

## LESSON 1 FAMILY LIFE

**Marriage** is a thing which only a rare person in his or her life avoids. True **bachelors** and **spinsters** make up only a small percent of the population; most single **people** are "**alone but not lonely**".

Millions of others **get married** because of the fun **of family life**. And it is fun, if one takes it with a sense of humour.

There's a lot of fun in **falling in love** with someone and chasing the prospective **fiancee**, which means **dating** and **going out** with the candidate. All the **relatives** (**parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, stepmothers and stepfathers** and all **in-laws**) meanwhile have the fun of criticizing your choice and giving advice. The trick here is not to listen to them but **propose to your bride-to-be** and somehow get her to accept your **proposal**. Then you may arrange the **engagement** and **fix the day of the wedding**.

What fun it is to get all those things, whose names start with the word "wedding" — **dress, rings, cars, flowers, cakes**, etc.! It's great fun to pay for them.

It's fun for the **bride** and the **groom** to escape from the guests and go on a **honeymoon trip**, especially if it is a **wedding present** from the parents. The guests remain with the fun of gossiping whether you **married for love or for money**.

It's fun to return back home with the idea that the person you **are married to** is somewhat different from the one you knew. But there is no time to think about it because you are **newly-weds** and you **expect a baby**.

There is no better fun for a **husband than** taking his **wife** to a **maternity home** alone and bringing her back with the **twins** or **triplets**.

And this is where the greatest fun starts: **washing the new-born's nappies** and **passing away sleepless nights, earning money to keep the family, taking children to kindergarten** and later **to school**. By all means it's fun to **attend parents' meetings** and to learn that your children **take after you** and don't **do well at school**.

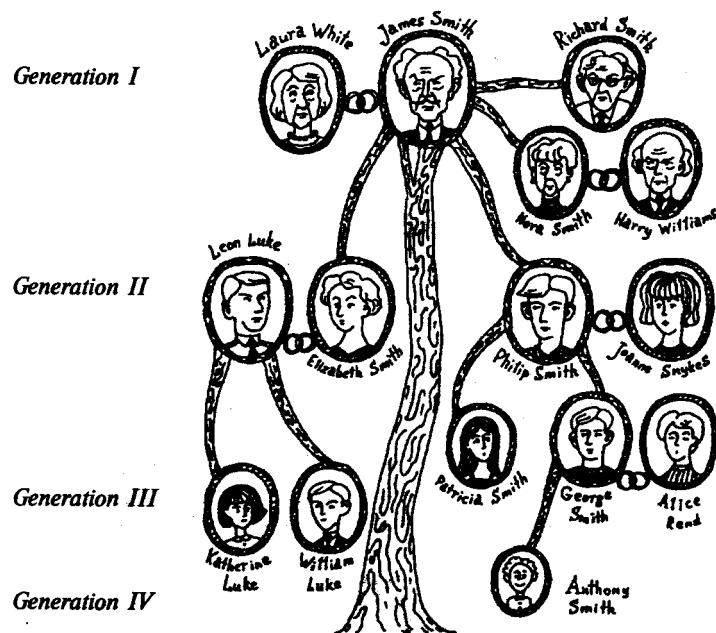
The bigger your children grow, the more they **resemble** you outwardly and the less they display likeness with you inwardly. And you start **grumbling at them** and discussing with your old friends the problem of the "**generation gap**". What fun!

And when at last you and your grey-haired **spouse** start thinking that your family life has calmed down, you haven't **divorced** but **preserved your union**, the climax of your fun bursts out!

One of your dearest **offsprings** brings a long-legged blonde to your house and says that he wants to marry. And you think: 'Why do people ever get married?'

1. Choose one of the names in the family tree below and say how the person is related to other people. Note that the pictures of marriage partners are connected with wedding rings.

► **Pattern:** *William Luke is Leon Luke's son, Philip Smith's nephew and Laura White's grandson*



2. Make up your family tree and speak about your family.
3. Work in pairs and talk. Imagine that:
  - a) you are speaking with a distant relative trying to find out what relation you are to one another;
  - b) you show your family album to your friend and answer all his or her questions.

○ TEXT

**A Marriage of Convenience**

(Story by W. S. Maugham. Abridged.)

I left Bangkok on a shabby little ship. I had gone on board early in the morning and soon discovered that I was thrown amid the oddest collection of persons I had ever encountered. There were two French traders and a Belgian colonel, an Italian tenor, the American proprietor of a circus with his wife, and a retired French official with his.

