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# Family and Marriage



## Unit Walk-through

### Mini-lecture

文章的核心与辐射——主题、主题思想与主题句

### Guided Reading

Full-time Househusband in China

### Reflective Reading

The Battle of the Sexes

### Self-access Reading

1. Family — Honoring the Elders
2. The Problem with Living Together
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### Inquiry Reading

Marriage and Family in China



## 文章的核心与辐射——主题、主题思想与主题句

阅读英语文章时，要先从宏观把握再到微观理解。宏观把握就是要抓住文章的主要内容（主题思想或主要信息）。微观理解即理解文章的次要信息和其它细节。在这一讲里，我们将讨论如何抓住文章的主要内容。

首先介绍三个与文章拓展有关的概念：主题 (topic)、主题思想 (main idea)、和主题句 (topic sentence)。主题是指文章的话题，主题思想是文章所要表达的主要内容，主题句是文中能概括主题思想或主要信息的那句话。比如说，假设你偶然听到朋友们谈话中提到你的名字。你问他们在谈什么，朋友回答说：“我们正在谈论你。”至此你仅仅了解到他们谈话的主题，但是还不知道谈话的主要内容。你自然想了解他们究竟谈了些什么，于是朋友告诉你，他们正在说你积极参加志愿者活动，干得很出色。这时你就获得了他们谈话的主要内容。如果用一句话概括他们的谈话内容就是——朋友们正在表扬你。这句话就是概括他们谈话的主题句。主题句是从文章内容中提炼出的最关键的一句话。

主题句因文章的类型、作者的写作风格不同而有不同的呈现形式，主题句一般要完成两大任务：1) 点明主题思想；2) 预设文章结构。因此，在分析主题句时，要注意寻找文章的主题、关键词(key words) 等线索。典型的主题句结构如下：

### Divorce affects children in several important ways.

这个主题句点明了文章的主题是“离婚”，主题思想是“对孩子几方面的影响”。在表达主题思想时，作者用关键词affect表明了文章的发展方向，用形容词important表明了其态度，用数词several预设了文章的结构，即分类阐述的形式。由此可见，在分析主题句时，不仅要辨认主题，也要关注一些描写性的词语如形容词、副词等，从而发现文章的基调；还要关注数量词，从而预测文章的整体结构。请看下例：

### The experience of having exploratory stomach surgery was worse than I had imagined.

此句中，主题是having exploratory stomach surgery (做胃部探查术)，名词experience点明了文章的发展方向，而形容词worse点明了文章的基调。通过分析，我们就可以预测作者将描述做胃部探查术的糟糕经历。因为是介绍“经历”，我们可以预测文章的体裁可能是记叙文。

英语文章一般会在开头就点明主题，所以主题句通常会出现在段落的第一句，文章的第一段。当然也有例外，主题句也可能出现在段中、段末、段首第二句或根本不出现。这时我们就得通过文章的题目和篇章的逻辑结构去推测、总结主题句。

如果文章篇幅较长，第一段的主要任务通常是引出主题、点明主题思想、预设文章结构。下面是一篇关于“阅读方法”的文章，让我们分析一下它的第一段吧。

All of us have heard students reading aloud as the study. Certainly reading a sentence aloud a few times is a helpful way to memorize it. However, to improve one's reading comprehension, it is better to read silently than to read aloud.

上段中，第一、二句是导入句，第三句是主题句。主题句点明文章的主题是to improve one's reading comprehension，主题思想是it is better to read silently than to read aloud。上例是典型的开首段，作者通过导入句描述普遍现象、介绍一般观点；用转折词however引出主题句，表明文章的重点；通过比较两种阅读方法，作者表明了自己的观点，暗示了下文的拓展方式。读者接下来要弄清楚的是“默读”究竟在哪些方面以及为什么优于“朗读”。

综上所述，主题句统领全篇，是文章的主要内容、观点、结构的概括，抓住它有助于理解全文。主题句一般出现在文章的开头，并常有but、however、yet、nevertheless、while、whereas、contrary to、in contrast等表示转折的词或词组引导。主题句一般会表明文章的主题和主题思想。在分析主题思想时，我们要注意一些描写性的词语，因为这些词通常会暗示作者的观点、倾向和语气。

