

Family and Daily Life



Oral English Communication (Volume 1)

Fred Allen, an American comedian, once said, "We only live once, but if we work it right, once is enough." People all over the world realize life is so short that everybody should value it, make full use of it and live it to the full extent. Family is the most important component in one's life. Some people even say that home is the harbor of love. However, westerners and easterners tend to choose different family types, either nuclear family or extended family, because of their various customs and traditions. Moreover, nowadays, there are other family types in addition to nuclear family and extended family.



Learning Outcomes

- After this unit, students should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes.
 - LO 1: Identify how to take quality notes through listening.
 - LO 2: Communicate effectively about different family types and structures.
 - LO 3: Compare, contrast, and communicate about Chinese and American family values.
 - LO 4: Construct and deliver a quality presentation.
- LO 5: Improve intercultural awareness, skills, and communication by conducting a cultural interview.

Part I Warm-up

Work in pairs and discuss these questions with your partner.

Question 1

Do you think family and family life play an important role in the process of personal and societal development? Why or why not?

Question 2

What does "happy family" mean to you? What do you think are the secrets of a "happy family"?

Question 3

An old Chinese saying goes, "Harmony at home brings prosperity and wealth." How do you comprehend it? What traditional Chinese values does this saying imply? Give examples to support your idea.

Part II

Listen and Talk

Before listening to the passage about *Chinese Families*, take a few minutes to go over the following glossary and note.

Glossary

Confucian: based on the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius — Confucianism

obedience: compliance with one's wishes or orders or acknowledgement of one's authority

filial piety: or Xiao, an attitude of respect for parents and ancestors in societies influenced by Confucian thought

aged care facility: a facility for elderly people who can no longer live at home and need ongoing help with everyday tasks or health care

supersede: to take the place of something/somebody that is considered to be old-fashioned or no longer the best available

Note

Taking organized notes could be very important for college students. By writing and organizing notes taken from a lecture, students can keep track of important information and explanations that the professor covers in class. After class, students can review these notes, helping them identify and understand key information from the class.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Additional Reading 1.1: Confucianism



Listen to the passage about *Chinese Families* carefully, and take notes as you listen. Then discuss the following questions in pairs.

Question 1

How do you understand the statement "the family unit is considered to be one of the most central institutions"?

Question 2

Do you agree with the idea that the Chinese family is largely understood through Confucian thought? Why or why not?

Question 3

What do you think of filial piety, one of the Confucian tenets that stresses the importance of age?

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ASSIGNMENT (2)

Listen to the passage about *Chinese Families* again. Compare your notes with your partners. Make sure to use symbols and abbreviations, and organize the notes by outlining. The table below shows common examples. Please create your own and add them to the table.

Symbols & Abbreviations	Meaning
= ; ≠	equals (or is the same); does not equal
> ; <	is more than; is less than
w/ ; w/o	with; without
# ; !	number; important
+ ; →	and; causes
b/c	because
bef; aft	before; after
est; govt	established (or estimate); government
pop; intl	population; international
yr; exp	year; experiment (or experience)

Example of Notes: Chinese Family

- most central inst (institution)
- provide ID & network of support
- Confucian thinking

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ASSIGNMENT (3)

Listen to the passage about *Chinese Families* for the third time, and discuss the main idea of the passage in pairs and write it down.

Main idea of the Passage		

Note

By identifying the main ideas in materials that students read and hear, they can better identify what's important in them. This will help students



in class and to understand related information. Here are some strategies to identify the main ideas.

- 1. Before you read or listen, you need to activate the knowledge you have already had and use the context to make predictions and guess the purpose.
- 2. Pay attention to the beginning. The speaker or author may state the main idea directly, but often they will start with a story or "hook" to catch your attention.
- 3. Read or listen for sentences that clearly express the main ideas.
- 4. As always, take notes.
- 5. Read through notes and organize them.

Part III

Identify and Imitate

Go over the glossary, cultural information, and/or note first. Then follow the instructions and role-play the dialogues. Finally, make a comparison and contrast.



