

Directions: READ the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow in complete sentences with appropriate.

PASSAGE 40

How the Family Islands are governed

Daughter Mommy, why are some Bahamian islands called Family Islands?

Mother Well, some years ago all Bahamian Islands except New Providence were called Out Islands. Then it was decided that the name 'Family Islands' would sound better. After all, the people of The Bahamas are all a part of one family.

Daughter But Mommy, I always wanted to know what an island is anyway, do you know?

Mother Sure I do. You see an island is a piece of land that is completely surrounded by water. If you visit any island, you would be able to see water on every side. The Bahamas consists of at least 700 different islands, some big and some very small. People do not live on all of these islands, though; only 27 of the 700 are inhabited.

Daughter My friend at school told me that we could never drive to other islands.

Mother The only way we can do that is by a bridge. We can drive from the island of New Providence to Paradise Island because they are connected by bridges.

Daughter So the only way we can get to a Family Island is by plane?

Mother No sweetie, we can also go by boat. Remember Auntie Susan came to visit us from Cat Island on the mail boat called the Lady Eddina?

Daughter Oh yeah! So Mommy, the Bahamians who live in the Family Islands have the same government as us in New Providence, right?

Mother Yes, the same elected government, governs the entire Bahamas. However, the Family Islands are run a little differently than in New Providence. Let me try to explain it as simply as I can. The **central government** of The Bahamas is located in New Providence. This is where all the laws, policies and decisions for the entire Bahamas are made. The prime minister is the leader of this central government and he along with cabinet ministers and members of Parliament meets here at the House of Assembly on Bay Street. In 1996, the government of The Bahamas decided that people living in the Family Islands should be given the chance to govern themselves on minor matters relating to everyday life on each island. Before 1996, people called **commissioners** were appointed for each Family Island district.

Daughter What was this commissioner's job?

Mother Well, he was really the person in charge of that island, and he was the link between the central government in New Providence and the people of that island. He would make all government decisions on that island. He was also responsible for being the local magistrate and justice of the peace. Some of his duties included conducting marriages and signing passports and birth certificates.

Daughter Are there still commissioners in the Family Islands now?

Mother They are now called **administrators**, and they work along with people from that Family Island who have been elected to district councils. These groups of people would be responsible for making **local government** decisions on their island or area.

Daughter What would happen on an island as large as Andros?

Mother On the larger islands such as Andros, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama and Abaco, there would be a district council established for each area on the island. For example, Andros would have a district council for North Andros, one for Central Andros and one for South Andros. Town committees would then be established for each town area. People from the area would be elected to these committees.

Daughter Do you think these new councils and committees have helped the Family Islands?

Mother Yes, because the central government in New Providence would not know as much about the needs of the people on each Family Island as would the people who actually live on the island. The district councils and town committees will be able to meet and make decisions that affect the daily governing of the islands. Some decisions they would make would be on maintenance and cleaning of public buildings, parks and cemeteries among other things. Through local government, problems on Family Islands would be able to be dealt with in an easier and faster manner.

Daughter Thanks a lot, Mommy. You really helped me to understand our island country a little better.

Preserving our Heritage Level 3 part 2

DATE: _____

1a. What was the name of the person appointed for each Family Island district by the central government before 1996? [1]

1b. Name THREE of his duties. [3]

2a. Do you think it is a good idea that people on the Family Islands to govern themselves on **minor** matters? Write yes or no. [1] _____

2b. Why or why not? [2]

3. Which TWO islands of The Bahamas are connected by a bridge? [2]

4. Name the TWO types of government in The Bahamas. [2]

5a. Does the government allows family islands to make decisions about their island? Write yes or no. [1] _____

5b. Use information from the paragraph TEN to support your answer. [2]

6. How many district councils do the island of Andros has? [1]

7. Write 'F' for fact and 'O' for opinion for the following statements. [2]

- a. _____ It is believed that people live on all 700 islands of The Bahamas.
- b. _____ To get to the islands of The Bahamas you must go by plane or boat.