

Item A

Conflict theories take a negative view of the family arguing that it plays an integral part in perpetuating social inequality. Feminist sociologists are highly critical of the family as they claim it reinforces patriarchy by confining women to a subservient role within the home as a housewife and mother which is learnt during primary socialisation and reinforced during marriage. Marxists conversely would argue that the family simply exists to protect private property and prevent the proletariat revolution by creating a false class consciousness. Consensus theories however would point to the advantages of the family as an agent of socialisation which helps maintain social order by teaching norms and values.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two ideological functions of the nuclear family.

Paragraph 1	
Point/theory to be discussed:	
Quote from item to support point/ theory:	
Explanation:	
Evidence/studies:	
Analysis (link back to the question showing why your chosen factor does/does not support the statement in the question):	

Paragraph 2

Point/theory to be discussed:	
Quote from item to support point/ theory:	
Explanation:	
Evidence/studies:	
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Conclusion:

Overall summary & which point is most convincing and why:	
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Item A

Recent changes in the law have had a significant impact on family formations and family life. Sociologists have argued that the advancing of women's rights has resulted in a range of new legislation to protect the rights of women and give them rights within the family. Divorce has become more accessible and takes considerably less time than in the past. Women also have greater legal rights within the workplace and this allows them greater independence as they have their own finances and therefore a more equal say about family spending and decisions. Other legal changes that have played a part in the changing form of the family include those that have allowed for both civil partnerships and gay and lesbian families as a response to more liberal social attitudes and similarly the greater rights that have been afforded to cohabiting couples.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two ways in which social attitudes may have influenced government reforms to family policy.

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Item A

Nowadays, the number of children in families is significantly lower than in the past, with the average British family only having one or two children. This is because children have become an economic liability and it is now much more costly to raise a family than in the past. Children are also unable to make financial contributions to the family themselves as they are prohibited from paid employment. Similarly, women are investing more in their careers and less in their families due to changes in their social status which has seen them become more equal to men in the world of work. Women also have more control over their fertility through the introduction of free contraception and so are more likely to delay childbirth and as a consequence have fewer children. The way in which children are raised has therefore changed as the family has become more child-centred and children have greater rights than ever before.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two arguments that suggest that today's society is 'child-centred'.

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Item A

Sociologists have competing perspectives about the main reasons why divorce has increased in society. Many feel the increase can be attributed to a general decline in social stigma towards divorce and it is no longer seen as shameful. This goes alongside a decline in religious belief (secularisation) which means society is generally more tolerant of family diversity as there is no longer an expectation for individuals to remain in unhappy marriages because marriage is no longer seen as a holy institution. Functionalist and New Right sociologists are critical of the increased divorce rate as they believe it threatens social solidarity and weakens the economy, whereas Feminists and Marxists welcome the changes as they believe it free us from patriarchal/capitalist exploitation.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two negative effects of the rise in the divorce rate according to the New Right.

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Item A

Domestic violence accounts for up to a quarter of all recorded violent crime. Victims are more likely to be female and offenders male: domestic violence is linked to gender roles in patriarchal society. However, not all women are equally likely to suffer domestic violence. Victims - both female and male - are more likely to belong to disadvantaged social groups and live under difficult circumstances.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two reasons for patterns of domestic violence.

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Item A

A popular view is that childhood is a fixed, universal, biological stage of physical and psychological immaturity that is common to all human beings. Everyone will pass through it on the way to biological maturity and adulthood. However, evidence shows that what counts as childhood, what experiences children undergo and what roles they play, are far from universal.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two arguments that childhood is a fixed, universal stage.

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Item A

Capitalist society is based on a wealthy capitalist class exploiting the labour of a propertyless working class in order to extract a profit. However, to obtain their profit, capitalists must sell what has been produced and this requires people who are willing to buy it. For capitalism to continue, the proletariat must be persuaded to accept their exploitation. Capitalists also need to retain control of their wealth in order to maintain their privileged position.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two functions that the family may perform for capitalism.

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Item A

The different cultural traditions, migration patterns and economic circumstances of different minority ethnic groups are reflected in the ethnic differences in family and household patterns seen in the United Kingdom today. These include differences in the proportions of people from different ethnic groups who live in single person, nuclear family, lone-parent and extended family households.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two reasons for ethnic differences in family and household patterns.

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Item A

According to the individualisation thesis, greater individual choice has transformed the family and intimate relationships. Unlike in the past, when individuals' lives were governed by tradition, today both men and women are free to make their own choices about relationships, sexuality and so on, following their own self-interest. Class, gender and family structures no longer limit our choices.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two criticisms of the individualisation thesis.

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Item A

In the 1950s, most immigrants into the United Kingdom came from Commonwealth countries such as India and Jamaica. More recently, many immigrants have come from European Union countries such as Poland. Many immigrants are young adults seeking work.

These migration patterns have affected household structures.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two ways in which migration patterns have affected household structures in the United Kingdom.

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Item A

Parents today spend a great deal of time and money trying to make sure that their children enjoy a comfortable upbringing. They want their children to have opportunities that they themselves never had. 'March of progress' sociologists argue that these changes in family life have led to an improvement in the position of children in society.

Applying the item and your own knowledge analyse two changes in the position of children in society over the last 100 years.

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