

Years ago, families were much larger than they are today. There were more children in the average family, and grandparents often lived with their children and grandchildren. Other relatives sometimes lived with the family or in the same neighborhood. This was known as the “extended family.”

Today we speak of the modern family as a “nuclear family” because a typical household now usually contains only the nucleus of parents and children. It is also common for families to be separated geographically from grandparents and other relatives. In this lesson you will learn words that refer to the family.

WORD LIST

descendant
generation
inheritance
lineage
maternal
matriarch
parental
patriarch
posterity
sibling

DEFINITIONS

After you have studied the definitions and example for each vocabulary word, write the word on the line to the right.

1. **descendant** (dĭ-sĕn'dənt) *noun* An individual or animal coming from a specific ancestor; offspring of a certain family or group. (From the Latin *de-*, meaning “down,” and *scandere*, meaning “to climb”)

Related Words *descend verb; descent noun*

Example John claims to be a *descendant* of George Washington.

1. _____

2. **generation** (jĕn'ə-rā'shən) *noun* **a.** All of the offspring that are at the same stage of descent from a common ancestor. **b.** A group of people who grow up at the same time and are thought to have similar ideas. (From the Latin word *genus*, meaning “birth”)

Related Words *generate verb; generational adjective*

Example Three *generations* of McCleary women were represented at the party—Alice, Alice’s mother, and Alice’s grandmother.

2. _____

3. **inheritance** (ĭn-hĕr'ĭ-təns) *noun* **a.** The act of receiving property or money after the death of a relative or friend. **b.** the property or money received at such a time. **c.** A characteristic, such as red hair, that is received genetically from a parent, grandparent, etc. (From the Latin *in-*, meaning “in,” and *heres*, meaning “heir”)

Related Words *inherit verb; inheritor noun*

Example Esther received a large *inheritance* after her grandmother’s death.

3. _____

4. **lineage** (lĭn'ē-ĭj) *noun* a. Direct descent from a particular ancestor; ancestry. b. All of the descendants of a common ancestor. (From the Old French word *ligne*, meaning "line")

Related Word **lineal** *adjective*

Example The horse had an impressive *lineage*, which began with the thoroughbred champion Thunder.

5. **maternal** (mə-tûr'nəl) *adjective* a. Referring to a mother or motherhood: *maternal concern*. b. Inherited from one's mother: *maternal trait*. c. Related to one's mother. (From the Latin word *mater*, meaning "mother")

Related Word **maternally** *adverb*

Example Baby-sitting brought out the *maternal* side of Joan's personality.

6. **matriarch** (mā'trē-ärk') *noun* A woman who rules a family or clan. (From the Latin word *mater*, meaning "mother," and the Greek word *arkhos*, meaning "ruler")

Related Words **matriarchal** *adjective*; **matriarchy** *noun*

Example Because she is a strong leader, Grandma Jessie is the *matriarch* of the Hobart family.

7. **parental** (pə-rĕn'tl) *adjective* Characteristic of a mother or father. (From the Latin word *parere*, meaning "to give birth")

Related Words **parent** *noun*; **parentally** *adverb*

Example Small children require a great deal of *parental* guidance.

8. **patriarch** (pā'trē-ärk') *noun* a. The male leader of a family or clan. b. A very old and respected man. (From the Greek word *pater*, meaning "father," and *arkhos*, meaning "ruler")

Related Words **patriarchal** *adjective*; **patriarchy** *noun*

Example At family reunions, Uncle Charlie is the acknowledged *patriarch*.

9. **posterity** (pŏ-stĕr'ĭ-tē) *noun* a. Future generations. b. All of a person's descendants. (From the Latin word *posterus*, meaning "coming after")

Example The famous artist will leave many paintings to *posterity*.

10. **sibling** (sĭb'lĭŋ) *noun* One of two or more children of the same parents; a brother or a sister. (From the Old English word *sibb*, meaning "kinsman")

Example *Siblings* often resemble one another physically.

NAME _____

DATE _____

EXERCISE 1 COMPLETING DEFINITIONS

On the answer line, write the word from the vocabulary list that best completes each definition.

1. Something that relates to a mother or father is _____.
2. The male ruler of a clan or family is called a(n) _____.
3. If something is left to future generations, it is given to _____.
4. Something that refers to a mother or motherhood is _____.
5. The offspring of a specific ancestor is a(n) _____.
6. Property or a characteristic received from a parent or ancestor is a(n) _____.
7. A _____ consists of people who are at the same stage of descent.
8. Two or more individuals having the same parents are _____.
9. A female ruler of a clan or family is a(n) _____.
10. One's _____ is one's descent from a particular ancestor.

EXERCISE 2 USING WORDS CORRECTLY

Each of the following questions contains an italicized vocabulary word. Decide the answer to the question, and write *Yes* or *No* on the answer line.

1. Would a *matriarch* lack power within a family?
2. Are you a member of the same *generation* as your grandfather?
3. Is an older brother a *sibling*?
4. Would a male ruler of a Scottish clan be a *patriarch*?
5. If a poet destroyed his or her work, could it still be left to *posterity*?
6. Would a direct ancestor of a king be of royal *lineage*?
7. Would your father's uncle be a *maternal* relative?
8. Would a *descendant* be born before an ancestor?
9. Is a five-dollar loan an *inheritance*?
10. Might a father sign a *parental* permission form?

EXERCISE 3 CHOOSING THE BEST WORD

Decide which vocabulary word or related form best completes the sentence, and write the letter of your choice on the answer line.

1. The devoted mother of five has strong _____ instincts.
a. descendant b. patriarchal c. lineage d. maternal
2. As the great-granddaughter of homesteaders, Judy is proud of her _____.
a. lineage b. posterity c. sibling d. generation

3. "Introduce your younger _____," Mrs. Henderson instructed Lynn, the older of the two sisters.
a. generation b. patriarch c. sibling d. matriarch
4. The graduates of the class of 1980 are members of the same _____.
a. inheritance b. patriarch c. matriarch d. generation
5. City officials left a time capsule for _____.
a. posterity b. lineage c. siblings d. descendants
6. A beautiful gold watch and cufflinks were part of the _____ I received from my grandfather.
a. posterity b. inheritance c. sibling d. descendant
7. Lady Agatha Ashcroft is a powerful _____ who controls a large family.
a. patriarch b. descendant c. sibling d. matriarch
8. "_____ intervention is sometimes unavoidable," the counselor told the mothers and fathers.
a. Descendant b. Posterity c. Parental d. Lineal
9. Lisa thinks that she is a _____ of the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
a. matriarch b. descendant c. sibling d. patriarch
10. The members of the village looked to their _____ for advice because he was a great leader.
a. patriarch b. descendant c. lineage d. matriarch

EXERCISE 4 USING DIFFERENT FORMS OF WORDS

Each sentence contains an italicized vocabulary word in a form that does not fit the sentence. On the answer line, write the form of that word that does fit the sentence.

1. Donald *inheritance* eight thousand dollars.
2. Before going on a class field trip, Steve had to get permission from his *parental*.
3. Blair discovered that she was *descendant* from Thomas Jefferson.
4. The explorers found a *matriarch* family group while exploring the islands.
5. Gerald's *lineage* history includes famous painters and writers.
6. Although they do not look alike, Martha and Rachel are *sibling*.
7. In early Scottish history, clans ruled the land through a *patriarch* system.
8. The park system was created not just for present residents of the city but also for *posterity*.
9. Claude wrote a composition about the *generation* differences between his views and those of his grandparents.
10. The young girl cradled the doll *maternal* in her arms.