



2006 Census Results Teacher's Kit

Lesson 3 - What is a Family?

This lesson was written by The Critical Thinking Consortium with editorial input and subject matter expertise from Statistics Canada's Education Outreach Program and Demography Division.

Overview

Learners will explore how Canadian families have changed over time and examine the factors that contribute to changing family and household structures. They will then create written or illustrated profiles of families and households to describe key trends and changes.

Suggested grade level and subject areas

Intermediate, secondary – Grades 7 to 10
History, social studies, geography, family studies

Objectives

Learners will demonstrate:

- understanding of the changing nature of family and household structures in Canada
- understanding of factors that contribute to change in family and household structures in Canada
- understanding of various causes of demographic shifts
- ability to interpret various population graphs and draw inferences from statistical data
- ability to effectively support decisions with appropriate evidence.

Materials

Handout 1: Family photographs

Handout 2: Place the photos in order

Handout 3: Comparing the differences

Handout 4: What is a family?

Handout 5: Sample illustrative response

Handout 6: Family and household statistics, 1921 to 1976

Evaluation rubric 1: Assessing the justifications

Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing the evidence and explanations of change

[2006 Census Dictionary](#)

Introduction

Learners will compare past and current family and household structures, first by examining 'family portraits' and then by analysing statistical evidence. They will explore how Canadian families have changed over time, identifying changes in four key areas:

- number of children per family
- number of parents per family
- types of relationships (e.g., common law, same sex)
- number of people per household.

Finally, learners will create written or illustrated profiles of families and households to describe key trends and changes.

Classroom instructions

Activity 1: Learn about families in historical and contemporary contexts

Organize learners into teams and provide each team with copies of [Handout 1: Family photographs](#) and [Handout 2: Place the photos in order](#). Without drawing attention to the idea of family or family structure, instruct learners to sequence the photographs from most recent to oldest. Encourage learners to consider the following categories when searching for details to support their choices:

- technology
- furniture
- fabrics and design of clothing.

Invite learners to share their sequences and supporting reasons. Discuss the plausibility of the inferences that learners develop to support the sequences. Ask learners to revisit the photos and examine details about each family: Does considering the size of each family change the learner's ordering of the photos? (The sequence of photos from most recent to oldest is 2, 1, 3.)

Assess learner responses using the [Evaluation rubric 1](#) Assessing the justifications.

Activity 2: Identify changes in family structures

Provide each learner with a copy of [Handout 3: Comparing the differences](#).

Invite learners to develop five statements that compare past and present families and households. A sample statement might be: 'In the 1920s, families had 4.6 people per family and now, families average 2.5 people per family.' Each statement should include a supporting statistic and address a key area of family and household structure:

- number of children per family
- number of parents per family



- types of relationships (i.e., common law, same sex)
- number of people per household.

Direct learners to record their statements in the left-hand column of the chart.

Learners can find key statistical evidence to support their statements in the following information sources:

- general overview of families, marital status, household and dwelling characteristics:
<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/070912/d070912a.htm>
- vignette of census families:
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/vignettes/families.html>
- highlights of changes to families, marital status, households and dwellings:
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/highlights.cfm>
- tool to generate comparisons between 2006, 2001, and 1996 census data:
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/trends/index.cfm>
- Handout 6: Family and Household Statistics, 1921 to 1976.
- Historical Statistics of Canada:
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/11-516-XIE/sectiona/sectiona.htm#Household%20&%20Family%20Stats>

Assess learner responses using the Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing the evidence and explanations of change.

Activity 3: Examine the factors that influence the structure of families

After doing Activity 2, introduce the factors that contribute to changing family and household structures in Canada. Ask learners to think of what factors or events might have contributed to the change they identified in each statement developed in Activity 2, then indicate these reasons in the right-hand column of Handout 3. Encourage them to consider the following criteria when developing their explanations:

- Is it plausible?: Does the explanation seem possible given what is known about changes in family structures? For example, one explanation for fewer people in families and households is that divorce divides one family unit into two smaller units.
- Is it corroborated?: Is there any specific evidence that directly supports the explanation? For example, increases in the divorce rate and in the number of single parent families support the explanation that divorce is a factor in changing family structure.
- Is it imaginative?: Does the explanation go beyond the most obvious conclusions or stated reasons to suggest more revealing insights about the factors that can influence family structures?

Assess learner responses using the Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing the evidence and explanations of change.



Invite learners to share their identified changes and explanations with other members of the class.

As an extension to this activity, you could encourage learners to reflect on the effects of these changes. If desired, ask learners to add a third column to Handout 3: Comparing the differences in which they could record possible political, economic, and social effects.

