

DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY

This is the second lesson in our '[Vocabulary for Describing People](#)' series.

By the end of this lesson, you will know how to describe your family in many different ways.

There are **9 Steps** in total. I recommend that you do **1 Step** at a time for maximum results.

You can use a unilingual or a bilingual dictionary to check the meaning and pronunciation of new words.

Make sure you also have a pen and a notebook to jot down important information.

Once you are ready, we can start.

a) Describe Your Family (Step 1): Different Types of Families

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FAMILIES

NUCLEAR IMMEDIATE ELEMENTARY EXTENDED BLENDED

TRADITIONAL MONOPARENTAL SINGLE-PARENT CONJUGAL ROYAL

MATRIFOCAL MATRILINEAL PATRILINEAL STEP-FAMILY FOSTER

MONOGAMOUS POLYGAMOUS ADOPTIVE SAME-SEX



As you can see in the picture above, families can be described in several ways. I think that the most common type of family is the nuclear one. This is a family that is solely composed of parents and their children. What is your family like?

Let's see what we can say about the other types of families.

- In Africa, there are many **extended** families because people often help each other out.
- It is not a rare sight to see **blended** families nowadays because couples divorce more often.
- Children from **single-parent** families are resilient and rarely spoiled. Do you agree?
- It is better for a child to have a **foster family** than to be homeless and struggle to survive on his or her own.
- A child of a divorced parent who remarries will live in a **step-family**.
- A **nuclear** family is the **immediate** or **elementary** family comprising a father, a mother and their children.

Your turn: Choose 5 words from the picture and make sentences. Be as creative as possible.

b) Describe Your Family (Step 2): Different Types of Family Members

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FAMILY MEMBERS

FATHER MOTHER CHILDREN SON DAUGHTER BROTHER SISTER

GRANDFATHER GRANDMOTHER GRANDSON GRANDDAUGHTER

GRANDCHILDREN UNCLE AUNT NEPHEW NIECE COUSIN

GODFATHER GODMOTHER GODSON GODDAUGHTER



As you already know, there are many people that we can find in a family. You are a son or a daughter of someone and you probably have siblings. What about saying a few things about your relatives?

- My father's brother is called an **uncle** and his wife is my **aunt** of course!
- My parents' parents are my grandparents and I love my **grandfather** and my **grandmother** so much..
- I live with my **cousin**, Mwiza, because her parents live in another town.
- I don't have a **nephew** or **niece** yet but [Uncle Roger](#) has so many of them on YouTube.
- My best friend chose me as **godmother** for her son. I'm so happy and I've been invited to go to the baptism with my husband.
- My wife and I don't have any **children** yet but we plan to have some soon.

Your turn: How about making your own sentences? Think of as many situations as you can. Unleash your creativity!

c) Describe Your Family (Step 3): Positive Adjectives for Describing Family Members

POSITIVE ADJECTIVES FOR PEOPLE

GENTLE CLEVER LOVING TRUSTWORTHY RESPECTFUL POLITE

RESOURCEFUL CHARMING SINCERE ADMIRABLE MATURE

WISE HARD-WORKING BROAD-MINDED FAITHFUL AFFECTIONATE

LIKEABLE CREATIVE HEALTHY REASONABLE BOLD



A family unit is made up of different types of people and personalities.

How would you describe your family in a positive manner?

Let's look at a few examples.

- My mother is **gentle** and **loving**. I don't know what I would do without her precious care and love.
- My **brother** is trustworthy and resourceful. **Besides**, he knows what to do in every situation! He is such a wonderful hustler!
- I try to be a **polite** son as much as I can. I don't want to give my parents any problems because they deal with so many things already and I shouldn't create extra problems for them.
- My grandfather is very **wise** **because** he gives me very good advice each time I have a problem. I enjoy my grandmother's wisdom too.

Your turn: Let's try to make things a bit more complicated this time. Your task is to make **5** sentences but you should use **BECAUSE, BESIDES** and **YET**.

