

# MARRIAGE OR LIVING TOGETHER - WHAT'S BEST?

**Objective:** Encourage fluency and lively debate

**Materials:** Use the sheet provided

## Procedure

**Warm up:**

Ask how many of your students are married. How many live with someone and how many are single. Look at the following sheet with the results of the New Woman survey.

Then ask questions:

For the married students

Why did you choose to marry?

Do you wish you had lived together first?

**What do you think is the best thing?**

For the students living together

Is this a temporary arrangement? – do you intend to marry?

What are the advantages of this arrangement?

Is it the same as being married?

For all the students

Do you agree that “marriage is only a piece of paper”

## Ready to tie the knot?

According to a *New Woman* magazine survey, most women still dream of getting married, although they do so much later than their own mother did. Here are some numbers:

- 96% of woman said that fidelity was extremely important in a marriage
- 96% believed that they could stay faithful forever.
- 91% said that 29 years old was the perfect age to get married
- 79% believed that the marriage would last if you lived together first
- 56% think that married couples don't put enough effort into their relationships
- 15% think that they will get married more than once.

*(statistics taken from New Woman survey found on the New Woman magazine website)*

## A FEW FACTS ON COHABITATION

### Cohabitation Trends Over Time

In 1960, there were **90 married couples** for every cohabiting couple.

Today, there is **1 cohabiting couple** for every **6 married couples** in the U.S.

If the current trend continues, projections indicate that by **2030**, there may be **4 married couples** for every cohabiting couple.

### Cohabitation Before Marriage

In the U.S., **over 65%** of single women now choose to live with their partners before marriage, compared to **10% in the 1950s**.

In England, **nearly 80%** of single women cohabit before marriage, compared to just **5% in the mid-1960s**.

In Sweden, there are now **almost as many cohabiting couples as married couples**.

## Duration & Stability of Cohabitation

The **median duration** of cohabitation in the U.S. is **15 years**.

**Over 60%** of cohabiting couples either break up or marry within **two years**.

Cohabiting couples have an **80%+ chance** that their relationship will end:

**40% break up before marriage.**

**40% divorce within 10 years of marriage.**

Studies indicate that couples who live together before marriage have a **35%-60% higher risk of divorce** compared to those who did not cohabit.

## Marriage & Cohabitation

**55%-65%** of first-time cohabitators eventually marry their partner.

**76%** of cohabiting couples express plans to marry, but **fewer actually do**.

Low levels of **religious participation** are linked to higher levels of cohabitation and lower rates of eventual marriage.

## Demographics & Children

The **most common age group** for cohabitation is **25-39 years old**, with over **8 million cohabiting couples in the U.S.**

About **40% of cohabiting households** have children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).

## Cohabitation & Mental Health

Women in cohabiting relationships experience **higher rates of depression**, nearly **three times higher than married women** (National Institute for Mental Health, 2024).

The **U.S. Justice Department** reports that women are **62 times more likely to be assaulted** by a live-in boyfriend than by a husband.