# 1 Family Ties

## Reading

**1** You are going to read a magazine article about family life in the past. For questions 1-15, choose from the people (A-E). The people may be chosen more than once. When more than one answer is required, these may be given in any order.

*Which person*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| moved home a lot as a child? | 1 | |
| thinks that what grandparents do has changed? | 2 | |
| no longer works? | 3 | 4 |
| is worried about the future? | 5 | |
| thinks families are closer than they used to be? | 6 | |
| comes from a small family? | 7 | |
| thinks people need to talk more? | 8 | 9 |
| used to feel safer than now? | 10 | |
| still knows people from childhood? | 11 | |
| thinks people are too busy these days? | 12 | |
| lives on his/her own? | 13 | 14 |
| thinks education has got better? | 15 | |

# In my day...

***How has family life changed in the last 50 or 60 years? We spoke to five people who grew up in the 1950s and asked them to tell us about their experiences.***

**A**

When she's not at work, Barbara Watson spends most of her time on her hobby – art. Her family live near the flat she shares with her paintings and she sees them almost every day, but she's very different from her own grandparents. 'When I was a child, both my parents worked, and so someone had to look after us children. That was usually my grandma. These days, my grandchildren spend their time doing lots of different activities, and they don't need me so much. That leaves me more time for painting!' Do other people the same age as her feel the same way? 'I have some close friends from 50 years ago and they all say the same. We've got more freedom than our own grandmothers had.'

**B**

Charles Browne's childhood was difficult, but he doesn't complain. 'My dad was in the army, so every few years I found myself in a new town, trying to make new friends. It was hard work. People were friendlier then.

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though. Today, everyone seems to work so hard that they don't have time for other people, which is a shame.' Apart from that, does he think anything has improved in 50 years? 'Well, certainly not entertainment. I think television has killed conversation. I used to love telling people about my day, but my grandchildren are too busy watching to chat. They learn much more in school than we ever did, but I think we were better at forming relationships with other people.'

C

'Growing up in a village in Ireland, was difficult for an only child,' **Kathleen O'Leary** says. 'I was jealous of people who had lots of relatives. I finally made lots of friends when I moved here to London to work. I still see them, even though I gave up work last year.' Does she think today's children have an easier life? 'Kids today seem to be a lot more active, but don't seem to read books like they used to. I spent a lot of time reading, and we didn't even have a TV in our house! I'm concerned about what's going to happen in ten or 20 years' time, though. I mean, if kids today don't read much, then their kids and grandkids will read even less.'

D

**Douglas Baker** still lives in the house he grew up in, which he has been in alone since his divorce five years ago. Although his own marriage has ended, he is positive about family life today. 'My parents stayed together, but I don't think they had a good relationship. People can choose their way of life more today, and I think that means that families are stronger than they were then. I think the gap between parents and children is smaller. Some things have got worse, though. When I was a child, there was much less crime and so I could play outside all the time. The streets are more dangerous now, particularly for older people.'

E

**Diane Short** thinks one of the biggest changes in her lifetime is how much money people have. 'We never had much money when I was a child, but neither did anyone else! These days, it seems like everyone can afford a new car and foreign holidays. When I was still working, I could afford them too, although that changed when I stopped. But it seems to me that people aren't any happier than we were back then. I think we communicated with each other more. Life today can be quite lonely. It would be much better if people shared their feelings with each other a bit more.'

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