Dialogue 1

Glossary

bagel: a hard bread roll shaped like a ring

bacon: pork that has been cured (= preserved with salt or smoke),

usually served in thin slices

smoothie: fruit juice mixed with milk or ice cream

almond: the flat pale sweet nut of the almond tree used in cooking and

to make almond oil

blender: an electric machine for mixing soft food or liquid

blend: to mix two or more substances together

toss: to shake or turn food in order to cover it with oil, butter, etc

Note

By **comparing similar ideas**, students can show how two or more things connect to each other. This is useful when students want to make a point using multiple pieces of information. There are some ways to compare similar ideas. One way is to use *additive* — connecting one similar idea to another (*too*, *also*, *as well*, *similarly*, *likewise*, etc.).

By **contrasting different ideas**, students can give two sides from which listeners or readers can identify their main point. This is useful when students stress the difference between two ideas. Such words as *but*, *however*, *while*, *on the other hand*, *in contrast*, etc. can be used.

Work in groups. Lucy's family are talking about their breakfast. Insert the best items into the correct places in the conversation. Then role-play it with group members. Finally, compare and contrast it with a typical Chinese breakfast

Dad: What are we going to have for breakfast?

Mom: We are going to have bagel with eggs, bacon and cream cheese this morning, as well as strawberry and blueberry smoothie.

Lucy: (1) . Can I make the smoothie?

Mom: Yeah, ____(2)___. You need frozen strawberries, blueberries, almond milk, and Greek yogurt.

Lucy: (3) . Shall I also put some bananas?

Mom: No, we should leave the banana out of this recipe to (4)

Dad: Lucy, I will give your some instructions about how to make smoothie.

Lucy: Thank you, dad.

Dad: (5), add almond milk into the blender. (6), toss the strawberries, blueberries and Greek yogurt. Blend it until smooth.

Lucy: Got it. It looks nice and thick, and _____(7)____.

Mom: The egg bagel sandwiches are ready too. Let's eat.

- a. It sounds yummy
- b. Perfect
- c. allow the flavors of the berries to shine
- d. Then
- e. it tastes delicious
- f. sure
- g. First



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Glossary

thoroughly: completely and with great attention to detail

donate: to give money, food, clothes, etc. to somebody/something, especially a charity

homeless shelter: a type of homeless service agency which provides temporary residence for homeless individuals and families

vacuum: to clean something using a vacuum cleaner

loads of: lots of

laundry: clothes, sheets, etc. that need washing, that are being washed, or that have been washed recently

attic: a room or space just below the roof of a house, often used for storing things

Cultural Information

A garage sale (or a yard sale, or tag sale) is an informal event for the sale of used goods by private individuals, in which sellers are not required to obtain business licenses or collect sales tax (though, in some jurisdictions, a permit may be required). Typically, the goods in a garage sale are unwanted items from the household with their owners conducting the sale.

Work in groups. Bob's family are talking about house cleaning. Insert the best items into the correct places in the conversation. Then role-play it with group members. Finally, compare and contrast it with the way how your family members do house cleaning and dispose of unwanted goods.

Mom: It's the day we thoroughly clean the whole house. We(1)
Dad: We also pack up things to donate to the local homeless shelter. Clean all the
rooms and(2)
Bob: (3) , mom?
Mom: You must clean your rooms. They(4)
Dad: Bob, you should clear your beds and chairs of all the items and be sure
to(5) Vacuum the entire room.
Bob: That's a lot to do.
Mom: Yes. We have a lot to do, indeed. So we(6) I have to do several
loads of laundry and clean the kitchen and dining room.
Dad: I'll clean the living room and the attic(7)
Mom: We probably don't need a lot of that stuff(8)?
Dad: I think I'm going to have a garage sale next weekend.
Mom: Yeah,(9)

- a. that's a great idea
- b. are really messy
- c. It's getting full up there
- d. wash all of the windows
- e. put them in their appropriate place
- f. What should we do with it
- g. What exactly do we have to do
- h. had better get started right now
- i. throw away things we don't need



Part IV

Discuss and Interpret

Read the following passages and discuss the questions.