Activity 4: Develop profiles of families and households

Provide each learner with copies of Handout 4: What is a Family? Ask learners to consider what time periods have seen the greatest changes to family and household structures. Direct learners to revisit the vignette that explores family structures in Canada from 1921 to 2006

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/vignettes/families.html> and to identify four key periods of change to family and household structures (e.g., pre 1945, 1945 to 1965, 1970 to 1990, 2000 to 2006). Ask learners to record their identified time periods in the designated spaces of the handout.

For each time period, ask learners to use statistical evidence to create a written or illustrated profile of the traits of families and households. (An example of an illustrative profile is provided in Handout 5: Sample illustrative response.) Instruct learners to consider the following in each time period:

- number of children per family
- number of parents per family
- types of relationships (i.e., common law, same sex)
- number of people per household.

Remind learners that the four profiles should accurately reflect the trends found in the census materials and that the response to the question 'What is a Family?' may differ in each time period. Encourage learners to again consider the criteria of plausibility, corroboration, and imagination when they create each profile. Invite learners to share their profiles for each time period.

Assess learner responses using the Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing the evidence and explanations of change.

Activity 5 (extension): Explore geographic patterns

Focusing on the geographic areas, ask learners to consider whether there might be differences in family profiles in various areas of Canada. Direct learners to the following source of maps that spatially illustrate family and households structures:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/tables.cfm#maps>

Additional resources: tables:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/provterr.cfm> (distribution by family or household structure)

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/tables/table10.htm> (children

under 14 years)

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/tables/table11.htm> (family structures, census metropolitan areas)

Distribute a copy of Handout 5: Sample illustrative response to each learner. Instruct learners to examine the maps and tables to determine which types of families would be most common in various locations of Canada. Ask learners to list under each type of family pictured on the handout the areas of Canada where that type would be most common. For example, under the picture illustrating a single parent family, learners would note the three territories.

Alternatively, invite learners to modify Handout 4: What is a family? to focus on four geographic areas rather than time periods. Instruct learners to use statistical evidence to create a profile of a family and household from each geographic area.

Assess learner responses using the Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing evidence and explanations of change.



Lesson 3

Handout 1: Family photographs



Photo 1



Photo 2

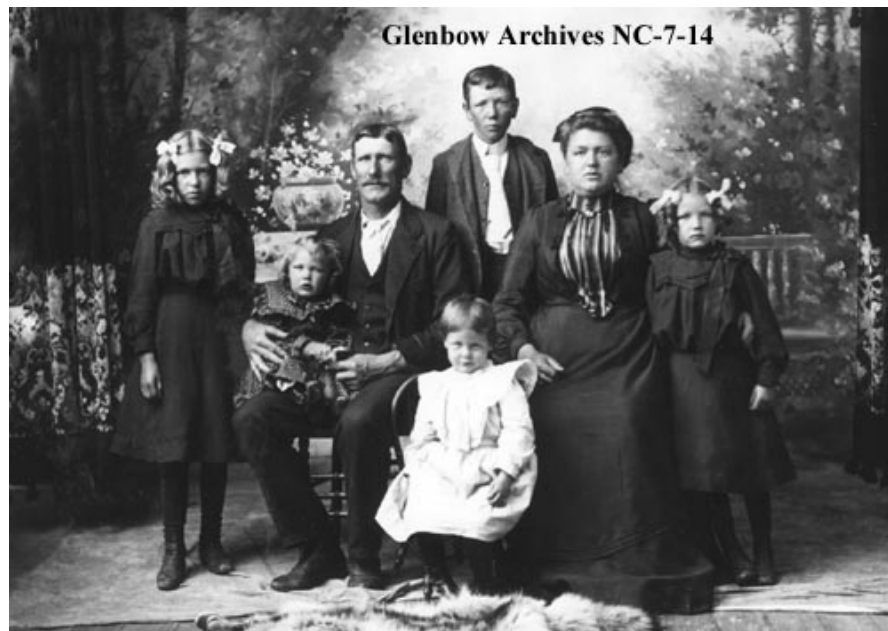


Photo 3



Lesson 3

Handout 2: Place the photos in order

Name: _____

<p>MOST RECENT PHOTO (select one) 1 2 3</p> <p>Reasons for my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>Details from the picture that support my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p>OLDER PHOTO (select one) 1 2 3</p> <p>Reasons for my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>Details from the picture that support my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p>OLDEST PHOTO (select one) 1 2 3</p> <p>Reasons for my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>Details from the picture that support my choice:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>



Lesson 3

Handout 3: Comparing the differences

Name: _____

What is different?	What are the reasons for the difference?
<p>1. In the past, families...</p> <p>Key statistic: And now...</p> <p>Key statistic:</p>	
<p>2. In the past, families...</p> <p>Key statistic: And now...</p> <p>Key statistic:</p>	
<p>3. In the past, families...</p> <p>Key statistic: And now...</p> <p>Key statistic:</p>	
<p>4. In the past, households...</p> <p>Key statistic: And now...</p> <p>Key statistic:</p>	
<p>5. In the past, households...</p> <p>Key statistic: And now...</p> <p>Key statistic:</p>	



Lesson 3

Handout 4: What is a family?

