

## UNIT 20 MY SPLIT FAMILY

### UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will:

- 🎧 Read and listen to Kenny’s latest website entry.
- Answer open-ended comprehension questions to show understanding of the story.
- 🗣️ Consider four alternative opinions about divorce, and decide which ones they agree with.
- Study the Opinion Network to learn expressions for asking for opinions and ways to respond.
- Extend the Topic by talking about responses to Kenny’s website entry.
- Read a Culture Corner extract about divorce rates worldwide.
- Share ideas about ways to decrease the divorce rate.
- Watch a follow-up video extract from Scott giving his views about parents divorcing.
- Take the Unit Test.

### Authors’ Introduction

Go to [impactseries.com/issues](http://impactseries.com/issues) to listen to Junko’s unit introduction.

### The Issue

In this unit, a high school student writes on his website about how his parents’ divorce is affecting him. Since Kenny’s parents divorced, his life has been hard. Living with his dad for a month and then with his mom for a month is confusing and tiring for him. It’s disrupting his school life, too. And there is more: His dad has a girlfriend now. What should Kenny do to make his life less stressful? Should parents stay together for the sake of their kids?

### Questions Raised

- Is it wrong for parents to get divorced if it will make their children unhappy? Should they stay together for the sake of their children?
- If parents divorce, what happens to their children? What is the best way to minimize the effect on them?
- What advice can you give Kenny to make him feel happier and more stable? What should he do? What should his parents do?

### To Keep in Mind

- Keep in mind that in any class there are probably students whose parents have divorced or separated. It is important not to make students feel like they have to talk about their personal lives. However, if students want to share their situations, it is OK.
- You could have students look at divorce from the husband’s and the wife’s point of view and then from the child’s point of view. They will be able to understand the difference.
- This is a good opportunity to talk about love, marriage, and divorce. This unit can tie in with Unit 17, The Art of Compromise, or Unit 6, Housework.

## TEACHING GUIDE

### Getting Ready

→ Have students work in pairs. Don’t spend too much time here—do this part lightly. Make sure students understand the meaning of *divorce*.

🗣️ **Teaching Tip:** After the students have worked in pairs, you could ask volunteers for their answers.

## Situation

→ Have students guess what Kenny has written on his website by looking at the photographs on page 86 before listening to the audio. Then have them listen to the CD without looking at the text to find out if their guess was right. Have students listen to the audio again, this time looking at the text.

🎧 **Teaching Tip:** Have students make pairs. Each student will read one paragraph aloud, taking turns. Help students pronounce the words.

## Check Your Understanding

### Answer Key (sample answers)

1. They don't love each other anymore.
2. With his dad for a month and then with his mom for a month.
3. He is confused and tired, and his grades have gone down.
4. He wishes his parents would get back together.
5. He feels she is OK.

## What Do You Think?

→ After you check students' understanding of the story using the comprehension questions, students discuss the opinions of Iris, Mark, Anna, and Shingo. Have students do Activity A individually. Then have them move to Activity B and share their opinions in pairs.

🎧 **Teaching Tip:** Students learn how to express uncertainty when they are unsure about their answers. If they say "I'm not sure," however, they should say why they are not sure.

✂ **Culture Point:** The United States has the highest divorce rate in the world. There is a 40 to 60 percent chance that new marriages will end in divorce. There is a 20 percent chance of the marriage ending within the first five years and a 33 percent chance of the marriage ending within the first ten years. Approximately 25 percent of American children live with a stepparent.

(Brian K. Williams, Stacy C. Sawyer, Carl M. Wahlstrom, *Marriages, Families & Intimate Relationships*, 2005)

## Extending the Topic: Responding to Kenny

- Have students work individually when choosing good responses in the chart, and in pairs (or threes) for the follow-up discussion.
- Make sure that they add their own ideas at the bottom of the chart.
- Do the Extra Activity (role play) if there is time.

## Culture Corner

Have students work in pairs or groups of three. Students read through the list of divorce rates in different countries. You can ask for students' general reaction to the list, or write a few questions on the board for discussion in pairs.

## Extra Activity: Role Play

If there is time, consider doing the Extra Activity, a role play. Set up the role play by dividing the class into pairs. One member of each pair (student A) is Kenny. The other (student B) is Kenny's friend.

Give the students a few minutes to prepare their role play. Student A (Kenny) tells student B (his friend) what he is going through and what he wants to do. Kenny's friend should listen and try to give sound advice. Students can look over the Situation and the Extending the Topic activity, and write questions and information they may want to use in their role play. Give the students about two minutes to act out their role play. Then you can ask for volunteer pairs to act out their role play in front of the class.

## Sharing My Ideas: Decreasing the divorce rate

### → Choose

Begin by having the students choose one idea to help slow down the divorce rate. If they don't agree with any of the ideas, have them fill in their own idea at the bottom of the box. Unique or humorous ideas are welcome. Explain that students are going to give a presentation about decreasing the divorce rate.