Passage 1

Family structure has changed dramatically over the last 50 years. The "Leave It to Beaver" family is no longer the standard, and several variations on family have been created. There are six specific types of family structures identified by society today.

Nuclear Family

The nuclear family is the traditional type of family structure, which consists of two parents and children. It has long been held in esteem by society as the ideal way to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two-parent structure and generally have more opportunities due to the financial base of two adults.

Single Parent Family

The single parent family consists of one parent raising one or more children on his/her own, which may include a single mother with her children, a single dad with his kids, or a single person with their kids. The single parent family is the biggest change society has seen in terms of changes in family structures.

Extended Family

The extended family consists of two or more adults who are related, either by blood or marriage, living in the same home. This family includes many relatives living together and working toward common goals, such as raising the children and keeping up with the household duties. Many extended families include cousins, aunts or uncles, and grandparents living together.

Childless Family

While most people think of family as including children, there are couples who either cannot or choose not to have children. The childless family is sometimes the "forgotten family", as it does not meet the traditional standards set by society. Childless families consist of two partners living and working together.

Step or Blended Family

Over half of all marriages end in divorce, and many of these individuals choose to get remarried. This creates the step or blended family which involves two separate families merging into one new unit. It consists of a new husband, wife, or spouse and their children from previous marriages or relationships. Step families are about as common as the nuclear family, although they tend to have more problems, such as adjustment periods and discipline issues.

Grandparent Family

Many grandparents today are raising their grandchildren for a variety of reasons. One in fourteen children is raised by his/her grandparents, and the parents are not present in the child's life. This could be due to parents' death, addiction, abandonment or being unfit parents.

Cultural Information





Leave It to Beaver is an American television sitcom

broadcast between 1957 and 1963 about an inquisitive and often naive boy, Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver (Jerry Mathers), and his adventures at home, school, and around his suburban neighborhood. The show also starred Barbara Billingsley and Hugh Beaumont as Beaver's parents, June and Ward Cleaver, and Tony Dow as Beaver's brother Wally. The show has attained an iconic status in the United States, with the Cleavers exemplifying the idealized suburban family of the mid-20th century.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Work in groups. Read and discuss the following questions with your group members. Research the topic online if necessary.

1. According to the passage, which type of family structure is regarded as the ideal
one? And which family is taken as "forgotten family"?
2. How did "Leave It to Beaver" family model influence the American society in
the mid-20th century?
3. What's the main idea of this passage?

Passage 2

In the United States, family life is changing. Two-parent households are on the decline as divorce, remarriage and cohabitation are on the rise. And families are smaller now, due to the growth of single-parent households and the drop in fertility since the end of the post-World War II baby boom. Not only are Americans having fewer children, but the circumstances surrounding parenthood have changed. While in the early 1960s babies typically arrived within a marriage, today fully four-inten births happen to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner. At the same time, family structures have transformed, so has the role of mothers in the workplace and in the home. As more mothers have entered the labor force, more have become breadwinners — in many cases, primary breadwinners — in their families. This increase in labor force participation is a continuation of a century-long trend; the rates of labor force participation among married women, particularly married white women, have been on the rise since at least the turn of the 20th century.

In today's China, the average Chinese household dynamic has evolved away from the traditional archetype as the country has modernized and advanced technologically. Some Chinese believe that love is shown through the provision of money to one's family members. Less focus is being put on personal bonding as parents work harder to earn more money. More mothers are becoming full-time workers. According to the 2020 United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report, 69 percent of women participated in the labor force in China. It means women are seeking careers in addition to their traditional child-rearing role due to increased opportunities. Fathers are often absent due to work-related commitments. Therefore, it is common for young children to be raised by their grandparents while their parents work away from home. Due to a declining birthrate, one-child policy was changed to a two-child policy in 2016, followed by a three-child policy in 2021.