## 即学即练

### 仔细阅读下面的短文，然后回答问题

The whole world exaggerates. It exaggerates everything, from the yearly number of bicycles sold to the yearly number of heathens (异教徒) converted into the hope of salvation and more whiskey. Exaggeration is the basis of our trade, the fallow-field (休耕地) of our art and literature, the groundwork of our social life, the foundation of our political existence. As schoolboys, we exaggerate our fights and our marks and our fathers' debts. As men, we exaggerate our wares; we exaggerate our feelings; we exaggerate our incomes — except to the tax-collector, and to him we exaggerate our “outgoings”; we exaggerate our virtues; we even exaggerate our vices, and being in reality the mildest of men, pretend we are daredevil scamps (捣蛋鬼) .

1. 上文中是否有主题句？如果有，是哪一句？
2. 上文的主题思想是什么？作者是如何围绕主题思想展开阐述的？







Read carefully the following passage and the explanations.

## Full-time Househusband in China

### Passage

In a traditional Chinese family, women are expected to do the housekeeping and leave the other business to men.<sup>①</sup> However<sup>②</sup>, the emergence of the full-time househusband<sup>③</sup> is changing traditional family dynamics.

<sup>④</sup>A survey in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen shows that 22 percent, 73 percent, 34 percent and 32 percent of white-collar male workers, aged between 28 and 33, would be prepared to do the housekeeping if the conditions were right.

“Dear, time to have supper,” calls Yang Wenhui. Yang is a full-time househusband<sup>⑤</sup> who cooks delicious dishes to enjoy with his wife when she gets home from work every day. Yang said, “I feel satisfied when I see her gobble up the dishes.”

<sup>⑥</sup>Yang, 32 years old, worked at the office of a periodical prior to quitting the workforce. “My job was flat and steady; I was not promoted. My wife, in contrast, really likes her job. So, after our baby was born, I chose to stay at home and take care of the family while my wife works full-time outside the home,” said Yang.

Sociologists have found the full-time househusband emerges in three<sup>⑦</sup> main situations.

### Explanations

- ① 第一句是导入句，介绍一般观点，引导读者进入文章讨论的主题。
- ② 用转折词However引出主题句，表明本文的主题是full-time househusband，主题思想是The emergence of the full-time househusband is changing traditional family dynamics.。
- ③ househusband的含义可以从我们熟悉的单词housewife推知，意思是“操持家务的丈夫”。
- ④ 第二段给出具体数据(statistics)，以支持上一段中主题句所表达的观点。
- ⑤ full-time househusband是近年来出现的新词，可能有许多人并不熟悉，本段通过一个例子来加以解释。
- ⑥ 本段通过Yang的亲身体验为我们介绍了导致full-time househusband出现的原因，为下文展开讨论作了铺垫。
- ⑦ 句中数字three预设了下文的结构，即作者将在下文分三点展开阐述导致full-time househusband出现的三种情形。



**Firstly**<sup>8</sup>, if the wife is ambitious, well-paid and has good job prospects, while her husband is paid poorly and has no job prospects, it makes economic sense for the female to become the main income earner for the household. **Secondly**<sup>9</sup>, if the wife is tired of household chores and eager to work outside the home, her husband may **forfeit**<sup>9</sup> his job for her sake. **Thirdly**<sup>8</sup>, if the husband can do his work at home, he may take this option as it allows him more time to take care of the family.

People have changed their ideas about what makes a good father in recent years. Many of the young men surveyed believe a successful man will make a good father.

Mary, a businesswoman, said, "In my circle of friends, many families have full-time househusbands and live very happily." **However**<sup>10</sup>, Wang Yuan, a pressman, thinks men should remain the family **breadwinner**<sup>11</sup> although he understands the reasons behind the new division of work.

Influenced by traditional ideas, some families with full-time househusbands prefer others not to know about their arrangement; concerned people would laugh at a husband with "no prospects" or a wife who is "too strong".

