

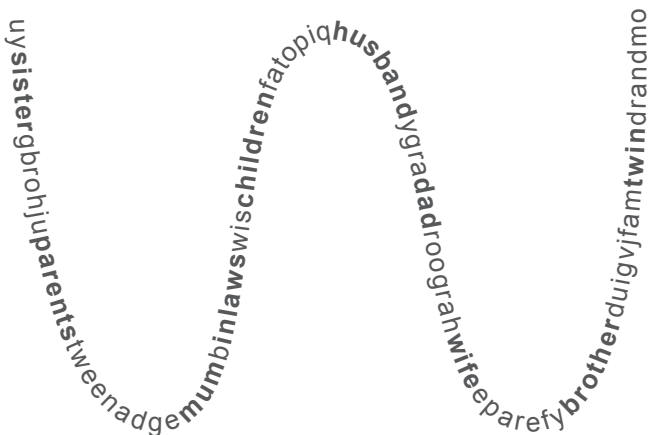
## Topics: Family by Adrian Tennant

**LEVEL:** Pre-intermediate  
**AGE:** Teenagers / Adults  
**TIME NEEDED:** 90 minutes + project  
**LANGUAGE FOCUS:** Modal verbs, understanding vocabulary in context, topic words

### LEAD-IN

Ask students to look at the word-snake and try to find the ten words connected to family. Encourage students to work in pairs. Check the answers together.

Key \_\_\_\_\_



### FIRST SENTENCES

Explain to the students that they are going to read four sentences that are the first lines of four different letters to an *agony aunt* (someone in a magazine or newspaper who tries to help people with their problems). First, check to see if your students know what an agony aunt is, then get them to read the sentences. They should then discuss in pairs what they think the problem is in each situation. Elicit ideas from students as a whole class discussion. Don't confirm whether their ideas are correct yet.

### READING: LETTERS

Ask students to read through the letters and see if their ideas were correct. While they are doing this, they should also try to complete each letter with the correct first line (if you want, you can give a short time limit, i.e. two minutes). Tell them they don't need to understand every word in the letters. Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class. Remember to discuss their predictions from the previous stage.

Key a \_\_\_\_\_

1. b; 2. d; 3. a; 4. c

Next, ask students to read the four sentences and decide if each one is true (T) or false (F). Again, get pairs to check their answers together before checking as a class.

Key b \_\_\_\_\_

1. F (*Aaron doesn't like his stepbrother.*); 2. T; 3. T; 4. F (*Barbara was 25 when she had her daughter.*)

After this, ask the students to read through the two replies and match each one to the correct letter. Get them to check their answers together in pairs, then check as a class.

Key c \_\_\_\_\_

A. Letter 4; B. Letter 1

### WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Ask students to look at the five sentences and the underlined modal verbs. Check that everyone knows what modal verbs are. Explain that they have different functions and point to the five words in the box. Then ask them to match the functions in the box to the correct sentence. Monitor and help where necessary. Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Key \_\_\_\_\_

1. *necessity*; 2. *obligation*; 3. *advice*; 4. *certainty*; 5. *possibility*

### WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

#### Focus 1: Meaning

Ask students to look back at the letters and replies and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas as they look at the texts. Monitor and help where necessary. Check the answers as a class.

Key \_\_\_\_\_

1. *share*; 2. *raise*; 3. *adopted*; 4. *bumped into*; 5. *identical*; 6. *blame*; 7. *tough*

## Topics: Family by Adrian Tennant

### Focus 2: Topic-related words

Ask students to look back at the letters and replies and circle all the words connected to family members. Then, ask students to work in pairs and complete the table. Encourage students to add any other family words they know. Check the answers as a class.

Key \_\_\_\_\_

<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>either / both</b>
<i>father / dad</i>	<i>mother / mum</i>	<b>parent(s)</b>
<i>son</i>	<b>daughter</b>	<b>child(ren) / kid / baby</b>
<b>brother</b>	<i>sister</i>	<i>sibling(s) / only child</i>
<i>twin brother</i>	<b>twin sister</b>	<i>twin(s)</i>
<b>stepbrother</b>	<b>stepsister</b>	
<b>husband</b>	<i>wife</i>	<i>spouse</i>
<i>father-in-law</i>	<b>mother-in-law</b>	<i>in-laws</i>
<i>grandfather</i>	<b>grandmother</b>	<i>grandparent(s)</i>

### LISTENING

Ask students to listen to a short extract from a radio show and decide which of the letters from the Reading: Letters exercise it is most closely related to.