Glossary

cohabitation: the act of living together and having a sexual relationship (especially without being married)

fertility: the ability of producing offspring

baby boom: a period when many more babies are born than usual **archetype:** a very typical example of a certain person or thing

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ASSIGNMENT (2)

Work in groups. Make a comparison and contrast between Chinese family life and American one from different perspectives, such as family change, women's role, birthrate, etc. What conclusion will you draw finally?

	Chinese Family Life	American Family Life
Family change		
Family type		
Family structure		
Women's role		
Birthrate		
Conclusion		



The values of the society rely, to a large extent, on people's family values. However, due to the difference of geographical and historical background, religion and belief, different nations have their own family values. Americans pay attention to personality. Their value orientation is based on the individualism.

Additional Reading 1.2: Cultural Distinctions of Chinese and American Families



They lay stress on their own benefits, advocate individual improvement and find their own true value. It is the core of American culture. An American scholar pointed out: In a democratic society, every citizen has his own goal, which is himself. In the family, individual is the most basic one, which is the valuable, independent from his family relation and doesn't depend on others. So, in American family, parents used to treat themselves and their children as two separate individuals. "Self" doesn't only include parents themselves but the children's selves. To carry out children's self-value, parents should respect children's willingness, interest and hobby first. But American parents attach importance to enjoying their life. They wouldn't give up going to cinema because of the children.

However, Chinese pay attention to general character. They have a conception, which is the most important. The conception is collective spirit. In other words, it means considering things as a whole. It emphasizes collective interest more important than individual interest. Chinese consider that a person is living in contrast with other people. From ancient time to the present, "self", the conception results from contrast with other people, that is, individual value only can live with others' relations in Chinese society. In Chinese family, parents would lose themselves and at the same time, they don't respect their children sometime. "The way that Chinese parents lose themselves presents as follows: they consider children as their own, as a continuation of themselves; their children seem to be their whole lives and hopes; they put all their hopes on their children. This kind of parents would use their determination to replace their children's." They think from adult's view. So, we can find Chinese parents always set an impractical goal for their children.

Glossary

conception: the process of forming an idea or a plan

continuation: the action of carrying something on over a period of time

or the process of being carried on

ASSIGNMENT (3)

Work in groups. Discuss characteristics of Chinese family value and American family value, and make a contrast between them. Generally, contrast can be used to support the main idea or point of view. If so, what's the main idea of this passage?

Additional Reading 1.3: Social Aspects Leading to the Cultural Distinctions

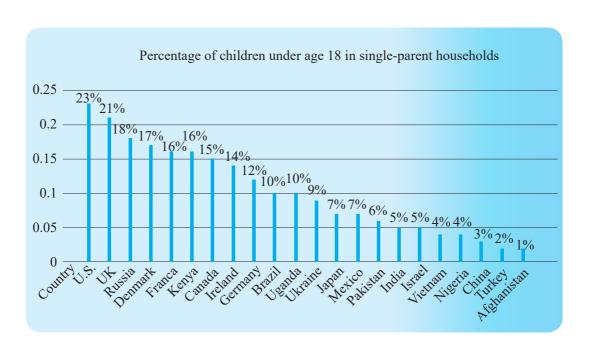


	Chinese Family Value	American Family Value
Focus		
Value orientation		
Emphasis		
Attitude to kids		
Treatment of kids		
	Main Idea	



For decades, the number of American children living with a single parent has been increasing, accompanied by a decline in marriage rates and a rise in births outside marriages. A new Pew Research Center study of 130 countries and territories shows that the American has the world's highest rate of children living in single-parent households. Almost a quarter of American children under the age of 18 live with one parent and no other adults (23%), more than three times the share of children around the world who do so (7%). In comparison, 3% of children in China, 4% of children in Nigeria and 5% of children in India live in single-parent households. In neighboring Canada, the share is 15%.

