**Chapter Exercises**

**Chapter 11: Families and Society**

1. In your notebook, draw a “typical American family.” On what assumptions did you choose your figures? Did media influence your choice? Based on what you learned in the readings, how typical would you say your sketched “typical” family is in the United States?
2. Research suggests that most marriages are *endogamous*—that is, between members of the same social group. So, for instance, college educated adults are more likely to marry other college-educated adults than to marry high school dropouts. And most marriages are still within rather than between racial groups. How would you explain the phenomenon of endogamy? Make a list with factors that could influence endogamy. In your list, distinguish between *sociological* and *individual* factors influencing marital endogamy.
3. Do an informal survey of 5–10 friends to learn what kind of family structure they grew up in. Before doing the survey, work with classmates to choose categories that encompass major family forms in the United States today (for instance, *married parent home*, *single parent home*, *grandparent headed home*, etc.).

Add a few brief questions to learn about roles in the family, such as “Who supported the family economically? Who stayed home when you were sick? How was housework divided in your home?” Describe what you found and compare it to findings of larger studies on family forms and roles covered in this chapter.

1. With a group of peers, discuss the nature of your more removed family interactions. How much contact and involvement did you have with family members living outside your immediate home such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins? Did these interactions, or lack of them, affect your family’s ability to function effectively as a family unit? What would have changed for your immediate family if these larger familial interactions had increased or decreased? What is the functional purpose of these larger familial connections?
2. Using an internet research tool such as The Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)), survey the plots of a sample of romantic comedy movies. What do these movies have to say about marriage, love, and relationships? What do they show to be the expected role of men and women in a relationship? Is marriage represented as a primary goal of relationships? How central is love in relationships? How do they represent single people who are dating versus married couples? How does this analysis compare with the findings in the chapter about the shifting role of marriage within the United States?