

# FAMILY

**1** In groups of four, based on what you know from television or personal experience, describe the typical British or American family. In your group prepare a short report for the other students. Then in pairs briefly describe your own families and report to the other pair.

**2** Try to answer the questions on the right before reading the text. Then read it and see if you were right.

## FAMILY VALUES, OLD AND NEW

In Britain and around the world, the image of the family continues to change. The traditional "Victorian family", in which the man was the breadwinner, the woman the homemaker, and the children numerous and obedient, is giving way to new ideas about what the modern family should look like.

One of the most obvious characteristics of the new family is that there are not always two parents. Due mostly to the rise in divorces since World War II, single-parent families are becoming more and more frequent and accepted in British society. Usually, it is the mother who takes responsibility for raising the child, and she has to balance the pressures of earning a living and raising her children at the same time.

However, even in families with both parents present, many mothers are giving up the role of homemaker and pursuing their own careers. Some go on maternity leave after their children are born and then take up part-time work when the child is old enough to go to school. Others feel that their careers come first, and wait until they have fully established their career before having children.

Another area which has changed significantly is what happens before marriage. In the past, people lived with their parents until they got married, and each marriage was supposed to be a "white wedding". Today, living together before marriage and premarital sex are considered normal, and many people "try out" their relationship by living together before getting married.

These changes, together with other changes such as mixed marriages, have altered the face of British society. Some people deplore them as a breakdown of traditional values. Others praise them as expressions of greater tolerance and diversity. But one thing is for sure: British families are changing and will continue to change.

**1** In the traditional Victorian family, the man

- a was never contradicted.
- b made bread for the family.
- c was the sole provider for the family.
- d shared responsibility for the family budget with the wife.

**2** The main reason for the rise in single-parent families is

- a the increase in premarital sex.
- b that many men were killed in World War II.
- c that some women put their careers before their children.
- d the increase in broken marriages.

**3** One of the main reasons for living together before getting married is that

- a couples want to see how well they get on before getting married.
- b couples have to balance earning a living with raising a child.
- c traditional values have broken down in Britain.
- d premarital sex is on the rise.

**4** Find a word in the text that means:

- changed
- acceptance of different lifestyles
- speak with approval of
- easily seen or understood
- say that one strongly dislikes something