



# THE MODERN FAMILY: CHANGES IN STRUCTURE AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

## Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1a: Figure 1, Households by Type, 1970–2012
- Item 1b: Figure 3, Households by Size, 1970–2012
- Item 2a: Table 1, Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households by States Grouped by Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Couple Marriages and Unions: 2010
- Item 2b: Table 2, Couple Households With Children,: 2010

## Student Learning Objectives

- I will understand how sociologists interpret data and will learn how to make empirical statements.
- I will become familiar with past and present census data about family structures and living arrangements in the United States.
- I will be able to discuss how different families are defined and how structures of families have changed since the 1970s.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1 - Analyze Data

Work in groups of three or four to complete part 1.

1. Examine **Item 1a: Figure 1, Households by Type, 1970-2012**. Referring to specific data, describe two ways that household types changed between 1970 and 2012.

What are some family structures that are not represented in **Item 1a**?

2. Examine **Item 1b: Figure 3, Households by Size, 1970-2012**. Referring to specific data, describe two ways that household sizes changed between 1970 and 2012.

3. Examine **Item 2a: Table 1, Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households by States Grouped by Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Couple Marriages and Unions: 2010**. What conclusions can you draw about same-sex couple households in 2010?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Examine **Item 2b: Table 2, Couple Households With Children: 2010**. What conclusions can you draw about couple households with children in 2010?

Do you think any family structures are not represented in **Item 2b**?

## Part 2 – Observe and Compare

Now you will watch a clip from the TV show “Modern Family” as a class. Be sure to take notes on your own observations (e.g., the types of families you notice, how they interact).

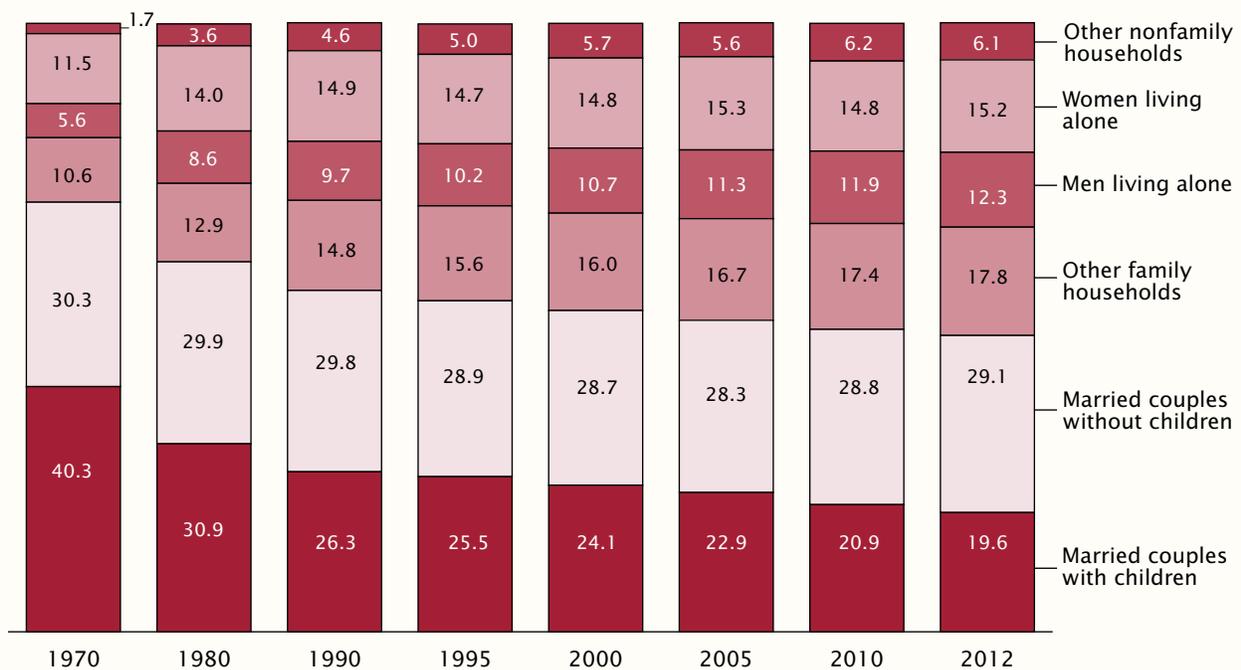
Rejoin your small group to answer the following questions:

1. What is the family structure often referred to as “traditional” and the roles associated with it?



## Item 1a: Figure 1, Households by Type, 1970–2012

Figure 1.  
**Households by Type, 1970 to 2012: CPS**  
 (In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1970 to 2012.

