

Family Feuds

“Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.”

—George Burns, comedian

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Which family member(s) do you often argue with?
2. What do you and your family member(s) disagree on the most?
3. Does your family get along during holidays and special events such as weddings and funerals?
4. What expectations often lead to family feuds?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. get-together | a) something that makes an experience a lot easier |
| ___ 2. stressful | b) having a deep connection, intimate |
| ___ 3. throw into the mix | c) a person who acts poorly when he/she does not win |
| ___ 4. close-knit | d) causing strong feelings of worry |
| ___ 5. grudge | e) secretly (in another person's absence) |
| ___ 6. behind one's back | f) always looked after, always getting what one wants |
| ___ 7. trigger | g) a bad feeling one holds onto from a past experience |
| ___ 8. saving grace | h) a subject or thing that causes a specific type of reaction |
| ___ 9. sore loser | i) a gathering of friends and/or family members |
| ___ 10. spoiled rotten | j) to add to something (usually an already difficult situation) |

Reading

FAMILY FEUDS

Home for the holidays

1. Do you spend a lot of time with your family over the holidays? Family **get-togethers** can be fun, but they can also be **stressful**.
2. The fear of disappointing a family member is a major source of holiday stress. You may want to have dinner at your mother's home, but your mother-in-law expects you at hers. What happens when step-families are **thrown into the mix**?
3. We often worry about what our family members will think or say about our decisions. Will they like the gifts we chose for their kids, and did we spend enough money? What will Grandma say if we don't mash the potatoes her way?
4. In a **close-knit** family, it's only natural to notice each other's differences. Sadly, our familiarity often makes us feel like we can say whatever we please. Hurt feelings can turn into long-lasting **grudges**. Are we better off talking **behind each other's backs**?
5. Some families argue about the same thing at every get-together. Avoiding your family's **triggers** can be a **saving grace**. Which subjects should your family avoid?
6. For many families, get-togethers involve alcohol and sweet foods. This can make people say and do things that they later regret. Going outdoors and doing something active together is a good way to avoid these conflicts.
7. Do you still tell your adult sibling not to be a **sore loser**? Does your aunt still think of you as a **spoiled rotten** child? Everyone is getting older, but it can be difficult to forget your family's past. Perhaps it's time to let each other grow up.
8. What does your family do to end a family feud? Do you sit down and talk about your issues, or do you pretend like nothing happened? Some families only address conflicts by text.

Comprehension

Write the answers in your notebook or discuss them with a partner.
Use the information from the reading to answer the questions.

1. What do many family members worry about before a get-together?
2. Why does the reading mention mashed potatoes?
3. Why do family members focus so much on each other's differences?
4. What can happen when one family member hurts another's feelings and does not apologize?
5. How does alcohol and sugary food contribute to family feuds?
6. According to the reading, what do some family members need to allow each other to do?

Vocabulary Review

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the vocabulary list on page 1.

1. Aunt Joan brought extra butter. That was a _____ .
2. Grandpa Jones is _____. Grandma does everything for him.
3. My cousin cries every time I beat her at tennis. She's such a _____ .
4. I once said that blue wasn't Mackenzie's color. Her parents are still holding a _____ about it.
5. Why are the Bennett get-togethers always so _____? Everyone worries about everything!
6. I was already worried about having enough room at the table before your step-dad said he was coming. How did he get _____?
7. They are a _____ family. Even the aunts and uncles go to all of Jason's hockey games.
8. It's not really a party. It's more of a family _____ .
9. Red wine is a _____ for us. Every time we drink red wine, we get into a fight.
10. My cousin Louis didn't come to the wedding, and everyone talked _____ .

Collocations

A. Make Collocations

Look at the list of words below. Try to make collocations.
Collocations are words that are typically written or said together.
Some words will not be used.

Ex. *thrown into the mix* _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Word List:

• saving	• loser
• sore	• grace
• thrown into	• the holidays
• spoiled	• the mix
• it's only	• rotten
• home for	• nothing happened
• pretend like	• natural

B. Write Sentences

Now choose three collocations from Part A and write your own sentences with them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Discussion

1. Do you enjoy family get-togethers? Why or why not?
2. Which topics trigger arguments in your family?
3. Do people in your family talk behind each other's backs?
If yes, do you join in?
4. Do you hold a grudge against family members
if they hurt your feelings or disappoint you?
5. Relationship experts say that we are more irritated by our family
members' habits than by the habits of friends or strangers.
Which behavior or habits do you find most annoying?
6. What does your family do to end or forget a family feud?

