

Example of A level paper that also completed the
Name: extra credit available

Criteria for assignment and (maximum points possible in parentheses)

Clear thesis statement that guides and focuses paper (-5/+5)

+5

· *Clear thesis*

Provides clear and accurate description of material from the four assigned readings that demonstrates the writer has read the assigned materials (20)

19

· *Two minor clarity concerns*

Covers and includes information from all reading assignments: Cherlin Ch. 9, Leap Ch. 22 or 25, Lareau Ch. 11, and Russell et al. article (20)

20

· *Good*

Integration: Includes reaction/thesis that is tied to all 4 reading assignments. (20)

20

· *Good integration of the material*

Paper demonstrates writer thought about readings (e.g., reflection or application), not just repeating information or basic comments. (20)

20

· *Yes, good additional caveat to your argument in your last paragraph that a diverse family structure is not a sentence to poorer outcomes.*

Literacy and grammar. Work is understandable, clearly written, and logically structured. Citations are provided. (20)

19

· *Minor grammar/ word choice (this is getting picky, but still important to note).*

Extra Credit: Incorporate both Leap chapters (Ch 22 & 25) into your paper with proper citations. (Max: 3)

+3

OVERALL SCORE

Example of A level weekly paper
plus extra credit

Family Structure and Health Outcomes

Family is important for several reasons; however, some reasons stand out more than others. For instance, according to Cherlin, families provide the main setting in which children's fundamental needs are met and parents are given broad powers to shape their children's lives (pg. 240). In other words, it is the parent's duty to nourish their child and how they do so can majorly affect their child later on in life. Now, since family plays such an integral role in the life outcomes of children, the structure of the family does as well. Furthermore, family structure is incredibly diverse in today's world. In fact, research shows that approximately 54% of children reside in single-parent, divorced, cohabiting, remarried, or other nonnuclear households (Pew Research Center, 2015, as cited in Russell, Coleman, & Ganong, 2018). This means that nonnuclear households are becoming much more prominent, making it important to examine how differing family structures affects children, including their health. More specifically, this paper is going to argue that children who are raised in a family with a diverse structure, like those in single-parent households or those with unmarried parents, do not receive the support they need and consequently, have a greater chance of experiencing either poor mental or physical health. ^{outcomes.} - clear focus

Mental health is of course an important part of a person's well-being. Furthermore, there is evidence that family structure plays a part in mental health, ultimately affecting children's well-being. First, for example, children in single-parent families are shown to have higher rates of depression (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001, as cited by Cherlin, pg. 253). This suggests that children who have one parent are at a higher risk for depression, ^{in comparison to?} making it clear that family structure must play a part in mental health. Second, another example of this concept is in Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods*. In the book, Lareau examines the family of Billy Yanelli, which

is composed of him and his two parents who are unmarried (pg. 221). Furthermore, Billy's father believes that his wife should be in charge of taking care of Billy, including caring about his schooling (Lareau, pg. 222). This obviously leads to an instability in the support that Billy receives since it is only his mother that looks after him. Additionally, it is important to note that Billy gets B's in school but he is considered to be a behavior problem and he is often in trouble (Lareau, pg. 225). More specifically, his behavior problem is so bad that his teachers are worried and have recommended not only that Billy sees the school counselor at least once a week, but also that his family goes to counseling as well (Lareau, pg. 226). I believe these behavioral problems and having to see the school counselor are signs of poor mental health and they are a direct result of the lack of support that Billy receives being in a diversely structured home.

Explain what this looks like specifically. You hint at it previously

Additionally, the fact that the school thinks the family needs counseling as well, backs up the idea that the family structure is not working properly and affecting Billy's mental health.

Physical health, just like mental health, is another vital component to a person's overall wellness and can also be affected by things like family structure. In fact, there is research that shows children living in diverse family structures experience differences in their physical health outcomes (Russell, Coleman, & Ganong, 2018). More specifically, children in such families have been shown to have higher rates of chronic illness diagnoses and hospitalizations across their lifetime (Russell, Coleman, & Ganong, 2018). To further illustrate this concept, a good example of a person who has had such an experience is Donald from Jorja Leap's *Project Fatherhood*. It is understood in the book that like many other men who participated in the project, Donald grew up without a father, which I believe meant that he did not have a lot of support and caused him to be exposed to gang life early on. Consequently, Donald lived a life full of violence and in chapter 22, he specifically talks about one instance where he was caught

by a rival gang and stabbed through the back until the knife protruded from his stomach (Leap, pg. 195). Now this is of course an extreme example of how living in a diversely structured family can lead to physical harm, but nonetheless it does highlight how detrimental it can be when a child grows up without the full support that I believe kids in nuclear households obtain.

Children in diverse household structures can experience a lack of support that can affect one's overall health. For instance, whether it is mental health that is affected, like what happened with Billy Yanelli, or physical health that is affected, like what happened with Donald, it is obvious that family structure ultimately plays a big part in health outcomes. However, it is important to note that just because a child grows up without married parents or without a father, does not concretely mean that they will have some sort of health problem. In fact, the men from *Project Fatherhood* are trying to combat these possible negative effects, specifically by wanting to hold impact sessions for kids from not only their neighborhoods, but surrounding neighborhoods as well (Leap, pg. 219). I believe it is this kind of extra support that children living in diverse family structures need and can help to make sure that their health, mental or physical, is not affected negatively.

good
addition