The French official had been accompanied on board by the French minister at Bangkok, one or two secretaries and a prince of a royal family. He was evidently a person of consequence.<sup>1</sup> I had heard the captain address him as Monsieur le Gouverneur.

Monsieur le Gouverneur was a little man, well below the average height, and small made, with a very ugly little face; he had a bushy grey head, bushy grey eyebrows, and a bushy grey moustache. He did look a little like a poodle<sup>2</sup> and he had the poodle's soft, intelligent and shining eyes.

The Governor's wife was a large woman, tall and of a robust build. She towered over her diminutive husband like a skyscraper over a shack. He talked incessantly, with vivacity and wit, and when he said anything amusing her heavy features relaxed into a large fond smile.

In such a small ship having once made the acquaintance of my fellow passengers, it would have been impossible, even had I wished it, not to pass with them every moment of the day that I was not in my cabin.

Talking of one thing and another we watched the day decline, we dined, and then we sat out again on deck under the stars. Soon, influenced perhaps by the night, the Italian tenor, accompanying himself on his guitar began to sing. He had the real Italian voice, and he sang the Neapolitan songs.

I saw that the little French Governor had been holding the hand of his large wife and the sight was absurd and touching.

'Do you know that this is the anniversary of the day on which I first saw my wife?' he said, suddenly breaking the silence. 'It is also the anniversary of the day on which she promised to be my wife. And, which will surprise you, they were one and the same.'

'You see, ours was a marriage of convenience pure and simple.'<sup>3</sup>

'C'est vrai,'<sup>4</sup> said the lady. 'But sometimes love comes after marriage and not before, and then it is better. It lasts longer.'

'You see, I had been in the navy, and when I retired I was forty-nine. I was strong and active and I was very anxious to find an occupation. And presently I was sent for by the minister to the Colonies and offered the post of Governor in a certain colony. The minister told me that I must be ready to start in a month. I told him that would be easy for an old bachelor.'

'You are a bachelor?'

'Certainly,' I answered.

'In that case I am afraid I must withdraw my offer. For this position it is essential that you should be married.'

'It is too long a story to tell you, but the gist of it was that owing to the scandal my predecessor had caused, it had been decided that the next Governor must be a model of respectability. I expostulated. I argued. Nothing would serve. The minister was adamant.'

'Well, think it over/' said the minister. 'If you can find a wife in a month you can go, but no wife no job.'

I walked away from the ministry with death in my heart.<sup>5</sup> Suddenly I made up my mind.<sup>6</sup> I walked to the offices of the Figaro, composed an advertisement, and handed it in for insertion. You will never believe it, but I had four thousand three hundred and seventy-two replies. It was an avalanche. It was hopeless, I had less than a month now and I could not see over four thousand aspirants to my hand in that time. I gave it up as a bad job.<sup>7</sup> I went out of my room hideous with all those photographs and littered papers and to drive care away<sup>8</sup> went on to the boulevard and sat down at the Cafe de la Paix. After a time I saw a friend passing. My friend stopped and coming up to me sat down.

'What is making you look so glum?' he asked me.

I was glad to have someone in whom I could confide my troubles and told him the whole story. He laughed. Controlling his mirth as best he could, he said to me: 'But, my dear fellow, do you really want to marry?' At this I entirely lost my temper.<sup>9</sup>

'You are completely idiotic,' I said. 'If I did not want to marry, do you imagine that I should have spent three days reading love letters from women I have never set eyes on?'<sup>10</sup>

'Calm yourself and listen to me,' he replied. 'I have a cousin who lives in Geneva. She is Swiss. Her morals are without reproach, she is of a suitable age, a spinster, for she has spent the last fifteen years nursing an invalid mother who has lately died, she is well educated and she is not ugly.'

'There is one thing you forget. What inducement would there be for her to give up her accustomed life to accompany in exile a man of forty-nine who is by no means a beauty?'

When I made this remark to my friend he replied: 'One can never tell with women.'<sup>11</sup> There is something about marriage that wonderfully attracts them. There would be no harm in asking her. '

'But I do not know your cousin and I don't see how I am to make her acquaintance.'

'I will tell you what to do,' said my friend. 'Go to Geneva and take her a box of chocolates from me. You can have a little talk and then if you do not like the look of her you take your leave and no harm is done.'

That night I took the train to Geneva. No sooner had I arrived than I sent her a letter to say that I was the bearer of a gift from her cousin. Within an hour I received her reply to the effect that she would be pleased to receive me at four o'clock in the afternoon. As the clock struck four I presented myself at the door of her house. She was waiting for me. Imagine my surprise to see a young woman with the dignity of Juno, the features of Venus, and in her expression

the intelligence of Minerva. I was so taken aback that I nearly dropped the box of chocolates. We talked for a quarter of an hour. And then I said to her.