Role-Play

Get into small groups (families). Imagine you are sitting at a dinner table for a holiday get-together. Have a family feud. Then find a way to resolve it. Perform your role-play for the class. Try to use some vocabulary and expressions from this lesson. Your audience should be able to identify the following:

- What was the reason for the get-together?
- What was the trigger for the feud?
- Who contributed to the feud, and how?
- What annoying behavior did you see at the table?
- Was there a resolution (or attempt)?

Useful Expressions

- I hate it when you... (*base verb*)
- I wish you wouldn't... (*base verb*)
- Why do we always talk about... (*noun*)
- He/she is so... (*negative personality adjective*)
- Let's agree to disagree.
- Can we change the subject?
- Let's talk about something else.
- Let's get some fresh air.
- I think we've had enough... (*beer, wine, treats*)
- I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said anything.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

FAMILY FEUDS

Home for the holidays

1. Do you spend a lot of time with your family over the holidays?
Family _____ can be fun, but they can also be _____ .
2. The fear of disappointing a family member is a major source of holiday stress. You may want to have dinner at your mother's home, but your mother-in-law expects you at hers. What happens when step-families are _____ ?
3. We often worry about what our family members will think or say about our _____. Will they like the gifts we chose for their kids, and did we spend enough money? What will Grandma say if we don't _____ the potatoes her way?
4. In a _____ family, it's only natural to notice each other's differences. Sadly, our familiarity often makes us feel like we can say whatever we please. Hurt feelings can turn into long-lasting _____. Are we better off talking _____ each other's backs?
5. Some families argue about the same thing at every get-together. Avoiding your family's _____ can be a _____. Which subjects should your family avoid?
6. For many families, get-togethers involve _____ and sweet foods. This can make people say and do things that they later _____. Going outdoors and doing something active together is a good way to avoid these conflicts.
7. Do you still tell your adult sibling not to be a _____ ? Does your aunt still think of you as a _____ child? Everyone is getting older, but it can be difficult to forget your family's past. Perhaps it's time to let each other grow up.
8. What does your family do to end a family feud? Do you sit down and talk about your _____ , or do you pretend like nothing happened? Some families only address conflicts by _____ .

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about holiday stress as a source for family feuds. They discuss their own family triggers and do a role-play in small groups.

LEVEL: Int**TIME:** 1–2 hours**TAGS:** family feud, holiday, fight, argue, Christmas, December, family, relationships

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary. Discuss the quote.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. i | 3. j | 5. g | 7. h | 9. c |
| 2. d | 4. b | 6. e | 8. a | 10. f |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 6. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. Before family get-togethers, many family members worry about disappointing each other. They also worry that they won't meet each other's expectations.
2. The reading mentions mashed potatoes as an example of something a person might do differently than another family member.
3. Family members focus so much on each other's differences because they are so similar.
4. Without an apology, family members can hold grudges.
5. Alcohol and sugary foods can make people say and do things they later regret.
6. According to the reading, some family members need to allow each other to grow up.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. saving grace | 6. thrown into the mix |
| 2. spoiled rotten | 7. close-knit |
| 3. sore loser | 8. get-together |
| 4. grudge | 9. trigger |
| 5. stressful | 10. behind his back |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Collocations

A. MAKE COLLOCATIONS

1. saving grace
2. sore loser
3. spoiled rotten
4. it's only natural
5. home for the holidays
6. pretend like nothing happened

B. WRITE SENTENCES

Answers will vary.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Role-Play

Put students in small groups and allow them to practice an informal role-play scenario. Give groups time to perform their role-play for the class. Ask the audience the questions that are provided.

Listening

1. get-togethers, stressful
2. thrown into the mix
3. decisions, mash
4. close-knit, grudges, behind
5. triggers, saving grace
6. alcohol, regret
7. sore loser, spoiled rotten
8. issues, text

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Color* and *Behavior*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Colour* and *Behaviour*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.