Name: _____

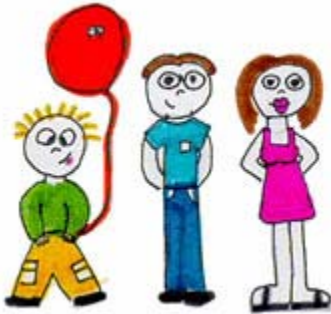
<p>1. Time period: _____</p>	<p>2. Time period: _____</p>
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<p>3. Time period: _____</p>	<p>4. Time period: _____</p>
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Lesson 3

Handout 5: Sample illustrative responses



Source: Government of South Australia. 2008. 'What is a family,' *Children, Youth and Women's Health* website, 'Kid's Health' section (accessed August 7, 2008).
<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=290&id=1714>

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Handout 6: Family and household statistics, 1921 to 1976

Number of **households** and average number of persons per household, Canada, 1921 to 1976

Year	Total number of households	Average number of persons per household	Total number of URBAN households	Average number of persons per URBAN household	Total number of RURAL households	Average number of persons per RURAL household
1976	7,166,095	3.1	5,613,045	3.0	1,553,050	3.5
1971	6,041,302	3.5	4,743,279	3.4	1,298,023	3.9
1966	5,180,473	3.7	3,941,459	3.6	1,239,014	4.1
1961	4,554,736	3.9	3,280,682	3.7	1,274,054	4.2
1956	3,923,646	3.9	2,701,234	3.8	1,222,412	4.2
1951	3,409,284	4.0	2,155,028	3.9	1,254,256	4.2
1941	2,575,744	4.3	1,416,893	4.2	1,158,851	4.5
1931	2,252,729	4.4	1,240,715	4.3	1,012,014	4.6
1921	1,897,227	4.6	958,371	4.5	938,856	4.7

Number of **families** and average number of persons per family, Canada, 1921 to 1976

Year	Total number of families	Average number of persons per family	Total number of URBAN families	Average number of persons per URBAN family	Total number of RURAL families	Average number of persons per RURAL family
1976	5,727,895	3.5	4,372,090	3.4	1,355,805	3.7
1971	5,070,682	3.7	3,923,380	3.6	1,147,305	4.1
1966	4,526,266	3.9	3,413,178	3.8	1,113,088	4.3
1961	4,147,444	3.9	2,985,055	3.7	1,162,389	4.3
1956	3,711,500	3.8	2,583,568	3.6	1,127,912	4.3
1951	3,287,384	3.7	2,123,540	3.5	1,163,844	4.1
1941	2,525,299	3.9	1,437,415	3.7	1,087,884	4.5
1931	2,419,360	3.9	1,333,579	3.7	1,085,781	4.6
1921	2,001,512	4.3	1,023,736	4.0	977,776	4.7

Source: Statistics Canada. 1983. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Catalogue no. 11-516-XIE.
http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/11-516_XIE/sectiona/sectiona.htm



Lesson 3

Evaluation rubric 1: Assessing the justifications

Use the following rubric to assess students' sequencing of the photographs.

	Outstanding	Very good	Competent	Satisfactory	In progress
Supports the sequencing of the photos with convincing reasons	The sequencing of the photos is convincingly supported by the reasons provided.	The sequencing of the photos is mostly supported by the reasons provided.	The sequencing of the photos is generally supported by the reasons provided.	The sequencing of the photos is only partly supported by the reasons provided.	The sequencing of the photos is not at all supported by the reasons provided.

Lesson 3

Evaluation rubric 2: Assessing the evidence and explanations of change

Use the following rubric to assess students' explanations of changes to family and household structures.

	Outstanding	Very good	Competent	Satisfactory	In progress
Identifies relevant and important changes and supporting evidence	Identifies the most important and evident trends regarding changes to families and households. Includes evidence that strongly supports the identified trends.	Identifies several important and evident trends regarding changes to families and households. Includes several relevant pieces of evidence.	Identifies some of the important trends regarding changes to families and households, but some supporting evidence is omitted.	Identifies some of the trends regarding changes to families and households but little supporting evidence is included.	Identifies no relevant trends regarding changes to families and households and has not included supporting evidence.
Offers plausible, corroborated and imaginative explanations	Demonstrates insight and imagination in identifying the most plausible causes of change to families and households. The evidence effectively corroborates the explanation.	Identifies most of the important and plausible causes of change to families and households. The evidence effectively corroborates the explanation.	Identifies only the obvious and stated plausible causes of change to families and households. The evidence generally corroborates the explanation.	Identifies very few plausible explanations of change to families and households; most of the important ones are missing. Some evidence does generally corroborate the explanation, but may not be the best choice.	Identifies no plausible, corroborated or imaginative explanations of change to families and households.