

Task 1

You will hear a story. For items 1-10 decide whether the statements marked 1-10 are True (A) or False (B) according to the text you hear. You will hear the text only once.

I'm an English teacher working in Russia, and for some reason I really don't like that classroom topic - Talk About Your Family. Perhaps it's because everyone studied English from the same book at school. So all the students say, "My family consists of five members. Me, my mother, my father, my brother and my dog..." And so on. As if all families are exactly the same.

It's such a shame, because our families are unique. All families have their stories, their dramas, their private jokes, nicknames and phrases. They're the place where our personalities were made. How often have you heard someone with young children complain "Oh no, I think I'm turning into my parents...?"

The other day I found myself turning into one of my grandparents. I was trying to get my daughter (1 year and 8 months old) to eat her dinner and I said "That'll make your hair curl." Now, I don't think that green vegetables give you curly hair, or even that curly hair is a great thing to have. It's just a phrase I heard from my Granddad a hundred times when I was small. It had stayed in my mind, half-forgotten, until the time I could use it myself. I wonder if he heard it from his own grandparents? How many other old-fashioned phrases like this stay inside families, when the rest of the world has forgotten them?

Shaking the family tree

Talk about your family? "Well...they're just there", we say. Our families are so ordinary to us that we even think they're boring. Not a bit of it! Families are the most exotic things on earth. If you dig enough in your own family, you're sure to come up with all the stuff you could want for a great novel. Surprising characters, dramatic or funny stories passed down for generations, or a face from the past you recognise – maybe in your own. Someone or something unique to your family. Or, as genealogists like to say, "Shake your family tree - and watch the nuts fall out."

My mother started tracing our family tree a few years ago, not expecting to get far. But, digging in old records and libraries she got back three hundred years. She turned up old stories and a few mysteries. What happened to the big family farm? Where did the family fortune go in the 1870s? More to the point – where is it now?

I'm the traveller in my family, and I like to think I got it from a great-grandfather on my Dad's side. He was an adventurous soul. My two favourite family heirlooms are a photo of him on a horse in a desert landscape (1897 in Patagonia) and a postcard home from Portugal complaining that his boat was late because of the Revolution in Lisbon. "Dreadful business, they seem to have arrested the King..." he says. If you look at your family, you open a window on the past.

Who wears the trousers?

To go back to that English class then, let's get rid of the phrase "my family consists of..." and look at some more interesting ways to talk about families. English is rich in idioms to talk about family life. We've mentioned the black sheep of the family – that's someone who didn't fit in, or caused a family scandal. If you're loyal to your family, you can say blood is thicker than water or keep it in the family. If you share a talent with another family member, you can say it runs in the family. You might have your father's eyes or your mother's nose. If you're like one of your parents, you can say like father, like son or you can be a chip off the old block.

Who wears the trousers in your family? (Who's the head of your family?) You might affectionately talk about your bro, your sis or your folks (parents). Or if you like Cockney slang, what about her indoors or the missus to talk about your wife? Though both these phrases make feminists reach for their guns.

If you want to get more technical, you can discuss the benefits of the nuclear family : a small family, just parents and children living in the same house. If grandparents or other relatives live there too, then you have an extended family. In English we talk about the average nuclear family with the phrase 2.4 children.

Then there are idioms that have left the family (flown the nest) and gone on to have a life of their own. You can't teach your grandmother to suck eggs. It means you can't tell your elders anything they don't know already. But why would anyone want to suck eggs anyway? Now here's a really strange one. A Londoner is telling someone how to get a new passport. "Get four pictures taken, pick up a form in the post office, hand it in with your old passport and ...Bob's your uncle." It means "the problem is solved". But I'd love to know who the original Bob was, and why he was such a useful uncle to have.

Task 2

Integrated Task

Read the text about the salmon migration, then listen to a part of the lecture on the same topic. You will notice that some ideas coincide and some differ in them. Answer questions 11-25 by choosing A if the idea is expressed in both materials, B if it can be found only in the audio-recording, C if it can be found only in the reading text, and D if neither of the materials expresses the idea.

Now you have 7 minutes to read the text.

Now listen to a part of the lecture on the same topic. You will hear the lecture twice.

The question of why the current is so important to the young salmon was asked and I'd like to respond to this. Smolts, uh, the young salmon, hatch from their eggs in fresh water. Before the large-scale construction of dams, the young fish used the strong current from the spring runoff of melting snow to get to the sea in between six and, uh, twenty days. It's necessary for them to reach the sea within this window of time because during these days the smolts' bodies undergo the physiological changes for adaptation to saltwater. The net result of the slow current is that many of the young fish don't survive the trip, which can now take up to 60 days to reach the sea. What happens is their bodies have adapted to saltwater conditions, but they're still in fresh water. Obviously, with fewer fish surviving the trip to the sea, there are fewer adult salmon to migrate back up the rivers for breeding.

The solutions to the problem that have been presented have not been very successful. Many scientists think that the artificial method of getting the fish to the sea by barge has killed more fish than it saves.

The suggestion some people have made concerning increasing the flow rate temporarily by either releasing water from upstream reservoirs or reducing the water level in all linked reservoirs for the period of smolt migration would be a partial solution to the declining salmon numbers. Unfortunately, both of these proposals have met with criticism from the power companies that manage the dams.

Now you have five minutes to finish the task and transfer your answers to the answer sheet. This is the end of the integrated task. Now you can start working on your reading task.