<sup>12</sup>Zhou Wei said he has become accustomed to being a full-time househusband although his relatives doubted this when they gathered during the holidays. "A happy life is the most important thing, not other peoples' opinions," added Zhou.

**8** 读这一段时，我们要注意副词firstly, secondly, thirdly，因为这三个词提示了我们 three main situations分别是什么。

**9** 推测forfeit的含义，必须依靠上下文线索和常识。本句大意：如果妻子已厌倦了家庭杂事，急切地想出门工作，那么她的丈夫也许会为了她而辞掉自己的工作。forfeit的意思是“丧失、失去”。

**10** 作者用however表示转折，连接了上文的现代观点与下文的传统观点，为下文做好铺垫。并由此与主题句中的is changing相呼应。

**11** breadwinner的含义可以通过构词法和常识来推测：bread+winner是“赢得面包的人”，对于家庭来讲，自然是“挣钱养家的人”。

**12** 本段通过Zhou Wei的例子说明虽然有些人仍心存疑虑，但full-time househusband依然在家庭中真实地出现了，这与主题句中的is changing traditional family dynamics相呼应。





Read the following passage and answer the questions.

### The Battle of the Sexes

#### Passage

It has often been said that women are the weaker sex.<sup>①</sup> Where survival is concerned, however, the converse is true: men are the weaker sex.<sup>②</sup> “Give me proof”, I hear you say; well, here it is.

<sup>③</sup>Throughout recorded history male death rates have consistently been higher than the death rates for women. This is true not only for the upper age range but even as early as conception. It is a natural fact that more male fetuses (胎儿) are miscarried (流产), and more male babies die in infancy. Nature’s answer to this is to make sure that more female babies are born so that a balance of the sexes can later be achieved. In addition<sup>④</sup>, males are more likely to suffer genetic disorders, and their immune system is less efficient. Assuming that males are genetically in good condition, there is then the fact that suicide rates for men exceed those for women, and the number of males killed in motor accidents far **outstrips**<sup>⑤</sup> the number of women who suffer similar fates. **What’s more**<sup>⑥</sup>, crime statistics show that, although the initiator of a crime is more likely to be a male than a female, the **victim**<sup>⑦</sup> is also more likely to be male, especially in the case of murder.

Strangely enough, men seem to accept this phenomenon without question. You may

#### Questions

- ① 此句在文中起什么作用?
- ② 此句在文中的作用是什么?
- ③ 作者是如何展开本段的主题句的?
- ④ 本段中in addition这个短语给了我们什么启示?
- ⑤ 推测outstrip的词义可以利用什么线索?
- ⑥ what’s more 这个短语在上下文中起到什么作用?
- ⑦ 推测victim的词义可以利用什么线索?



ask yourself, “What can they do?” The answer can be found if you examine what the female gender has done to improve its own situation. Take health, for example<sup>8</sup>. In the three decades of feminism, women have built up an awareness of things that can go wrong with the female physiology (生理学), and are doing something to improve the situation. The only clinics which deal specifically with male disorders are those which serve homosexuals, not men in general.

Another<sup>9</sup> field in which women are doing something to help themselves is in self-defense. The number of women enrolling in martial arts classes has been increasing for the last ten years. Women are no longer prepared to suffer attacks by aggressive<sup>10</sup> males — these attacks are often linked to sex crimes, and have declared war on their aggressors<sup>10</sup>. More and more women now refuse to submit passively to potential rapists; they have learned how to scream — not a shrill cry of fear, but a deep, angry roar. Far from being the victim of vicious assault, women who have trained in the art of self-defense are giving their attackers plenty to think about.

<sup>11</sup>The myth that women are a weaker sex is really becoming a thing of the past.

