

Lesson Plan: Family members and relationships

Level	Beginner (A1)
Time	45–60 minutes
Skills	Vocabulary, speaking, writing
Focus	Nuclear and extended family; possessive 's for relationships; in-laws and step-family

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Name at least 15 family relationship words correctly
- Use possessive 's to describe family relationships naturally
- Describe your own family using learned vocabulary
- Understand extended and in-law family terms

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Nuclear family

- mother / mom (AmE) / mum (BrE) | father / dad
- sister | brother | son | daughter
- husband | wife | spouse / partner (gender-neutral)

Extended family

- grandmother / grandma | grandfather / grandpa
- aunt | uncle | cousin (male or female — no distinction in English)
- niece | nephew | grandchild, grandson, granddaughter

In-law and step-family

- mother-in-law | father-in-law | sister-in-law | brother-in-law
- Note: in-laws = the family of your spouse
- stepmother / stepfather = your parent's new partner (not a blood relative)
- half-sister / half-brother = you share one parent

Possessive 's for relationships

- Maria is my sister's daughter. (= Maria is my niece)
- Tom is my mother's brother. (= Tom is my uncle)
- She is John's wife. / He is Ana's husband.

Meaning & Nuance

Term	Relationship	Key note
niece	your brother's or sister's daughter	Gender-specific — not 'nephew'
nephew	your brother's or sister's son	Gender-specific — not 'niece'

cousin	your aunt's or uncle's child	Male or female — English has no gender distinction
stepmother / stepfather	your parent's new spouse	Not a blood relative
half-sister / half-brother	share one parent	More specific than 'sister/brother'

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Famous families (5 min)

Task: Show a famous family photo or family tree (e.g. a royal family, a TV family).

- Students identify who's who: 'She is his mother. They are brothers.'

→ *Elicit as much vocabulary as possible before the presentation.*

2. Vocabulary presentation (10 min)

Task: Build a family tree on the board, naming each person and their relationship.

- Work outward: parents → siblings → grandparents → aunts/uncles → cousins.
- Then: in-laws and step-family.
- Pronunciation: niece (sounds like 'neese'), nephew, cousin, aunt (two pronunciations common in AmE).

3. Family tree activity (15 min)

Task: Students draw or fill in a family tree (real or fictional) and label all relationships.

- Must include at least 10 people.
- Then describe 5 relationships using possessive 's: 'This is my father's mother — my grandmother.'

4. Speaking: Describe your family (15 min)

Task: Students describe their family to a partner in 5–8 sentences.

- Partner asks follow-up questions: 'Do you have any brothers?' / 'How many cousins do you have?'

→ *Encourage use of in-laws, step-family, and extended family where relevant.*

5. Writing task (5 min)

Task: Write a short paragraph (5–7 sentences) about your family using at least 5 different family words.

- Example: 'I have one sister. Her name is Lena. She is my parents' youngest daughter.'

TEACHER NOTES

- Be sensitive to non-traditional family structures — use 'parent', 'partner', 'guardian' where appropriate.
- The niece/nephew distinction is challenging for speakers of languages where one word covers both.
- Cousin covers both male and female — unlike many other languages. Worth highlighting explicitly.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Write a short description of a famous family (real or fictional) using at least 8 family words.
2. Draw and label your own family tree with at least 10 people and their relationships to you.
3. Write 6 sentences using possessive 's to describe family relationships.