



OPEN SCHOOL BC

## Families in Society

# Introduction Assignment

This assignment is intended to familiarize you with some of the basic concepts and skills related to *Families in Society*. This is the first meaningful assignment for *Families in Society*, so complete it with care.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following *Families in Society* Assignment independently and return it to your teacher based on the instructions provided by your school. No external resources are required to complete this assignment.

**There are two parts to this assignment:**

Part A: Critical Reading	10 marks
Part B: Written Response	12 marks

**Contents:**

- 6 pages
- 10 multiple choice questions
- 1 written response question

**Assignment time:**

2 hours

**Before you start, read these important tips.**

1. Read each question carefully before answering.
2. Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
3. Take your time. Check your work before handing in the test.
4. Write neatly and watch your spelling.

## Part A: Critical Reading

Read the article on marriage trends; then answer the multiple-choice questions that follow. (10 marks)

### Is Marriage in Canada Becoming a Thing of the Past?

We hear or read in the media that common-law unions are on the rise, marriage rates are down, and of those couples that choose to formalize their partnership with a legal document, half end up divorcing. Does this mean marriage is a thing of the past in our country?

Common-law can be defined as a union between two people who are not legally married but live as a family, with or without children. Statistics show that Canadian couples are increasingly choosing common-law partnerships over marriage; this is most prevalent in Quebec where more than 30 percent of all families are common law.

The number of couples choosing not to marry has more than doubled since 1981. At that time, approximately six percent of Canadian couples were common law whereas 83.1 percent were married. The 2006 Statistics Canada Census found that common-law unions increased to 15.5 percent whereas families headed by married couples decreased to 68.6 percent.

The 2006 Census showed that more of the Canadian population is not married than married for the first time in census history. Reasons for this include more adult children are living at home with their parents, and more adults are divorced or have chosen the single life. But the census numbers of non-married people is also due to the increase in common-law unions. This increase suggests that there is a greater social acceptance of the common-law family structure. There is a desire to be part of a couple, but perhaps with fewer perceived legal or financial obligations than those associated with marriage.

A huge jump in common-law relationships among those 40 and older was also revealed in the 2006 census. People aged 60 – 64 living common law rose 77 percent between 2001 and 2006. Many people this age have already been married once and after divorce or the death of a spouse, choose common-law relationships rather than a second marriage.

Anne Milan, senior analyst with Statistics Canada, noted that while fewer Canadians are 'tying the knot,' married-couple families with children are still the single most common foundation on which Canadians build a family.

"We're seeing more diversity with the increase in common-law families, but marriage overall remains an important family structure," Milan added.

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Based on what you read in the article, answer the following questions.

1. Which statement best defines common-law partnerships?
  - a. Couples who live together before they get married.
  - b. Partnerships in which couples do not believe in marriage.
  - c. A legal union between two people.
  - d. A union between two people who are not legally married but live as a family. ( )
  
2. Which one of the following statements is true?
  - a. People over 40 years of age are marrying in greater numbers.
  - b. The divorce rate is at an all-time low.
  - c. Over 30 percent of all Quebec families are common law.
  - d. There was no difference in the numbers of common-law unions between 2001 and 2006. ( )
  
3. Which one of the following statements is false?
  - a. In 1981, six percent of Canadian families were common law.
  - b. The 2006 Census found that 83.1% of Canadian families were married.
  - c. Common-law families increased to 15.5% in the 2006 Census.
  - d. The number of couples choosing not to marry has more than doubled since 1981. ( )
  
4. The increase in common-law unions suggests that:
  - a. there is a greater social acceptance of this family structure.
  - b. marriage is no longer a viable option for couples.
  - c. young couples cannot afford to get married.
  - d. the divorce rate is increasing. ( )

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5. From 1981 to 2006, the percentage decrease in married-couple families was:
- a. 26.2%
  - b. 14.5%
  - c. 18.3%
  - d. 22.7%
- (     )
6. According to the article, couples may choose to live common law rather than marry because:
- a. if the relationship breaks up, they don't have to incur the expense of a legal divorce.
  - b. they have no religious affiliations.
  - c. they may chose not to have children.
  - d. there are fewer perceived legal or financial obligations than those associated with marriage.
- (     )
7. Based on the statistics given in this article, what trend would you predict for common-law unions?
- a. More couples will choose to marry over living common law.
  - b. The trend will be for common-law unions to level off.
  - c. The rate of common-law unions will drop considerably.
  - d. Common-law unions will continue to rise.
- (     )
8. What conclusion can you draw from the information in this article?
- a. Marriage is a thing of the past.
  - b. Common-law unions are becoming more prevalent in Canadian society, especially among those aged 60–64 years.
  - c. Canadian social mores are eroding.
  - d. Alternative family structures are uncommon in Canada.
- (     )

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9. Which word best describes the purpose of this article?
- a. amuse
  - b. inform
  - c. criticize
  - d. entertain ( )
10. Which statement best describes the main idea in this article?
- a. Marriage is slowly becoming extinct.
  - b. Common-law unions are more popular among people aged 60–64.
  - c. Common-law families are on the rise, but marriage still remains an important family structure.
  - d. Blended families are increasing in numbers. ( )

**Part B: Written Response—Writing an Expository Paragraph**

In a well-developed paragraph of approximately 125 words, write on the following topic. (12 marks)

*Families are the foundation of Canadian society. In your opinion, is it important for couples to formalize their union with a legal marriage, or is common law a legitimate family structure?*

**Organization and Planning**

Use this space to plan your ideas before writing the response. This area will not be marked.

**Tips for Writing:**

- have a good topic sentence
- explain yourself clearly
- check your work







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/10 Part A: Critical Reading

/12 Part B: Written Response

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**Total**