Families and Household
Key Issues

• What is the purpose of the family? What benefits does it provide for society and it’s members? (Functionalism/Marxism/Feminism/Postmodernism)

• Is the family equal? Are the power relationships between partners equal? Is their a march of progress towards equality?

• Is childhood socially constructed? Does it vary from society to society? Is childhood disappearing?

• What changes have their been to the family structure over the past 50 years? Is there such a thing as a typical family?

• How can governments influence family structures? Why would government prefer the nuclear family over others? Can the government influence gender equality?

• How has globalisation influenced the family? What demographic changes have led to changes in our society? What are the benefits and costs of greater migration and ageing populations?
The Big Question: Evaluate the view that childhood is a social construction (20)

- Define what is meant by social construction
- Explain the difference between childhood and adulthood
- Identify a range of ways childhood may be socially constructed
- Outline reasons for society being child-centred
- Analyse the impact of these ideas
- Evaluate the impacts of these views
Why is childhood socially constructed?

Social Construction means ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childhood ends when...</th>
<th>Adulthood begins when...</th>
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Childhood is often viewed as a 'Golden Age', an age of innocence. As such, many societies see childhood as a period of life that requires protection and 'quarantine' from adult life.

Can you think of any evidence of this?

In what ways are children and adults 'separate'?

Pilcher (1995): 'Modern Childhood is defined through Separateness'. It is a clear, distinct life stage separate from adults i.e. in terms of status.

Wagg (1992):

'Childhood is socially constructed. It is in other words, what members of particular societies, at particular times & in particular places, say it is. There is no single universal childhood, experienced by all.'
Using research on following pages identify ways in which childhood can be socially constructed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Era of History</td>
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<td>Social Class</td>
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Outline reasons for society being child-centred
Explain how these ideas lead to a more child-centred society

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<tr>
<th>Changes in Law</th>
<th>Compulsory Education</th>
<th>Smaller Families</th>
<th>Decrease in Infant Mortality</th>
<th>Consumerism</th>
<th>Welfare State</th>
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Is childhood the same across all cultures?

Do all children have the same experiences?

In the UK 4.1 Million children live in poverty. What does this say about the claim society is child-centred?

From your studies of education, what can we say about cultural and material differences of students?