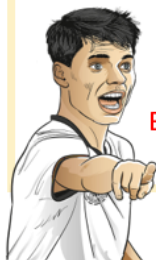
d) Describe Your Family (Step 4): Negative Adjectives for Describing Family Members

NEGATIVE ADJECTIVES FOR PEOPLE

MEAN SPOILED SELFISH CARELESS RIGID TYRANNICAL

IGNORANT ILL-TEMPERED THOUGHTLESS IMMATURE TOUGH

CRUEL IRRITABLE UNRELIABLE UNTRUSTWORTHY BOSSY



BOASTFUL LAZY RESTLESS ARROGANT UNREASONABLE



Well, this is a tough subject because things are not always rosy in a family. Yet, we spend a lot of time with our siblings, parents or other close relatives.

Families are not perfect and so we can find some family members who give us a tough time because they are bossy or irritable.

Let's look at a few more examples below.

- My little sister is very **restless** and a little **selfish**. She always wants to have the best things for herself.
- I have a cousin who is very **lazy** and he always gets fired from jobs because of his incurable laziness.
- My father can sometimes be **arrogant** when he wants his ideas to be adopted by all of us.
- My mother is very **unreasonable** when it comes to household tasks. I mean, whoever wants to do the dishes at 11 o'clock in the evening?
- I used to be very **spoiled** when I was young. I could literally get anything I wanted. I just had to cry loudly and stomp my feet.
- My uncle can be **thoughtless** and **cruel** at times when he says something about my performance at school. I don't like his caustic comments.

Your turn: What about you? How can you describe the rare or not so rare family members who are sometimes annoying and can make your life miserable?

I'm sure that this was more difficult than the previous steps. **Step 5** is about '**Jobs and Occupations**' so it might be easier.

Let's jump straight into this lesson.

e) Describe Your Family (Step 5): Jobs and Occupations for Different Family Members

JOBS AND OCCUPATIONS FOR THE FAMILY

GUARD SOCIAL WORKER PROFESSOR VETERINARIAN TAILOR

ESTATE AGENT RAPPER DENTIST CHARITY WORKER PUPIL

CHEF SCIENTIST PRIEST HEADMASTER PLUMBER INTERN



CIVIL SERVANT TECHNICIAN TV PRESENTER SINGER



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In this step, we talk about the different jobs and occupations that family members can have.

Look at the examples below to see how those new words can be used in context.

- My brother works as a **technician** for Apple. I am so proud of him.
- I have an uncle who works as a **TV presenter** for the BBC. I like watching his programmes because they are really interesting.
- My mother's sister is a **dentist** but she lives far, so she doesn't treat us. What a pity!
- My father almost became a **priest** when he was in his twenties. Currently, he works as a school headmaster.
- My sister wants to become a famous **singer** but my mother does not approve of her career choice.

- My great-great-grandfather used to be a **tailor** and this is why I'm now a fashion designer. I love clothes so much.

Your turn: Time for creativity! Pick 5 jobs and make sentences in relation to family members. Be as creative as you can.

I guess this was interesting. Let's get active with **Step 6**.

f) Describe Your Family (Step 6): Indoor Family Activities

INDOOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

PLAYING CARDS WATCHING MOVIES DANCING DOING FITNESS

EXERCISING DOING ARTS AND CRAFTS PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

DOING SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS SURFING THE INTERNET READING

DOING PUZZLES DOING ROLE PLAYS BAKING



There are many activities we can do as a family when we are inside the house. What is your preferred activity? Playing cards? Baking? How about looking at a few examples concerning this topic?

- My brothers and I like **doing science experiments** in our free time. It's fun!
- I like **surfing the internet**. Hence, I never get bored during the weekend.
- **Reading** is one of my favourite activities to do at home. My mother loves reading too but my brother would rather play video games
- My little sister likes **doing arts and crafts** because she is very creative. I've bought her plenty of books on that subject.
- My siblings like **doing puzzles** but I like **doing role plays**.
- In April, I used to love **doing fitness** during lockdown thanks to YouTube videos. It was an excellent way to stay mentally and physically healthy.