8 看到take ... for example这个短语，你猜想下文会出现什么？

9 关于段落间的衔接关系，another 给了你什么启示？

10 aggressive 和aggressor两词有关联吗？

11 文章结尾句的作用是什么？



## **1. Family — Honoring the Elders**

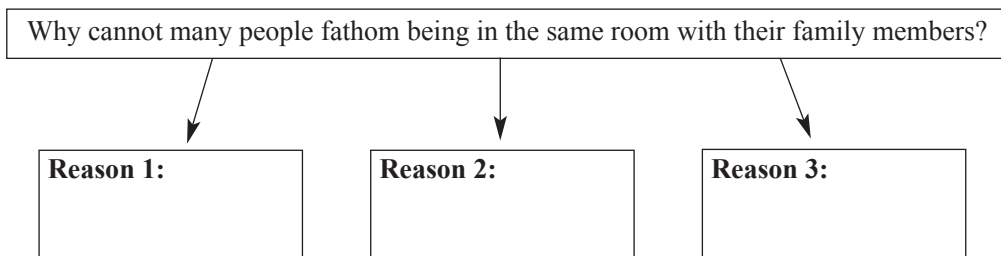
- ① Many elders are leaving the planet, taking their wisdom with them because no one is taking the time to learn the ways of the ancestors. This is a sad state of affairs. It is time once again to return the elders to their role as wisdom keepers and learn the knowledge they have to share relating to family, culture and society.
- ② During ancient times, elders were respected and given high reverence (尊敬). Many cultures set times aside each year for the express purpose of listening to the storytellers as they shared their life experiences with the younger generations.
- ③ In these civilizations, families were the center of the culture. The full tribe worked as one to raise and educate the young. Every person had a purpose, each sharing the chores and the gathering of food. Can you imagine living closely with your entire tribe? Many cannot fathom (理解真意) being in the same room for any length of time with some of their closest family members. Why is this? Often it is due to the lack of basic skills of clear communication, sharing and forgiving.
- ④ Clear communication involves talking when it is your turn to talk and listening while others are talking. By active listening and mirroring back what the speaker has said, there is less likely to be misunderstandings. How many of you are comfortable stating your truth and your honest opinion in any given situation? Lack of integrity and courage keeps individuals from knowing each other deeply.
- ⑤ Resistance to sharing is epidemic based on a huge fear of “lack” that permeates every aspect of most current societies. Many are creating havoc (大破坏) as a means to control others and gain excessive wealth. Poverty and hunger need not exist if all would simply share their skills and material objects.
- ⑥ Forgiveness is another word for non-judgment. Some beg for forgiveness when they transgress (侵犯) another. Others boldly proclaim that someone owes them an apology before they would even consider forgiving them. Once it is understood that everyone is doing the best they can in any given situation, you will better understand there is no thing and no one to forgive. In the act of “forgiving”, you have to place yourself in the position of judge.
- ⑦ Many respect elders as wisdom keepers, yet, are too busy to stop and encourage them to share their wisdom. There is tons of knowledge being lost because no one is listening to their stories. Sad indeed are those souls locked into nursing homes with no one to pay attention to what they have to offer.
- ⑧ Gather your families together. Restore the art of storytelling. Encourage the elders to share their wisdom. Let them know their lives have not been in vain and their experiences will live on forever.



**I. Choose the best answer for each question or statement below.**

1. During ancient times, many cultures \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. asked the young to tell their life experiences to the elders
  - B. ignored the elders to show respect for the young
  - C. put the elders aside because they often expressed their ideas
  - D. saved time to share the elders' life experiences
2. Which of the following is NOT the characteristic of the cultures in which elders were given high reverence?
  - A. Families were the center of the culture.
  - B. The young were raised and educated by the whole tribe.
  - C. The young were supposed to live with their mothers.
  - D. The chores were shared by everyone in the tribe.
3. People cannot understand each other deeply because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. they talk to others rather than listen to others
  - B. they listen to others rather than talk to others
  - C. they lack integrity and courage in communicating deeply with others
  - D. they have enough honesty and courage to express their truth
4. Poverty and hunger still exist because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. some people gain excessive wealth
  - B. people resist sharing their skills and material objects with others
  - C. there is a terrible epidemic in most current societies
  - D. havoc is created in some areas
5. What is the author's purpose in writing this article?
  - A. To tell us forgiveness is another word for non-judgment.
  - B. To argue that there is nothing and no one to forgive.
  - C. To persuade families to encourage the elders to share their wisdom.
  - D. All the elders' lives are fruitful.