'Mademoiselle,<sup>12</sup> I must tell you that I did not come here merely to give you a box of chocolates. I came to ask you to do me the honour of marrying me.'

She gave a start.<sup>13</sup>

'But, monsieur, you are mad,' she said.

Then I repeated my offer.

'I will not deny that your offer has come as a surprise. I had not thought of marrying, I have passed the age. I must consult my friends and my family.'

'What have they got to do with it? You are of full age. The matter is pressing. I cannot wait.'

'You are not asking me to say yes or no this very minute? That is outrageous.'

'That is exactly what I am asking.'

'You are quite evidently a lunatic.'

'Well, which is it to be?' I said. 'Yes or no?'

She shrugged her shoulders. She waited a minute and I was on tenterhooks.<sup>14</sup>

'Yes.'

And there she is. We were married in a fortnight and I became Governor of a colony. 'I married a jewel, my dear sirs, one in a thousand.'

He turned to the Belgian colonel.

'Are you a bachelor? If so I strongly recommend you to go to Geneva. It is a nest of the most adorable young women.'

It was she who summed up the story.

'The fact is that in a marriage of convenience you expect less and so you are less likely to be disappointed. Passion is all very well,<sup>15</sup> but it is not a proper foundation for marriage. For two people to be happy in marriage they must be able to respect one another, and their interests must be alike; then if they are decent people and are willing to give and take, to live and let live, there is no reason why their union should not be as happy as ours.' She paused. 'But, of course, my husband is a very remarkable man.'

### **Comprehension Check**

1. What kind of people were there on board the ship?
2. How did the author guess that the Governor was a person of consequence?
3. What did the Governor and his wife look like?
4. How did it happen that the Governor started telling his story?
5. What impulse did the Governor have to marry?
6. Why was it essential for the next Governor to be married?
7. What did the Governor suddenly decide to do?
8. What kind of response did the Governor get after he had handed in the advertisement?
9. Why did he give up reading letters?
10. Where did the Governor meet his friend?
11. What did his friend suggest?
12. Did the Governor agree to follow his advice? How?
13. What impression did the lady produce upon the Governor?
14. What reaction did the lady have to his proposal?
15. Was the Governor persistent? Support your opinion.
16. What happened in the end?
17. What piece of advice did the Governor give to the Belgian colonel?
18. How did the lady sum up the story?

## EXERCISES

### Exercise 1

Find in the text words similar in meaning to the following:

*Nouns:*

A human being, an owner, a statesman, getting to know someone, the celebration of a date, a single man, a post, bad public gossip, a person who strives for getting something, a single lady, stimulus, a present, a madman, a precious stone.

*Verbs:*

To meet by chance, to travel together with somebody, to call somebody, to cease employment, to take back, to protest, to give to somebody, to finish abruptly, to ask for advice, to give instructions, to summarize.

*Adjectives:*

In bad condition, bad-looking, full-bodied, tiny, tender, silly, firm, appropriate, urgent, admirable, good enough, moving.

### Exercise 2

Explain in other words the following phrases.

To confide troubles, to lose temper, without reproach, of a suitable age, to nurse somebody, to be taken aback, to do someone the honor of marrying him, to be on tenterhooks, to give a start, to come as a surprise, to pass the age, to be of full age, a proper foundation for marriage, a person of consequence, an aspirant to someone's hand, to be adamant, a marriage of convenience.

**Complete the sentences the way the author puts it in the text.**

1. Passion is all very well, but...
2. I had gone on board early in the morning and soon discovered that...
3. The Governor's wife was a large woman, tall and ...
4. I saw that the little French Governor had been holding ...
5. 'You see, ours was a marriage ...'
6. In that case I am afraid I must withdraw ...
7. It is too long a story to tell you, but ...
8. I walked to the offices of Figaro ...
9. You will never believe it but ...
10. I was glad to have someone to whom I could ...
11. Her morals are without reproach, she is of...
12. One can never tell with women. There is something about marriage ...
13. If you do not like the look of her...
14. I was so taken aback that...
15. I came to ask you
16. I will not deny ...
17. The fact is that in a marriage

### Exercise 6

Express the same idea using different wording and grammar.