## → Prepare and Rehearse

Students should think of persuasive reasons for supporting their idea for decreasing the divorce rate. Have them answer the questions in the Prepare box, and suggest using a separate sheet of paper for their outlines. Remind them to keep their notes simple, and be sure to point out the Language Hints.

Before students begin rehearsing, go over the Presentation Tip. You may want to demonstrate using a persuasive voice and body language by doing the sample presentation below. If possible, have students work with someone who chose the same topic. Once they have each presented their topic, they should compare their reasons and ideas as instructed in the Listener task. Give them time to revise their notes before presenting again in Step 4.

### **Sample Presentation**

*Here is how my plan will work. The government hires marriage counselors to give advice to married couples. When the husband and wife do not get along, they can talk to a counselor. Often you feel better just by talking about a problem, so probably after they talk to the counselor, they will feel better and be able to continue their marriage. Of course, the counselor can give good advice to the couple because s/he can look at the problem objectively from a third person's point of view. That's why I think this is the best solution to reduce the divorce rate.*

## → Present

Have students work with a new partner who chose a different topic, or put them in small groups. Have listeners take notes, because their task is to prepare one question they want to ask the presenter about his or her plan.

If you are using the assessment guide below, go over each point with the whole class before students begin their presentations. (This could also be done during the Rehearse step so that students have time to prepare for or practice each assessment point.) Be sure to remind your students that communicating their ideas is more important than trying to use perfect English!

### **Assessing the Activity**

Create a handout with a rating grid such as the one below, or simply write it on the board. (Note: For more information on student assessment and ways to modify the assessment system, see *Assessing the Activity*, Unit 1.)

- 1 – The presentation was well organized.
- 2 – The presenter used the Language Hints.
- 3 – The presenter used his or her voice to help persuade the audience.
- 4 – The presenter used body language to help persuade the audience.
- 5 – The presenter responded clearly to the questions at the end.

When students are working in pairs, have each student evaluate the other. If a student presents in front of a small group or in front of the class, have each student evaluate him or her. A rater can give up to 5 stars for each category, so the maximum score for any presentation is 25 stars.

Of course, you can also give your own assessment, along with positive suggestions for how the presenter can improve next time.

## PERSONAL OPINION

→ If you have downloaded the video clip or have access to the Internet in class, play the video clip. The first time, have the students watch with books closed. Ask questions to see if the students have understood the gist of Scott's opinion. Then have them look at the summary. See if they can fill in the missing words. Play the extract once or twice more. Then check the answers.

### Answer Key

#### Scott

This is somewhat personal for me. I feel that as a child of a family that's gone through—and not just one divorce but many divorces—I think it's very hard on the children when a divorce happens. I'm not saying that a couple shouldn't divorce. What I am saying is that if you have children, you really need to be careful about the effect that has on the children.

In my case, too, I was moved around every weekend. You know, I would see my father and then I would go back for part of the week to my mother—back and forth, back and forth! And it was really hard. I assume they were trying their best, but, in some ways, they were just thinking about themselves and not how it made us kids feel. So, I'm not saying don't divorce. In fact, I'm happy that my parents are divorced, because they didn't get along and they didn't love each other at that point, but it didn't affect me in a good way.

### Video Script

Well, I feel that, well, as a, the child of a family that's gone through not just one divorce but many, ah, I think it's very hard on the children when, ah, divorce happens. So, I'm not saying that you shouldn't divorce. Ah, what I'm saying is that if you have children, you really need to be careful about the effect of that on the children.

So, in my case, too, I was moved around every weekend. I would see my father and then I would go back for part of the week to my mother, and blah, blah, blah—back and forth. And it was really hard. So they were trying their best but, ah, in some ways they were just thinking about themselves and not how it made us feel. So, ah, I'm not saying don't divorce, in fact, I'm happy that my parent's are, ah, divorced because, ah, they didn't get along and they didn't love each other at that point but, ah, it didn't affect me in a good way. So, ah, I am saying to the parents: please, please, consider your children's feelings before you make that kind of schedule after you divorce.

## UNIT TEST

→ Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Distribute the copies and allow about 15 minutes for the class to complete the test. Correct the test in class.

A. Understanding the Situation: The focus is on understanding Kenny's problem with his divorced parents and how his confusion about the situation.

B. Vocabulary: The focus is on words or phrases from the Situation or the Extending the Topic sections. Students fill in three missing words of a short paragraph that summarizes the Situation.

C. Expressions: The focus is on checking students' understanding of the What Do You Think? and Opinion Network sections.

### Answer Key

A. 1. c 2. b 3. a 4. d 5. b

B. divorce; confused; grades

C. 1. b 2. a

## LINKS

If you would like the class to do additional research on parents' divorce, here are some useful links:

Counseling center: your parents' divorce:

[http://www.counselingcenter.uiuc.edu/?page\\_id=173](http://www.counselingcenter.uiuc.edu/?page_id=173)

"Divorce: A Parents' Guide for Supporting Children":

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/parenting/divorce\\_ho.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/parenting/divorce_ho.aspx)

Teen's Health, Answers and Advice: Dealing with Divorce:

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/families/divorce.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/divorce.html)