**II. Fill in the chart according to the passage above.**



## **2. The Problem with Living Together**

- ① The Census reports a 72 percent increase in the number of cohabiting couples since 1990. Unfortunately, research shows that cohabitation is correlated with greater likelihood of unhappiness and domestic violence in the relationship.
- ② Many people imagine that living together before marriage resembles taking a car for a test drive. The “trial period” gives people a chance to discover whether they are compatible. Actually, here’s the problem with the car analogy: the car doesn’t have hurt feelings if the driver dumps it back at the used car lot and decides not to buy it. The analogy works great if you picture yourself as the driver. It stinks (令人厌恶) if you picture yourself as the car.
- ③ The contract or consent approach doesn’t really help much either. Living together is fine as long as both people agree to it. The agreement amounts to this: I am willing to let you use me as if I were a commodity, as long as you allow me to treat you as if you were a commodity. But this is a bogus (假的) agreement. We can say at the outset that we agree to be the “man of steel”, but no one can credibly promise to have no feelings of remorse (懊悔) if the relationship fails.
- ④ Here is an analogy that works better than the analogy of taking a car for a test drive. Suppose I ask you to give me a blank check, signed and ready to cash. All I have to do is fill in the amount. Most people would be unlikely to do this. You would be more likely to do it, if you snuck out and withdrew the money out of your account before you gave me the check. Or, you could give me the check and just be scared and worried about what I might do.
- ⑤ Think about it: what do you have in your checking account that is more valuable than what you give to your cohabitating partner? When people live together without marriage, they put themselves in a position that is similar to the person being asked to give a blank check. They either hold back on their partner by not giving the full self in their shared lives. Or, they feel scared a lot of the time, wondering whether their partner will somehow take advantage of their vulnerability.

### **I. Choose the best answer for each question or statement below.**

1. What are the cohabiting couples likely to experience according to the passage?
  - A. If they get married finally, they are apt to divorce.
  - B. They are more faithful to their partner than the married couples.
  - C. They are less likely to suffer from unhappiness and domestic violence.
  - D. They are likely to fall victim to unhappiness and domestic violence.
2. Cohabiting cannot be compared to taking a car for a test drive because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the car cannot get hurt emotionally in the trial, but the cohabiting couple can if the relationship fails
  - B. the “trial period” cannot provide opportunity for the couple to discover whether they are compatible
  - C. they don’t have any similarities
  - D. it stinks if one is regarded as the dumped car



3. It is useless for the cohabitating couple to sign a contract or consent because \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. no one wants to be treated as commodities
  - B. the contract or agreement has no legal binding on both parties
  - C. they may fail to carry out the contract or agreement
  - D. any one will feel regret if the relationship fails
4. The phrase “hold back on” (in Para. 5, Line 3) probably means \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. to distrust their partner
  - B. to control their partner
  - C. to disobey their partner
  - D. to refrain from showing feelings
5. Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?
- A. It is difficult for the cohabitating couples to get married.
  - B. There are problems with living together before marriage.
  - C. Cohabitating can help you find a compatible partner.
  - D. We should follow the fashion of cohabitation.

## II. Find the corresponding English expressions from the passage for the Chinese below.

1. 未婚同居
2. 家庭暴力
3. 试驾
4. (意义上) 等于
5. 性格坚强的人
6. 空白支票
7. 从账户中取钱
8. 占某人的便宜

## 3. The Benefits of Marriage

① Gallagher and Waite think the benefits of marriage are observable within the realms of health and wealth. In these categories, married couples experience advantages that cohabitating couples or single individuals don't. With regard to health, they attest (证实) that marriage “can literally save your life”. They quote a 1990 article that concludes, “Compared to married people, the unmarried have a higher rate of mortality: about 50% higher among women and 25% higher among men.”