Your turn: What do you like doing with your siblings or parents? Choose 5 activities and talk about them.

g) Describe Your Family (Step 7): Outdoor Family Activities

OUTDOOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

WALKING SWIMMING PLAYING HIDE-AND-SEEK BARBECUING

DOING A SCAVENGER HUNT CAMPING JOGGING HAVING A PICNIC

VISITING A MUSEUM CYCLING BOWLING KAYAKING SURFING

HIKING SAILING CLIMBING HORSERIDING



I have no idea what activity you like but why not talk about it? What do you like doing outside with your relatives?

Below are a few examples for inspiration.

- **Visiting a museum** is not one of my favourite things to do with my family but I don't mind this activity. We can learn a lot of things.
- I would like to try **bowling** and **kayaking** with my younger brothers. These activities seem like fun.
- My dad likes **sailing** and **cycling** because these activities keep him feet. My mother prefers staying indoors to read.
- My little sister is into **horseriding** and she can't stop talking about this. She would like me to do this activity with her one day.
- Our family likes **hiking** because it is a free activity and we can **have a picnic** once we reach the top of the mountain.
- We used to go **swimming** on Sunday mornings before the pandemic started but, now, we go **jogging** instead because it's not forbidden.

Your turn: What are the activities you like doing with your relatives outside? Make **5** sentences and try to be as creative as you can.

Was this fun to do? Let's see what you can say about the following activities in **Step 8**.

h) Describe Your Family (Step 8): Household Chores for Inside the House

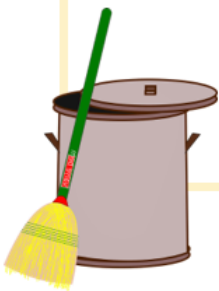
HOUSEHOLD CHORES IN A FAMILY (INSIDE)

WASHING THE DISHES CLEANING THE WINDOWS MOPPING THE FLOORS

SETTING THE TABLE PREPARING MEALS VACUUMING SWEEPING

DOING THE LAUNDRY SORTING OUT CLOTHES IRONING THE CLOTHES

MAKING THE BED DUSTING SURFACES PUTTING AWAY TOYS



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In many families, household chores are often a bone of contention. Have you ever fought with your sister about washing dishes or vacuuming the living-room?

Let's look at a few examples of chores that you can do inside the house. Why don't we start?

- I really like doing household chores but I hate **cleaning windows** because it is a difficult task.
- **Making the bed** is the first chore I do when I wake up. This sets a productive pace for the day.
- My mother spends her whole day mopping the floors. She wants her house to be spotless!
- I prefer **dusting surfaces** to **sweeping**.
- My cousin doesn't like **ironing the clothes** so his trousers and shirts are always crumpled.
- When we were young, my mother often told us that **putting away toys** was good for us because we would always live in a tidy space.

Your turn: What about you? What chores do you usually do around the house? Make 5 sentences and you can be as truthful as you can be;-)

i) Describe Your Family (Step 8): Household Chores for Outside the House

HOUSEHOLD CHORES IN A FAMILY (OUTSIDE)



We can also do various chores outside the house. Oftentimes, these are more challenging or demanding.

What do you like or don't like doing as a chore outside your house? What about your relatives?

Let's look at a few examples.

- I like ***mowing the grass*** but I hate ***hanging out the clothes***.
- My little brother likes ***taking the rubbish out***. I don't understand him!
- We all prefer ***sweeping the yard*** to ***watering the plants***. Isn't this weird?
- My brother-in-law often helps out with ***doing the groceries*** or ***shopping*** when he comes to our house to stay for a few days with his wife, my sister:-)

- In autumn, I am in charge of **raking the leaves** and in spring, my brother takes care of the grass.
- We take turns **washing the car** because it belongs to everyone in our house. Well, that's what my father says.

Your turn: What do you like doing outside? What do you have to do according to your family's rules.

Make **5** sentences to talk about that.

Well done! Congratulations for coming so far! You will soon have a good rest.

This was the last step in our '**Describe Your Family**' lesson. What did you like the most?

Before you go, remember that unilingual and bilingual dictionaries can be your best friends too. Check new words and practise your pronunciation. It is also an excellent idea to record yourself and make someone hear your recording.

You can do so many wonderful things in English!



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