1. Ours was a marriage of convenience pure and simple.
2. But sometimes love comes after marriage and not before, and then it is better. It lasts longer.
3. I was strong and active and I was very anxious to find an occupation.
4. I told him that would be easy for an old bachelor.
5. I expostulated. I argued. Nothing would serve.
6. I had four thousand and three hundred and seventy-two replies. It was an avalanche.
7. I gave it up as a bad job.
8. What is making you look so glum?

9. What inducement would there be for her to give up her accustomed life to accompany in exile a man of forty-nine who is by no means a beauty?
10. There would be no harm in asking her.
11. If you do not like the look of her you take your leave and no harm is done.
12. Within an hour I received her reply to the effect that she would be pleased to receive me at four o'clock in the afternoon.
13. I was so taken aback that I nearly dropped the box of chocolates.
14. You are of full age. The matter is pressing. I cannot wait.
15. For two people to be happy in marriage they must be able to respect one another, and their interests must be alike; then if they are decent people and willing to give and take, to live and let live, there is no reason why their union should not be as happy as ours.

### **Exercise 7**

Translate the following verbal phrases into Russian. Mind the difference in the use of prepositions in the two languages if any.

1. To consult somebody, to address somebody, to pass the age, to shrug one's shoulders, to encounter somebody, to marry somebody, to nurse somebody.
2. To sum up, to be taken aback, to give up, to hand in, to sit down, to come up.

### **Exercise 8**

Put in the missing prepositions or postpositions if necessary.

1. I felt deep sorrow and wanted to confide my troubles ... somebody.
2. The children were so much taken ... that they could not speak for a while; then they decided to think it... .
3. You don't need to consult ... anybody, you have already passed ... the age when people depend on others.
4. The best way to drive care ... is to sit... a cafe.
5. One never knows how to address ... young ladies — Miss or Mrs.
6. A lot of people have never set eyes ... skyscrapers.
7. The lady at the table shrugged ... her shoulders and sent... the waiter.
8. Not everyone has enough tolerance to nurse ... elderly people but those who have, never give it... .
9. I encountered ... my old friend in the street, we went to a cafe and talked ... so many things.
10. The most difficult thing for a young author is to hand ... his manuscript to the editor.
11. Younger people are easily influenced ... all sorts of things they see or hear.
12. When the lady was pleased her lips relaxed ... a smile.
13. Quite often the students are asked to sum ... the story.
14. The tenor sang and his assistant accompanied him ... the guitar.

### **Exercise 9**

Dramatize the dialogues between:

1. the narrator and the French Governor;
2. the minister and the prospective Governor;
3. the prospective Governor and his friend;
4. the prospective Governor and his future wife.

### **Exercise 10**

Retell the Governor's story:

1. in the third person;
2. in the person of the Governor;
3. in the person of the Governor's wife;
4. in the person of the Governor's friend.

### **Exercise 11**

Discussion points.

1. What do you think of the main characters — the Governor and his wife?
2. The characters' appearances are so different. Is it a plus or a minus?
3. Does their story sound true to life, in your opinion? Prove your point.
4. Was it really a marriage of convenience? Could it be a case of love at first sight?
5. Are you for or against marriages of convenience?
6. Do you think acquaintance services and marriage advertisements can be of help?

### **Exercise 12**

Express your opinion about the following words of the characters in the text.

'But sometimes love comes after marriage and not before, and then it is better. It lasts longer.'

'One can never tell with women. There is something about marriage that wonderfully attracts them.'

'For two people to be happy in marriage they must be able to respect one another, and their interests must be alike ...'

### **Exercise 13**

1. The Governor's wife had been a spinster and he had been a bachelor before they married. What other terms do you know to denote the marital status of a person? Consult the *Topical Vocabulary*.

- an unmarried person —
- a person, having a spouse —
- a person, who divorced his or her spouse —

2. The characters' marriage is called "a marriage of convenience". What other types of marriages do you know?

- marriage, when people love each other —
- marriage of people who are distantly related —
- marriage of people with different social status —

3. The Governor and his wife celebrated the anniversary of their wedding. Do you know what we call the most often celebrated anniversaries?

- 25 years of family life —
- 50 years of family life —
- 75 years of family life —

### **Exercise 14**

Imagine the following situation. Your parents have chosen a mate for you. They insist that you should marry the person they have found. How would you react? What do you think of arranged marriages in India and other oriental countries? Can an arranged marriage work?

Use the following expressions:

- It is all very well, but...
- One can never tell with ...
- What have/has they/it got to do with ...
- There would be no harm in ...
- I don't see how ...
- Imagine my surprise to ...
- Even had I wished it ...
- No wife, no ...