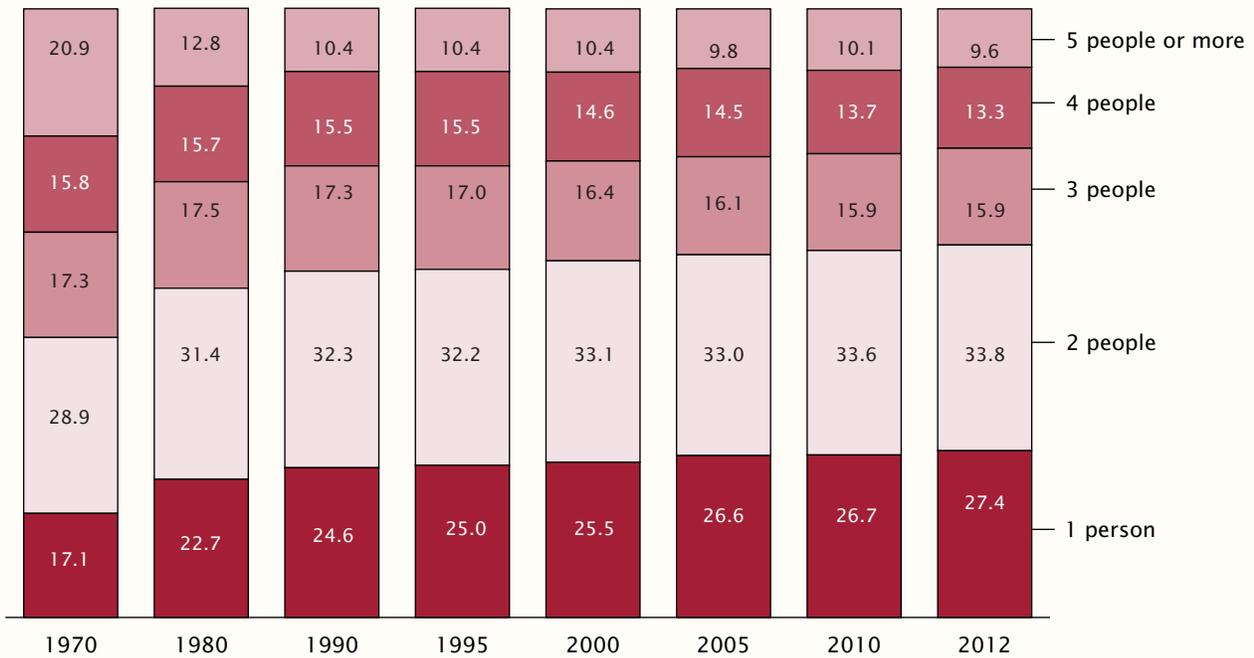
[www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-570.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-570.pdf)

To see the figure within the PDF, click on the link above and go to Page 5.

## Item 1b: Figure 3, Households by Size, 1970–2012

Figure 3.  
**Households by Size, 1970 to 2012: CPS**

(In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1970 to 2012.

[www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-570.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-570.pdf)

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## Item 2a: Table 1, Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households by States Grouped by Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Couple Marriages and Unions: 2010

Table 1.

### Distribution of Same-Sex Couple Households by States Grouped by Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Couple Marriages and Unions: 2010

(In percent. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www))

Legal recognition	Total		Reported as spouse		Unmarried partner	
	Estimate	Margin of error ( $\pm$ ) <sup>1</sup>	Percent	Margin of error ( $\pm$ ) <sup>1</sup>	Percent	Margin of error ( $\pm$ ) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total same-sex couple households . . .</b>	<b>593,324</b>	<b>11,395</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>74.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>
States performing same-sex marriages <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	42,195	3,055	42.4	3.7	57.6	3.7
Domestic partnership/Civil unions <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	169,205	6,133	28.2	1.4	71.8	1.4
California <sup>3A</sup> . . . . .	90,023	4,569	32.1	2.4	67.9	2.4
All other states . . . . .	381,924	8,804	22.7	0.9	77.3	0.9

<sup>1</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

<sup>2</sup> This includes Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and the District of Columbia.

<sup>3</sup> This includes California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.

<sup>3A</sup> California performed same-sex marriages from June to November 2008.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/acs/acsbr10-03.pdf>

To see the table within the PDF, click on the link above and go to Page 3.

## Item 2b: Table 2, Couple Households With Children: 2010

Table 2.

### Couple Households With Children: 2010

(In percent. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www))

Characteristic	Married opposite-sex couples		Unmarried opposite-sex couples		Total same-sex couples		Same-sex couples by reporting status			
	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>	Same-sex spouse		Same-sex unmarried partner	
		Percent		Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>		Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Households with children (number) . . . . .</b>	<b>24,443,599</b>	<b>83,848</b>	<b>2,684,978</b>	<b>23,359</b>	<b>115,064</b>	<b>5,516</b>	<b>43,933</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>71,131</b>	<b>4,381</b>
Own children present <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	93.8	0.05	88.5	0.20	84.1	0.93	89.0	1.43	81.1	1.48
No own children present <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	6.2	0.05	11.5	0.20	15.9	0.93	11.0	1.43	18.9	1.48
<b>Households with own children only . . . . .</b>	<b>22,872,151</b>	<b>86,426</b>	<b>2,267,016</b>	<b>20,771</b>	<b>94,627</b>	<b>5,026</b>	<b>38,778</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>55,849</b>	<b>4,077</b>
Biological only <sup>4</sup> . . . . .	90.8	0.10	88.0	0.41	72.8	2.71	80.4	3.11	67.4	3.81
Step only or adopted only <sup>5</sup> . . . . .	4.4	0.07	5.2	0.30	21.2	2.26	13.1	2.83	26.8	3.36
Combination of own children only <sup>6</sup> . . . . .	4.8	0.07	6.8	0.30	6.0	1.51	6.4	1.84	5.7	1.81

<sup>1</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

<sup>2</sup> Households with at least one own child present under the age of 18 years. Can contain not own children as well.

<sup>3</sup> Households that contain grandchildren, other relatives, or other nonrelatives under the age of 18 years.

<sup>4</sup> Households with biological children only.

<sup>5</sup> Households with either stepchild only or adopted child only.

<sup>6</sup> Combination of two or more of the three own children types.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/acs/acsbr10-03.pdf>

To see the table within the PDF, click on the link above and go to Page 3.