

Family Psychology: Theory, Research, and Practice

What is a family?

The answer to the question "what does family mean?" is both difficult to answer and highly subjective. The word has shifted its meaning considerably since it entered our language, currently contains many different senses, and in at least one of these senses may signify different things to different people. The earliest uses of family denoted "a group of persons in the service of an individual," a sense that is now archaic. Although this early meaning may seem far afield from the way that most of us use family today, it is not surprising when we consider that the word comes from the Latin familia, which meant "household," a designation that included both servants and relatives.

In modern use family may refer to one of a number of different groups of people or things collectively, such as chemical compounds, related languages, plants and animals, and people who may or may not share ancestry. Family is often encountered in legal use, but even within the jargon of the law it is not restricted to a single meaning. In many legal contexts family denotes "individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption," but in others the definition may be somewhat broader, encompassing groups of individuals not related by these things.

Reference

[Princeton Review MCAT Psychology and Sociology Review, 4th Edition: Complete Behavioral Sciences Content Prep + Practice Tests \(Graduate School Test Preparation\)](#)

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