② Lest one argues that the health advantages married people enjoy are due to their superior physical condition before entering into marriage, they point out that “men in poor health actually tend to marry sooner than healthier men do”, undercutting the idea that married men are healthier only because healthy men are more likely to marry. Furthermore, lifestyle studies show that people





take actions to improve their health upon getting married, demonstrating that marriage itself improves individuals' health.

③ For young men who tend to act in ways that seriously endanger their health, marriage adds several years to statistical life expectancy. As they put it, “the day a man says ‘I do’, he holds the Grim Reaper (死神) at bay.”

④ Cohabitation, by contrast, does not offer the same health advantages as marriage. They state, “If marriage were just a piece of paper, then cohabitating couples who share a home and bed should behave just like married couples. But research shows that cohabitation itself is a different institution than marriage, with different expectations and effects on the individual. For both of these reasons, cohabitation doesn't confer the same kind of health benefits on either men or women as does marriage.”

⑤ Measures of mental health and of happiness also demonstrate a sharp distinction between the married and cohabitating couples. According to them, the latest data show that 40% of married people say they are very happy with their life in general, compared with less than 25% of single or cohabitating individuals.

⑥ Married couples experience significant monetary advantages over single individuals or cohabitating couples. Not only are married couples much more likely to save for the future, their view of marriage as permanent allows them to “specialize” in ways cohabitators find risky. Current research also shows that married men earn 10—40% more income than single or cohabitating men. Since their wages rise faster after marriage, the wage premium is not just a case of wealthier men being more likely to marry.

### I. Choose the best answer for each question or statement below.

1. According to Gallagher and Waite, getting married can make one \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. more confident than before
- B. less happy than before
- C. get into trouble
- D. both healthier and wealthier than before

2. What does the phrase “hold the Grim Reaper at bay” (in Para. 3, Line 3) mean?

- A. To get death near the sea.
- B. To keep death from approaching.
- C. To trap death at the bay.
- D. To get death seized by the bay.

3. After getting married, \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the wife usually earns less income than her husband
- B. the couple make less money than those unmarried
- C. the couple are more likely to save for the future
- D. the couple tend to spend more money



4. Which of the following statements is NOT mentioned in the passage?

- A. The rate of mortality is lower for the unmarried men than women.
- B. The rate of mortality is higher for the unmarried than the married.
- C. When getting married, people take actions to improve their health.
- D. Married men make more money than those unmarried.

5. What is the author's attitude towards marriage?

- A. Positive.
- B. Negative.
- C. Indifferent.
- D. Neutral.

## II. Complete the chart below with the information from the passage.

	Benefits of Traditional Marriage
First	
Second	

### 4. Through the Eyes of the Fathers

① My father's father came to the USA as a small child in the late 19th century. His father abandoned the family. When my grandpa was 15, he borrowed his older brother's birth certificate and joined the US Army. He became a cavalryman (骑兵) and fought in the Philippines against the Aguinaldo uprising. When he came back to America he was a skilled tool and die (金属模具) maker at Ford Motor and then at GE. He was unemployed during most of the Great Depression (大萧条) and lived with extreme frugality (节俭) on his odd jobs and my brave grandmother's wages as a department store clerk.

② My father, a certified genius, entered Williams College, one of the best colleges in the nation, at 15, in 1931, in the depths of the Great Depression. He worked his way through at every kind of odd job, including washing dishes at a fancy fraternity (兄弟会) that did not admit Jews. He was never bitter about it, just grateful he had a chance to go to a fine college in a terrible depression.

③ My father lived with severe personal discipline through school, served honorably in the Navy in the War, worked like a Trojan all his life, never lived in even slight luxury even after he had become a famous and well-to-do man. In their old age, my parents, by then wealthy by some standards, lived in a one bedroom apartment at the Watergate, and slept in the same bed they bought at Macy's when they got married in 1937. When they went to McDonald's their luxury was one chocolate shake and two straws.