In addition, the U.S., like other economically advanced countries, has relatively small households overall (11% live in extended family). The average person in the U.S. lives in a home of 3.4 people—which is less than the global average of 4.9 (38% live in extended family globally), but slightly higher than the European average of 3.1.



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ASSIGNMENT 4

Work in groups. Employ the skills of comparison and/or contrast to make a description of the proportion of children living in single-parent homes in other countries, in which you are interested, based on the above figure. Then, rank them from the highest to the lowest in the table (including U.S., China, Nigeria, India, and Canada). Finally, discuss which factors (economic, social, historical, etc.) influence the household size globally.

	Children Living in Single-Parent Homes
Description of the proportion (comparison and/or contrast)	
Ranking list (highest to lowest)	
Factors affecting the household size	

Part V Speak and Perform

Making a presentation individually is a big part of university life and it comes in different forms. The student gives presentations as class assignments. What exactly are presentations? At a university, a presentation is when a speaker describes an idea or subject to an audience. The audience may not know much about the idea or subject. Therefore, it is important to present the information clearly. One way the speaker does this is by dividing the presentation into parts. Study the following table.

Part of Presentation	Purpose
Introduction	To get the audience's attention. To introduce the topic. To introduce the main ideas.
Body	To explain the main ideas. To support the main ideas with details or examples.
Conclusion	To restate the topic. To summarize the main points. To close with a conclusion.

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How can the audience understand a presentation or lecture when the speaker gives a lot of information? The key is to listen and look for **signposting expressions**, including words that help listeners get ready for certain types of information. Study the following table.

Part	Signposting Expression
Introduction	
	Today, I'll be talking about
Introducing focus	I'll discuss
	I'd like to introduce
	First, I'll discuss
Introducing main ideas	Then, I'll go on to
	Towards the end, I'd like to
Body	
	First
First main point	First of all
	The first point I'd like to make is
Second, third, etc., main points	On to my second point
Second, tillid, etc., main points	The next point I'd like to discuss is
	That brings me to my final point
Last main point	Finally, I'd like to talk about
	My last point is
Conclusion	
Restating and summarizing	I'd like to conclude by
	To summarize
Final sentences	(Are there) any questions or comments?

Cultural Information

When speakers conclude with a talk, they don't usually say "Thank you". Instead, they oftentimes ask the audience or students if they have any questions or comments. This is an invitation to ask questions about anything that is not clear.

Task One

Additional Reading 1.4: The Role of Family in Child Development



Study Case 1, make a presentation based on Prompt 1, and do the Reflection.

A. Case 1

Lili Tang, from China, is an international doctoral student at a flagship university in the northwest of the United States. Her son, Liang Chen, from China, is a sophomore at the local public high school. One day, Lili received a phone call from the high school and she was told that the school found Liang had a high tendency of committing suicide after they did a survey. Lili was shocked and scared to death. This is the first time for her to encounter such situation. She's totally at a loss about what to do next to help Liang out.

B. Prompt 1

Have you ever heard or had such similar experience in your life? Do you think that a lot of children are suffering from mental health problems, like anxiety, stress, or depression nowadays? Do family relationships or parent-child relationships affect children's mental and physical development? If you were the mother, Lili, what would you do to solve this problem? Your task here is to prepare and make a 5-10-minute presentation on the *Impact of Family Relationships on Children's Mental and Physical Development*.

C. Reflection

Listen to your classmates' presentations. Take notes and pay attention to how your classmates organize their ideas. Then discuss the similarities and differences between the processes your classmates have presented.

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Task Two

Study Case 2, make a presentation based on Prompt 2, and do the Reflection.

A. Case 2

Have you ever heard the stories about the Eagle Dad and the Tiger Mom? A Chinese father forced his four years old son Duoduo to run almost naked through a snowstorm. Duoduo also sailed alone out to the sea. Then he piloted a plane near Beijing. He had to follow a strict educational regime, with little free time. An American-Chinese mother educated two daughters in a harsh way. She forced one of her daughters to practice the piano endlessly with no water or bathroom breaks until she got the right tune.