Transcript:

Host: OK, so let's go to our next caller ...  
 Trudy: Hi, my name's Trudy and I'm 35 years old.  
 Host: And what's your story, Trudy?  
 Trudy: I always thought I was an only child but now I've discovered I have a brother.  
 Host: Wow! I guess that was a surprise.  
 Trudy: Yes, it was.  
 Host: So what actually happened?  
 Trudy: I got a phone call from a man who said he was my brother. Of course, I didn't believe him, but then he seemed to know a lot about my parents.  
 Host: So what did you do?  
 Trudy: Well, I met him and he told me his name was Kieran and he was my older brother. He was adopted before I was born and my mother didn't tell me about him.  
 Host: Wow! And what are you going to do now?  
 Trudy: I don't know. I'm a bit worried that we won't like each other. That's why I'm phoning you. Can you give me some advice?  
 Host: Mmm. Trudy – I think you should call ...

Key \_\_\_\_\_

letter 3

Ask students to read letter 3 and circle any differences between that and the radio show. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Play the recording again, if necessary. Check the answers as a class.

Key \_\_\_\_\_

*brother / sister; he phoned her / she bumped into her; he is older than her; they are the same age (twins); he / she was adopted; his name is Kieran / her name is Karen*

### SPEAKING

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the advice that they would give to the other two letters that Betty didn't reply to. Monitor and help where necessary. Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their suggestions.

### PROJECT

Ask students to carry out the project for homework and follow it up in the next lesson.

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LEAD-IN

Can you find ten words connected to family in the word-snake?



FIRST SENTENCES

Read these sentences. They are the first sentences in letters to an agony aunt. Each author has a different problem. What do you think the problem is in each situation?

a. When I was young, I was adopted.

b. Last year, my mum got married again.

c. I'm 41 years old and my daughter is going to have a baby!

d. I live with my husband's family.

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### READING: LETTERS

1. 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 and he already has two children – Carly and Tony. Now they are my stepsister and stepbrother. I like Carly – she’s nice. But Tony is horrible – he keeps taking my things and breaking them. When I talk to my mum, she tells me I have to learn to share. What can I do?

**Aaron**

2. Dear Betty,

In my culture this is quite normal and usually it’s fine. I have two young children and it’s nice to have someone there to help me look after them. The problem is that my mother-in-law tells me how I should raise my children, so sometimes we argue. What can I do?

**Safia**

b. Read the letters again. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

1. Aaron doesn’t like his stepsister.
2. Safia thinks living with her in-laws isn’t strange.
3. Trudy didn’t know she had a sister.
4. Barbara was only sixteen when she had her daughter.

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

A.

No, not at all. It must be quite difficult for you and your family. Your daughter is very lucky to have a mother who supports and cares for her. It’s going to be tough for your daughter as she really is very young but I’m sure everything will be fine.

Dear Betty



3. Dear Betty,

I never knew my real parents. I didn’t have any brothers or sisters and I thought I was an only child. So, imagine my surprise when I bumped into someone who looked exactly like me! She’s my identical twin sister, Karen. Of course, I’d like to get to know her – but what happens if we don’t like each other? What should I do?

**Trudy**

4. Dear Betty,

She’s only 16. When I tell people, I think they blame me – that it’s my fault she became pregnant. I love her and I’ll look after her but becoming a grandmother makes me feel so old. Do you think I’m a bad mother?

**Barbara**

B.

I know it must be difficult for you, but it must be hard for the other children as well. How old are they? Are you the oldest? Your mum is right. If you’ve never had a brother or sister before, then it’s something you have to learn to live with. It might be a good idea to talk about it together.

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WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Read these extracts from the letters and replies (1-5), and look at the underlined modal verbs. What function do they perform? Match each of the modal verbs to the correct function from the box.

advice	certainty	necessity
obligation	possibility	

- When I talk to my mum, she tells me I have to learn to share.
- ... my mother-in-law tells me how I should raise my children, ...
- What should I do?
- It must be quite difficult for you and your family.
- ... it might be a good idea to talk about it together.

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Focus 1: Meaning

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

- to allow someone to use or have something that is yours (letter 1)
- to look after a child until he or she becomes an adult (letter 2)
- legally became the parent of another person's child (letter 3)
- met someone unexpectedly (letter 3)
- exactly the same (letter 3)
- to say or think that someone is responsible for a problem or situation (letter 4)
- difficult (reply A)

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

Do you know any 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 kind of problems do people have? Are there any letters about family problems? Bring them to the next class to discuss with the other students.