④ So, when the stock market takes a dive, when my ill-considered mountain of real estate tumbles, when I learn I won't be able to live like Donald Trump in my later years, I try to look at my life through my grandfather's and father's eyes. What I am going through is a joke compared with what they went through. Now, I am well aware that there are people in Michigan and elsewhere who are going through really bad times like my father knew, and my heart breaks for them. But for a lot of



us, when we think of how great we have it even in a recession, how we still have too much food, air conditioning, color TV, our dogs and cats, social security, unemployment insurance—and how our grandparents and some of our parents did not have any of those things, we have to look at the world through our fathers' eyes, and be very grateful for what we have got—and for the America our fathers bequeathed ( 遗留 ) to us.

**I. Choose the best answer for each question or statement below.**

1. My father was NOT \_\_\_\_\_ according to the passage.
  - A. self-disciplined through school
  - B. grateful for the chance to attend Williams College
  - C. a naval soldier in the War
  - D. a member of a fancy fraternity
2. What does the phrase “work like a Trojan” most probably mean (Para. 3, Line 2)?
  - A. Work industriously.
  - B. Work reluctantly.
  - C. Work in haste.
  - D. Work in secret.
3. The author tried to look at life from his grandfather's and father's view when \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. he watched people suffering elsewhere
  - B. the prices fell greatly on the stock market
  - C. the mountain nearby collapsed
  - D. he realized he would live an extravagant life in his later life
4. Which of the following statements is NOT mentioned in the passage?
  - A. My grandfather became a soldier when he was 15.
  - B. My parents lived a thrifty life even though they were rich.
  - C. My grandfather was jobless during most of the Great Depression.
  - D. I was a real estate agent.
5. The author wrote this article to tell us that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. his grandparents lived a poor life in the Great Depression
  - B. his father was a self-made man
  - C. we should be very grateful for what we have got
  - D. we should be nostalgic

**II. Complete the following chart with the information from the passage.**

Generation	Attitude towards Life
My Grandfather	
My Father	
I	





**Skim and scan the passage to find the answers for the following questions or statements. Some multiple choice questions may have more than one answer.**

The accuracy rate of your comprehension: \_\_\_\_\_ %

- It is believed that marriage and family are taking on diverse trends in China's rural and urban regions due to \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. different standards of life  
 B. different levels of gender equality  
 C. different traditions and customs  
 D. economic development
- Nowadays people pay less attention to \_\_\_\_\_, and more attention to \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Western lifestyle of cohabiting is gradually accepted by \_\_\_\_\_.
- According to the passage, couples nowadays maintain their marriage for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. affection  
 B. children  
 C. care  
 D. economic security  
 E. mutually fulfilling sex  
 F. social status
- Elderly people are supported by \_\_\_\_\_ in the West, and traditionally by \_\_\_\_\_ in the East.
- These days, most Chinese women \_\_\_\_\_ according to the passage.  
 A. work to support their family  
 B. have to hand over their salaries to their husbands  
 C. spend less time and labor on housework than before  
 D. have an equal say in family financial affairs  
 E. are the head of family  
 F. have their own bank accounts
- What kind of people is more likely to divorce in China according to the passage?  
 A. The wealthy.  
 B. The middle-aged.  
 C. The highly-educated.  
 D. The poorly-educated.
- Mixed nationality marriages are on the increase, but to most Chinese marrying someone from the West is no longer a means to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- According to the passage, thanks to social and economic progress, rural women, particularly those who migrate to cities, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. have more life choices  
 B. are independent economically  
 C. expect to control their own life  
 D. are unwilling to marry their fellow villager  
 E. are popular marriage partner for urban men  
 F. become open-minded
- \_\_\_\_\_ for rural residents greatly influences farmers' attitudes towards having children.



## Marriage and Family in China

Time your reading.

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_

Finish time: \_\_\_\_\_

Your reading rate: \_\_\_\_\_ wpm

① Obvious difference exists between standards of life in China's rural and urban areas, and in their levels of gender equality. This adds complexity to China's overall marital (婚姻的) and familial situation. The urban economy and culture are moving in the direction of those of developed countries, as the rural economy shifts from being agriculture-dominated to one co-butressed (共同支撑) by agriculture and industry. Owing to these factors, marriage and family are believed to be taking on diverse trends in China's rural and urban regions.

