

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Directions: Read the following statistics and statements about the state of relationships in the U.S. today from the article "The Changing Landscape of Love and Marriage" by Kathleen E. Hull, Ann Meier, and Timothy Ortyl.

After reading each statement, decide if you think it is a problem or not. Circle "Yes" or "No." In the space below each statement, briefly describe your reasoning.

Do you believe that these changes in love and marriage present a problem to our society?

1) Nearly half of all marriages end in divorce.

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

2) People are getting married later than they used to; the median age at first marriage is now 28 for men and 26 for women, compared to 23 and 20 in 1960.

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

3) The proportion of adults who never marry remains low but is climbing; in 2006, 19% of men and 13% of women aged 40-44 had never married.

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

4) Unmarried cohabitation has gone from a socially stigmatized practice to a normal stage in the adult life course (more than half of all American marriages now begin as cohabitations).

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

5) Roughly one-third of all births are to unmarried parents.

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

6) **Today, people feel freer to marry later, to end unhappy marriages, and to forego marriage altogether.**

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

7) **Americans have established a pattern of high marriage and remarriage rates, frequent divorce and separation, and more short-lived cohabitations.**

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

8) **Straight women are more likely to rate faithfulness and lifelong commitment as extremely important compared to straight men and sexual minorities.**

Problem? Yes or No

Why? _____

Based on your responses above, which position described in the article do you ***most*** agree with?
Circle one.

1. The ***marital decline position***, which argues that changes in intimacy are a significant cause for concern.

OR

2. The ***marital resilience perspective***, which, in contrast, argues that changes in family life have actually strengthened the quality of intimate relationships, including marriages.

After you have finished, discuss your responses with a small group of classmates. Does your group agree?