior caregivers', whereas fathers are

viewed as 'less capable of, and/or less interested in, nurturant parenting' (*Parents' Interactions with Offspring*, Hosley and Montemayor, 1997, p.175). As discussed below, fathers' and mothers' behaviours are in fact multidimensional and multifaceted, and these behaviours often vary as a result of contextual variables including youths' age and gender.

Youths' age and gender

According to Collins and Russell (1991), research in Western societies shows that fathers and mothers interact differently with their middle childhood (i.e., preteens) to adolescent children than with younger children. For example, fathers generally interact with their adolescents through focusing on instrumental goals (e.g., school and athletic achievement, future plans) and objective issues such as political discussions. Mothers' interactions with adolescents, on the other hand, tend to be marked more by discussions of personal issues. More specifically, in their review of the literature on US families, Collins and Russell (1991) reported that 15- to 16-year-old US adolescents spent twice as much time alone with their mothers as with their fathers. Collins and Russell also reported that 14- to 18-year-olds, more than 12- to 13-year-olds, spent more time alone with their mothers than with their fathers. As for middle childhood, Collins and Russell (1991) found that mothers tend to be more involved in caregiving, whereas fathers are more involved in play activities.

Questions 1–4

*Read the following passage and select **TWO** correct answers from the FIVE options (**A–E**).*

1   Until the late 20th century, academic views of child development considered that

   A   men were naturally predisposed to childcare.

   B   the father was not an important figure.

   C   fathers failed to provide for their children.

   D   the mother's role was central to child rearing.

   E   men should spend more time with their children.

2   Margaret Mead believed that

   A   women did not want to change society.

   B   fathering could not be learnt.

   C   mothers were genetically programmed to bond with their babies.

   D   the mother-child relationship was difficult to change.

   E   fathers naturally wanted to look after their children.

3   Modern research has discovered that

   A   parenting is not an instinct.

   B   the role of parents varies with external factors.

   C   men and women have fixed parental roles.

   D   motherhood had not been thoroughly researched.

   E   fatherhood had been carefully researched in the past.

4   According to traditional research,

   A   fathers had no effect on their children's intellectual growth.

   B   fathers were not loving by nature.

   C   mothers were responsible for a child's emotional development.

   D   the development of the child's social identity depended on the father.

   E   mothers were not naturally caring.

Questions 5–8

Complete the sentences in Questions 5–8 with words taken from the passage. Write NO MORE THAN ONE WORD.

5   Early research into .... largely ignored the importance of the role of fatherhood.

6   Modern research has found that emotional behaviour is not restricted to the .... role.

7   The age and gender of the children affects their .... with their parents.

8   When children are in their teens they talk to their mothers more about .... concerns.

Questions 9–13

Match each sentence beginning (9–13) with the correct ending (A–H) from the list below.

9   Modern research into parental roles differs from early research in that

10 It is now more widely accepted for

11 In 1991, Collins and Russell found that children aged 14 to 18

12 In spite of recent changes in parental roles,

13 Even at the end of the 20th century, research found

A   men to be affectionate towards their children.

B   fathers still tend to concentrate more on their children's tangible achievements than on their emotional problems.

C   spent more time with their fathers than with their mothers.

D   only paternal roles have been investigated.

E   that young children received more nurturing from their mothers.

F   spent more time with their mothers than children aged 12 to 13.

G   it takes into account changing attitudes to gender.

H   that fathers preferred to spend time with their adolescent children.