② Nuclear families are increasing. The present proportion is 60 percent, and is expected to go higher. Most families now comprise 3 to 4 members, and expectations of marriage have changed with improved living conditions. To many people, income, housework and procreation (生育) are no longer top priorities; more important is having a loving, loyal and understanding spouse.

③ People are marrying and having children later in life, and more choose to remain single or issueless (无子女的). Among the West's ever-increasing numbers of unmarried people, most cohabit. This mode of life is gradually being accepted by China's urban youth.

④ Stress is now laid on the quality of a marriage, and an increasing number of couples part when they feel their partnership is beyond redemption (拯救). Taking imaginative measures to keep a marriage fresh and enjoyable is becoming a priority. Husband and wife are more equal, and domestic violence has decreased (减少). Husbands also share more household chores. The bonds of marriage are affection, mutually fulfilling sex and care, rather than economic security and children as before. The main reason why two people marry nowadays is the pleasure the marital relationship brings them.

⑤ A comparatively high-tempo work and lifestyle means people have less time for their parents. Supporting elders has become a grave social problem. Elderly people are supported by the society in the West, and traditionally by their children in the East. In China more elderly people are accepting the Western mode and starting to live in rest homes.

⑥ Sharing as they do the duties of the breadwinner, women have an equal say in family financial affairs. They often have their own bank accounts, and husbands do not necessarily hand over their salaries to their wives. Some couples have their respective property notarized (公证) before marrying. Thanks to developments in the service trade and popularization of domestic electric appliances, less time and labor is expended on housework, so less discord (不和) stems from it.

⑦ Divorce by mutual consent and trial divorce are signs of social progress. More couples are parting in a rational, hatred-free fashion. Society provides counseling and advice, but it is the couple that actually decides whether or not to carry on with their marriage. The divorce rate is expected to soar. There are now greater numbers of people with a good education who have higher expectations of love and marriage, and who may tire of their spouses. Being more sensitive and less



unwilling to overlook the flaws in their marriage, they are more likely to divorce.

⑧ Marriage is now viewed as an entirely private affair. Lifestyles have diversified (变得多样化) into those of celibacy (独身), single-parent families and cohabitation. People select the mode they believe will make them happy, rather than going along with the majority.

⑨ Mixed nationality marriages are on the increase, but to most Chinese marrying someone from the West is no longer a means to getting rich or going abroad, as in the early years of China's opening up and reform. Most Sino-foreign couples marry for love on the basis of mutual understanding.

⑩ In the countryside things have also changed. Free choice, rather than arranged, marriages are being promoted due to social and economic progress. Rural women have more life choices, particularly those who migrate to cities. Working in the city broadens their horizons and brings them economic independence. They consequently expect to be mistresses of their own fate. Many of them despise marrying fellow rural dwellers, but are frustrated that traditional prejudice makes them the last choice of marriage partner for urban men. This situation is likely to continue for a long period.

⑪ Thanks to economic development, more equal status for women, the establishment of social security for seniors, and education on reproductive (生殖的) science, the rural convention of early marriage and lots of children is now being rejected. Endowment insurance for rural residents is having a far-reaching influence on farmers' attitudes towards having children.

⑫ Gender imbalances have made it harder for men from poor households to find marriage partners. In depressed areas the cost of marrying is ruinous (破坏性的) to the man's family, to the extent that many simply cannot afford it. As farmers attach supreme importance to having a family and offspring, some risk the cheaper and more convenient alternative of buying wives.

⑬ The divorce rate in rural areas is likely to remain low, as divorce deprives rural women of some of the basic means of production, such as land. Those that work in township enterprises, however, have more freedom. For the sake of family solidarity, husbands now tend to treat their wives more fairly.

⑭ In conclusion, marriage and family in rural and urban China are evolving into more diversified, rational, and progressive institutions, as the concept of gender equality becomes more widely accepted.

(922 words)



