

**Topics: Family
by Adrian Tennant**

LEAD-IN

Can you find ten words connected to family in the wordsearch? Be careful! The words appear in all directions.

G	L	M	U	N	P	Q	U	E	N	D	S
G	R	A	N	D	P	A	R	E	N	T	S
K	F	T	C	A	I	N	R	A	M	T	I
D	E	L	L	E	W	K	B	I	L	J	S
I	N	K	E	Y	C	S	S	N	I	W	T
V	I	N	X	R	U	A	A	J	I	L	E
S	N	E	P	H	E	W	B	F	U	H	R
O	L	I	X	B	A	M	E	Y	W	F	U
M	A	W	Q	E	E	U	Z	P	N	R	E
V	W	U	R	L	J	X	N	B	P	K	O
M	S	T	E	P	B	R	O	T	H	E	R

FIRST SENTENCES

Read these sentences. What do you think the problem is in each situation?

a. Recently, I had the shock of my life!

b. Last year, my mother got married again.

c. I'm 41 years old and I'm going to be a grandmother!

d. I'm living with my in-laws and we don't always get on.

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one stop english

READING: LETTERS

- a. Read the letters sent to an agony aunt and fill in the gaps with the correct first sentences (a-d) from the previous exercise.

1. Dear Betty,

My new dad is called Bryan. I know he's actually my stepdad but that's okay. He already had two kids – Carly and Tony – so now I have a stepsister and a stepbrother. The problem is that Tony is a brat – he keeps taking my things. He never asks me if he can borrow things and then he loses or breaks them. I've tried talking to my mum and Bryan but they tell me I have to learn to share. What can I do?

Aaron

2. Dear Betty,

I know living with my husband's family might sound strange but in my culture it's quite normal. Sometimes it's great because I have two children and his parents can help me look after them. The problem is that my mother-in-law doesn't agree with the way I'm bringing my children up. She says I'm not strict enough, so sometimes we argue. What can I do?

Safia

Dear Betty



3. Dear Betty,

I never knew my real parents. I was adopted and grew up in a really loving home but knew nothing about my original family. So, imagine my surprise when I bumped into someone who looked exactly like me! It was like looking in a mirror. It turned out I had an identical twin sister, Karen. But now I'm not sure what to do. Should we try to get to know each other more? What if we don't get on? What do you think I should do?

Trudy

4. Dear Betty,

I know it sounds shocking – I couldn't believe it when I heard the news, especially as my daughter is only 16. When I tell people, they look at me as though I'm to blame – that maybe I neglected my daughter which is why she became pregnant – but the truth is we're a loving family and I just don't understand what went wrong. I've come to terms with it now but how do I make other people realize that I'm not a bad mother?

Barbara

- a. Read the letters again and answer these questions.

1. What is the relationship between Aaron's mum and Carly?
2. What is one thing that Safia likes about living with her in-laws?
3. How long has Trudy known her sister?
4. How old was Barbara when she had her daughter?

- a. Here are two replies from Betty that offer advice. Match the replies to the correct letters.

A. I can't imagine how you must have felt and I really do understand that it must be very difficult for you – your life has been turned on its head. But this is an opportunity you can't afford to miss. If you don't take it, you might regret it for the rest of your life. Take things slowly at first. After all, you've got a lot to find out about each other.

B. I know it must be difficult for you but I wonder if the other children are also finding it hard? How old are they? Are you the oldest? It seems as if you get on quite well with your stepdad, so at least that's not a problem. And your mum might be right – if you've never had a brother or sister before then it's something you might just have to learn to get used to.

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WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Focus 1: Understanding meaning

Answer these questions.

1. In letter 2, what does the word *it's* refer to in the phrase *it's quite normal*?
2. In letter 3, what does the word *it* refer to in the phrase *It was like looking in a mirror*?
3. In letter 4, what does the word *it* refer to in the phrase *I've come to terms with it now ...*?
4. In reply A, what does the word *it* refer to in the phrase *If you don't take it ...*?
5. In reply B, what does the word *it's* refer to in the phrase *... then it's something you might just have to learn to get used to*?

Focus 2: Language use

Look back at the letters and circle all the modal verbs you can find. Which modals are used for ...

1. ... asking for and giving advice?
2. ... talking about necessity?
3. ... asking for permission?
4. ... talking about possibilities?
5. ... talking about ability?
6. ... talking about something that is true or likely?

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Focus 1: Meaning

Find words and phrases in the letters and replies that match the definitions below.

1. an annoying child who behaves badly
2. to be friends with someone (two words)
3. having rules that must be obeyed / followed
4. to meet someone unexpectedly (two words)
5. exactly the same
6. to fail to look after someone when you are responsible for them
7. to accept something that was difficult to understand or accept (four words)
8. completely changed suddenly (four words)
9. become familiar with something new (three words)

Focus 2: Topic-related words

Look back at the letters and replies and find other family words to complete the table.

male	female	either / both
dad	mum	parents

Can you think of more family words? Write them into the table.

LISTENING

Listen to the radio show and answer the questions.

- Which letter is it most closely related to?
- What are the differences between the letter to the agony aunt and the radio show?

SPEAKING

Look back at the two letters that Betty didn't respond to. In groups, discuss the advice you would give to the two people. Do you agree with each other?

PROJECT

Find an agony aunt column in a newspaper, magazine or online. What kinds of problems do people have? Are there any letters about family problems? Bring some to the next class to discuss with the other students.