B. Prompt 2

Do you think family education is important? What do you think of the Eagle Father and the Tiger Mother in the above case? Does the parenting method vary from culture to culture? What are the proper ways to educate kids as parents? Your task here is to prepare and deliver a ten-minute presentation on *the Importance of Family Education*.

C. Reflection

Listen to your classmates' presentations. Take notes and pay attention to how your classmates organize their ideas. Then discuss the similarities and differences between the processes your classmates have presented.

Part VI Design and Produce

Conduct a cultural interview based on the following prompt.

Prompt of Cultural Interview

As a student, interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds is quite common in today's globalized world. For this assignment, you are required to select, contact and interview one person. He or she must come from a different region, or different socio-economic status (SES), or different racial, ethnic or national origin from yours.

The following table lists ten interview questions. They are adapted based on questions in Terrell and Lindsey's (2009) *Culturally Proficient Leadership* (p. 60). After the cultural interview, you should summarize, describe, and analyze the cultural differences and similarities with your own culture, based on the six dimensions: values, beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, and worldviews.

After finishing this assignment, you need to make a video about the core issues you have found, and your reflections on the cultural interview. (Then upload the video to the website to obtain reviews from others.) Finally, further reflect on what you have obtained from this cultural interview.



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Number	Interview Question
1	Would you like to introduce yourself, in terms of region, SES, ethnic group, national origin, etc?
2	How would you describe the structure of your family as you were growing up? (e.g. your parents, siblings, or grandparents, who's breadwinner, etc.)
3	What is the primary language spoken in your home?
4	What do you think about the importance or purpose of education?
5	How do your family traditions and customs influence your personal development?
6	How would you respond to or interact with people who are different from you, in terms of regions, SES, racial, ethnic or national origin?
7	How would you describe gender roles in your family?
8	How would you describe your worldview (e.g.,the purpose of life)?
9	Who or what is the biggest factor in shaping your worldview?
10	Is there anything you and members of your cultural group believe to be important but were not asked by me (interviewer)? What are they?

(Adapted from Terrell and Lindsey's *Culturally Proficient Leadership*, 2009, p. 60.)

Fun Time — Oral Practice

Play with idioms and proverbs and have fun.

A. Discuss the following idioms or proverbs in the family context with your friends or classmates, and guess their meanings.

Idiom or Proverb	In the Family Context	Guess the Meaning
Give someone the cold shoulder	The husband went back home from work, only to find that his wife gave him the cold shoulder.	
Kick the bucket	All the fish in my aquarium kicked the bucket when we went on a vacation.	
Let the cat out of the bag	David wanted to keep it a surprise, but his sister, Lily, let the cat out of the bag.	
Go the whole nine yards	When Kaila cooks dinner, she always goes the whole nine yards, with three courses and a choice of dessert.	

B. Look up the origin and meaning of the following idioms and proverbs online. Talk about your findings with your friends or classmates.

Idiom or Proverb	Origin	Meaning
Give someone the cold shoulder	Back in medieval times, whenever someone had a guest over, it was considered impolite to ask the guest outright to leave. Instead, they had a custom: when the host gave the guest a piece of meat from the shoulder of pork, beef, or mutton already cold, it signaled that the dinner was over and the guest should get ready to leave.	To treat someone in a hostile or unwelcoming manner; or ignore someone.
Kick the bucket		
Let the cat out of the bag		
Go the whole nine yards		

C. Keep a journal of idioms and proverbs. Then make up sentences by using them. Finally, share and discuss your sentences with friends.

Idiom or Proverb	Sentence
Give someone the cold shoulder	Example: I thought we were friends, but the last time I saw him, he <i>gave me</i> the cold shoulder.
Kick the bucket	
Let the cat out of the bag	
Go the whole nine yards	

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Self-Evaluation and Reflection