### **Exercise 15**

Read the following short passage and compare the wedding traditions in Russia and Great Britain. Say what is different and what they have in common. Speak about interesting wedding ceremonies in other countries.

Wedding Superstitions

In England the wedding preparations, ceremony and feast have all become loaded with ritual practices to ward off evil and bless the marriage with fortune and fertility.

The choice of date is important. May is traditionally unlucky for weddings. The tradition that the bride's parents should pay for the wedding dates from two or three centuries ago, when wealthy families would pay an eligible bachelor to take an unmarried daughter off their hands in exchange for a large dowry. At most formal weddings, brides still get married in virginal white — many other colours are considered unlucky.

A bride will also ensure that her wedding outfit includes "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue". "Old" maintains her link with the past; "new" symbolizes the future; "borrowed" gives her a link with the present; and "blue" symbolizes her purity.

Even a modern bride will observe the taboos about wearing her dress before the ceremony. The groom mustn't see her in it until she enters the church. The veil should be put on for the first time as she leaves for the church.

It's a lucky omen if the bride should see a chimney sweep on her way to church. Sometimes a sweep is paid to attend the ceremony and kiss the bride - a relic of the idea that soot and ashes are symbols of fertility.

After the ceremony, the couple are showered with confetti. One old custom was for the bride and sometimes the groom to negotiate some obstacle as they left the church — guests would impede them with ropes of flowers, for example, or with sticks that had to be jumped over.

After that the bride is faced with the feast. The most important item is the wedding cake, whose richness symbolizes fertility, just as it has done since Roman times. Today, the first slice is cut by the bride to ensure a fruitful marriage.

*(from "Reader's Digest")*

### **Exercise 16**

Agree or disagree with the following statements. Give your reasons.

1. The husband should be more intelligent than the wife.
2. Spouses should be alike.
3. Money often keeps people together.
4. Marriage should be compulsory for everybody.
5. The best wife is a housewife.
6. The marriage contract is incompatible with romantic love.

#### **► Use:**

*For agreement:*

I couldn't agree more ...

That's just what I was thinking...

You know, that's exactly what

I think...

I agree entirely...

That's a good point ...

*For disagreement:*

Yes, that's quite true, but...

I'm not sure I quite agree ...

Perhaps, but don't you think  
that ...

Well, you have a point there,  
but...

I see what you mean, but...

*For more categorical and informal disagreement:*

I can't agree with you there.

You can't be serious!



Come off it!  
Don't be so silly!

**Exercise 17**

Bring pictures of your close or distant relatives. Show them to the class. Tell the class about a memorable event in the life of your relatives.

**Exercise 18**

Make up a list of positive and negative sides of family life. Compare your lists with those of your classmates. Comment on the results.

Positive	Negative

**Exercise 19**

Make up dialogues discussing the following problems:

1. Teenage marriage.
2. Leadership in the family.
3. Marriage contracts and romantic love.
4. Divorce and one-parent families.
5. A white wedding or no wedding?

You can start your dialogues with the following expressions:

Would you agree that...

Do you think it's right to say that...

Ask your classmates to explain their point of view more precisely by saying:

I didn't quite follow what you were saying about ...

I don't quite see what you are getting at, I am afraid.

If you need to rephrase your own statement, say:

Let me put it another way.

Sorry, let me explain.

That's not quite what I meant.

**Exercise 20**

Explain the meanings of the proverbs given below. Make up five-sentence stories of your own to highlight their meanings.

1. Marriages are made in heaven.
2. Faint heart never won a fair maiden.
3. Birds of a feather flock together.
5. Every family has a skeleton in the cupboard.
6. Spare the rod and spoil the child.
7. When children stand still they have done some ill.
8. Like father like son.
9. A good husband makes a good wife.
10. He that would the daughter win, must with the mother first begin.
11. A tree is known by its fruit.

**Exercise 21**

Translate the following quotations and comment upon them.

'Though women are angels, yet wedlock is the devil.'

*George Gordon Byron*

'The dread of loneliness is greater than the fear of bondage, so we get married.'

*Cyril Connolly*

'Every woman should marry — and no man.'

*Benjamin Disraeli*

'Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut after.'

*Benjamin Franklin*

'A man should be taller, older, heavier, uglier, and hoarser than his wife.'

*Edgar Watson Howe*

'Marrying a man is like buying something you've been admiring for a long time in a shop window. You may love it when you get it home, but it does not always go with everything else in the house.'

*Jean Kerr*

'An ideal wife is any woman who has an ideal husband.'

*Booth Tarkington*