**![C:\Users\anr.LHC.001\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\IK9U9LDH\MC900363474[1].wmf]()SUGGESTED AREAS OF STUDY**

**The following topics and areas of study may be helpful for initial selection of your topic. Highlight the issues below that are of interest to you.**

**Finally, choose one topic only – you may negotiate another area of study with your teacher. Please note the questions below for each topic are guide questions only. It is expected that you will establish a strong hypothesis on the basis of your research.**

1. **Marriage** – What law governs marriage? Who is eligible to marry? What are the requirements to become legally married? What are the changing patterns and social practices towards marriage? Is the law reacting to social pressure or merely acting as a modifying influence?
2. **Financial Agreements (pre-nups)** – What is the law related to the making of a financial agreement? When may these be useful. Examine the arguments for and against these agreements.
3. **Divorce** – Some say it is easy to marry, but it is not so easy to get unmarried. Do you agree? What laws govern divorce? What are the grounds for divorce? What are the laws regarding division of property when a marriage is dissolved? Analyse the legal rights of children following parental separation and divorce. Does the law go far enough to ensure that children’s rights are protected?
4. **De Facto** – What legal rights do spouses and children of de facto relationships enjoy? What is the law relating to ex-nuptial children when the parents’ de facto relationship breaks down? Does Queensland have a De Facto Relationships Act? Do other states? How do they compare?
5. **Fathers** - Fathers are sometimes the forgotten party when decisions regarding children are concerned. What legal rights do fathers have over the unborn child? Can a father of a child conceived out of wedlock legally have a say in whether or not a child can be put up for adoption? Does the Family Law Act and Family Court decisions discriminate against fathers in custody decisions? What social changes have affected the courts decisions? Examine if there is a need for reform in this area of law?
6. **Birth** – What happens when a child is born? What are the legal requirements for notification of a birth? What are the functions of the Registry Office? Under what legislation does this office operate? What is the legal position of a child not born within a marriage? To what extent does Family Law in Australia protect the rights of the unborn?
7. **Surrogate** – What are Queensland’s laws? Compare these laws with the legal situation in other states. Analyse them to determine the adequacy of meeting the demands of today’s society. Examine the problems with legalisation of this process.
8. **IVF/Artificial Insemination** – The conception of women by means other than sexual intercourse carries with it a complex array of social, moral, religious, ethical and legal questions. Analyse the legal framework as it now applies. What are the current laws in Australia? Who bears the responsibilities of parenthood? What is the laws/regulations dealing with the freezing of embryos for future implantation or research. Is there room for law reform and if so, what direction should it take?
9. **Adoption** – What are the laws and regulations relating to Australian adoption? What is the legislation that governs this activity? What are the legal issues involved when an adoptee wishes to locate his/her natural parents – or vice versa? To what extent is the law and its interpretation adequate?
10. **Overseas Adoption** – Explain the law governing the adoption of foreign children by Australian resident citizens. What are the implications both for the individuals concerned and for the Australian society generally?
11. **Foster Children** – Under what circumstances does a child become a foster child or ward of the State? Who decides on the placement of foster children and how do families become foster families?
12. **Child Care** – What family issues give rise to an increase in child care requirements? What is the current law cover chid care providers? How does the law look after the safety and well-being of a child? Who can register to provide a child care service and what does the law require of this person/business?
13. **Parents** - What are the laws regarding the duty of care that parents have to care for their children? What are the laws regarding parental responsibility for children, particularly their criminal acts?
14. **Children** -What is the law on the age of majority? When does a child become an adult for various activities – i.e. age of consent, age of criminal responsibility, buying alcohol or cigarettes, getting married, working? Examine the legislation and rules that regulate these behaviours. Are the laws realistic and fair – justify your reasons.
15. **Youth** – At what age can a young person legally leave home? Why are some youth homeless? Can a young person be forced to go home? What alternatives are there? Do parents of a runaway youth have any rights? Which government department is responsible for child welfare issues in Qld. What is the scope of their responsibility?
16. **Single Parents** - What are the laws and regulations relating to support for single parents and low-income families? How are these people supported by government organisations? Which particular government organisations administer this assistance?
17. **Wards of the State** – Analyse the legal rights of all parties concerned with the transfer of legal custody of children from parents/guardians to the State. What situations would give rise to this procedure? Is the current system working in the best interests of all?
18. **Child Abuse** – To what extent is child abuse a problem in Australian society? What factors contribute to child abuse? What is the law doing both to help reduce the extent of the problem and to help rehabilitate the victim? Analyse the Child Protection Act thoroughly. Examine the legal rights of children, parents and witnesses associated with child abuse.
19. **Domestic Violence** – What is the law relating to domestic violence? What protection is available to those who suffer it? Include a discussion of emergency assistance. What laws are involved and what government organisations administer them?
20. **Family Court of Australia –** Over the years there has been considerable criticism of the Family Court of Australia. Trace its evolution. What are the current functions of the Family Court? What is the structure of the Family Court? What Act is it governed by? Evaluate any reforms which are or have been made which might have improved its image in Australian society.
21. **Family Law Reform Act** – This Act was designed to bring about certain important changes to divorce law. What are the rules regarding compulsory mediation in Family Law disputes? What is the law relating to parenting plans and financial responsibility of parents for care of children after marriage break-up?
22. **Death** – The death of a close friend/relative can be a very difficult time. What happens when a person dies? What are the legal requirements from the time of death until burial? What support mechanisms are in place to assist with dealing with the death and arranging all the necessary procedures?
23. **Wills** – To what extent are wills important in our society as a means of protecting our rights of inheriting private property? What is the law relating to the making of wills? What are the implications of intestacy?
24. **Enduring Power of Attorney** - What is the meaning of the term “Enduring Power of Attorney”? In what situations is it appropriate to have this in place?