

# TOPIC: FAMILY

Useful vocabulary, tips and resources for IELTS speaking exam

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Sample questions and answers from speaking part 1, 2 and 3

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References to teaching and authentic materials related to this topic: IELTS blogs, podcasts, videos and articles

# 1. SAMPLE ANSWERS

## PART 1

### 1. Do you have a large or small family?

- I come from a **large family**. Now, I just have my mom, an older and three younger brothers. Sadly, my father passed away 17 years ago. So, now I am the only daughter in the family.

### 2. How much time do you spend with your family?

- For now, I live alone in another city far from my family, so, I am only able to spend about two weeks per year with them.

### 3. What do you like to do together as a family?

- My family enjoys cooking together and afterwards having special meals when everyone is invited. We **catch up** on news and talk about our lives. We enjoy music as well. So, when we **get together**, we play several musical instruments and sing along.

### 4. Do you get along well with your family?

- Sure. We are really **close to each other**. I am happy that I can tell them literally anything. They are always there to listen when I have problems.

### 5. Is yours a typical family?

- Well, I can say that, yes, our family is a typical one. A family, who **stays by each other** through good times and bad times.

### 6. Are there many different types of family in your country?

- Yes, types of families vary in terms of the size of the household. There are small families with one or two children and large families with about eight or more children. Sometimes, parents decide to **adopt a child** without relatives.

### 7. Who are you closest to in your family?

- **I am the closest to** my mom. I think it is because we are the only women in the family. So, we **share the same ideas** about many things and she always supports me.

## PART 2

**Describe the person in your family who you most admire. You should say:**

- **what their relationship is to you**
  - **what they have done in their life**
  - **what they do now**
- and explain why you admire them so much.**

The person I **admire** the most, not just in my family but in the whole world, is my mom. She is a great wife and a wonderful mother. She is loving, caring, open-minded and very understanding.

I love how she looks at things. She is very **optimistic**. I love her courage in raising me and my brothers well, since my father passed away. She has been a single mom for about 17 years and did her best to act both a mother and father to us. She would always **stood up for us**.

My mom resigned from work few years after my father died. Her reason was to spend much more time with the family, especially when we were growing up. She felt the need to guide us physically and emotionally. She then started her own business, which she is still running.

I love her so much. She is not just a mom but also a **mentor** and a friend.

# PART 3

## 1. In what ways have families in your country changed in recent?

The roles of husbands and wives have changed in recent years. Both **spouses** have been more open to perform different roles, such as seizing various job opportunities or being more **involved in the household**. Another change, I think, is the trend to have less children. Parents nowadays think of having smaller families due to high cost of living and career perspectives.

## 2. Should husbands and wives have different roles within the family? Why (not)?

Traditionally, husbands and wives had had clear-cut roles in society. Husbands used work and **fulfill financial needs** of the family, while women were expected **to take care of the house**. Changes had occurred over time and both husbands and wives started to take part in each of these roles. I think this change is rather positive. It is not necessary to sharply define each role. I reckon, whatever role family members take, they should always move in the same direction and pursue what is best for the family itself.

## 3. Which are more important to you: your family or your friends?

Both are fairly important, but my family takes place in my life that is **dear to my heart**. Friends may **come and go**, but I know that my family will always be there for me, no matter what happens in my life and no matter what decisions I take. Nevertheless, my friends are the **closest people** with whom I can **share and discuss things** that sometimes are not appropriate **to bring up in the family circle**.

## 2. KEY VOCABULARY

### husband

the male partner in a marriage

She was having breakfast on the beach in Thailand with her **husband**.

### wife

a married woman.

Jackson lives at his family home in Wimbledon, south London, with his **wife** of 26 years and their three sons.

### uncle

the brother of someone's father or mother

He was talking very softly, like he was our **uncle**.

### aunt

the sister of either of your parents, or the wife of your parents' brothers

He was not certain which cottage his **aunt** rented during the winter.

### nephew

a son of someone's brother or sister

I'm assuming your **nephew** is young.

### niece

a daughter of someone's brother or sister

Kathy must divide 7 boxes of cookies among her 4 **nieces**.

### cousin

a child of someone's uncle

I understand that you have an uncle and a

	or aunt	<b>cousin</b> who live near the docks.
<b>spouse</b>	a husband or wife, considered in relation to their partner	In a marriage, both the persons are each other's <b>spouse</b> .
<b>stepdaughter</b>	the daughter of one's spouse and his or her previous partner	In 2012 my <b>stepdaughter</b> , who was 14 at the time, decided to get me out of her life.
<b>stepmother</b>	one's father's second, third, etc. wife	How's your <b>stepmother</b> treating you?
<b>mother-in-law</b>	the mother of one's spouse	<b>Mother-in-laws</b> are mostly seen as nightmares.
<b>father-in-law</b>	the father of one's spouse	Her <b>father-in-law</b> is a powerful figure in the community in Britain.
<b>extended family</b>	family that includes not only parents and children but also grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.	For many years I was conscious that I was the first woman in my <b>extended family</b> to do this.

## nuclear family

a mother, father, and their children, considered as a social unit

A **nuclear family** is merely a couple and their children, as opposed to an "extended" family.

## bring up

look after to adulthood

Everyone has a way to **bring up** their child.

## parent

someone's father or mother

Children learn by example, and so how you choose to live your life as a **parent** is one of the most important factors in determining how they will live theirs.

## upbringing

the way in which a child is cared for and taught while it is growing up

In the great majority of cases, it should be the decision of parents when to ask for help on their children's care and **upbringing**.

## divorce

legal dissolution (ending) of a marriage

The rate of **divorce** has increased, as has the proportion of men who are never or previously married.

## childcare

arrangements for looking after children while parents work

Waiting lists for **childcare** are often long and by the time a vacancy for **childcare** arises, the doctor may be moving to another post.

## adolescence

a period of human life

Having survived a very troubled **adolescence**

between childhood and adulthood

she had made a successful start in service career and hoped to achieve an officer status.

## **formative years**

first few years of a child's life when his/her character develops

I spent my **formative years** in Taiwan.

## **resemblance**

similarity in the way two people look or behave

Family **resemblance** can almost always be detected to some degree.

## **take after someone**

to look or behave like someone from your family

My son **takes after** me; my daughter takes more after her dad. (He appears to be like his parents)

## **family gathering**

meeting family on special occasions such as Christmas or New Year

At holiday **family gatherings**, relatives fill every room in my mother's home.

# 3. WORD FORMATION

<b>bring up</b>	verb	Some women choose to <b>bring up</b> children alone without a male partner.
<b>upbringing</b>	noun	Your <b>upbringing</b> only limits you if you let it limit you.
<b>a divorce</b>	noun	Our <b>divorce</b> was finalized four months ago.
<b>to divorce</b>	verb	We made the decision to <b>divorce</b> a year ago.
<b>divorced</b>	adjective	I am recently <b>divorced</b> .
<b>to depend</b>	verb	The answer <b>depends</b> on who you are.
<b>a dependant</b>	noun	Additional allowance was paid to students with children or other <b>dependants</b> .
<b>dependent</b>	adjective	I do believe basketball is heavily <b>dependent</b> on managers.
<b>a marriage</b>	noun	Her second <b>marriage</b> to athlete Peter Edmond produced two children – John, 11, and Grace, 8.
<b>to marry</b>	verb	The best age to <b>marry</b> is when you have the skills and legal status to cater to a family.

<b>married</b>	adjective	I am <b>married</b> .
<b>a relation</b>	noun	We have <b>relations</b> in UK and Scotland.
<b>relative</b>	adjective	The number of entries defines the <b>relative</b> importance of the topic.
<b>a relationship</b>	noun	It is hard to sustain a <b>relationship</b> between two people who come from two different worlds and live so far away from each other.
<b>to relate</b>	verb	This volume contains two chapters: the first <b>relates</b> mainly to the mother and the second – mainly to the infant.
<b>support</b>	noun	The spouse responsible for paying for the child's <b>support</b> , sends a check with a remittance form.
<b>to support</b>	verb	The course wasn't easy at times, but I stayed focused and my friends <b>supported</b> me throughout.

# 4. COLLOCATIONS

**family background**

During the interview they asked a question on my **family background**.

**member of a family**

The era, when a single **member of a family** was supporting everyone, is gone.

**family gathering**

I wasn't invited to their **family gathering**.

**to lead separate lives**

We were going **to lead separate lives**, getting together occasionally.

**look after children**

The rest of the time we cook and clean and **look after children**.

**family activities**

There are not many **family activities** I can think of in Breston.

**household chores**

Many **household chores** can be automated.

**family and friends**

One can be successful without the support from **family and friends**.

**family outings**

As a child I remember **family outings** to the airport restaurant to watch the planes take off and land.

large  
close  
close-knit  
immediate  
nuclear  
one-parent  
single-parent  
middle-class

adjective+

**family**

come from  
be in  
have  
start  
bring up  
raise  
feed  
support

verb+family

**family**

background  
history  
connections  
relationships  
ties  
member  
life

family+noun

**family**

business  
home  
commitments  
income  
holiday

family+noun

**family**

a member of a family

phrase

**family**

single  
unmarried  
widowed  
divorced

adjective+

**parent**

over-protective  
caring  
devoted  
strict  
working

adjective+

**parent**

supportive  
ex-, former  
pregnant  
faithful  
good  
loyal  
jealous

adjective+

**wife**

meet  
marry  
desert  
leave

verb+

**wife**

His wife has just given birth to a son

phrase

**wife**

get along well with

close  
near  
distant  
blood  
elderly  
old  
young  
female

adjective+

**relative**

have  
lose  
care for  
give support to  
help  
look after  
support

verb+

**relative**

live with  
stay with  
visit

verb+

**relative**

# 5. USEFUL RESOURCES

## THIS TOPIC ON IELTS BLOGS

- [IELTS Speaking Part 2: family celebration \[ielts-simon.com\]](https://ielts-simon.com)
- [IELTS Speaking Practice: family - part 1, 2 and 3 sample questions \[ielts-academic.com\]](https://ielts-academic.com)
- [IELTS Speaking: Famil \[ielts-exam.net\]](https://ielts-exam.net)

## PODCASTS

- [What Image of Marriage Do We Want Our Kids To Have \[GSPN.tv\]](https://GSPN.tv)
- [Is It Really The Collapse of Parenting? \[thenewfamily.com\]](https://thenewfamily.com)

## ARTICLES

- [Which is Better for the Family: One child, two children or more? \[quora.com\]](https://quora.com)
- [Should I Rise My Son and Daughter Like It's the 1950's? \[quora.com\]](https://quora.com)

## VIDEOS

- [Jennifer Senior: For parents, happiness is a very high bar \[TED TALKS\]](https://TED TALKS)

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