
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Marriage



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello - welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Neil.

Rob

And I'm Rob.

Neil

Now Rob, Can you complete this saying: "Love and marriage go together like"

Rob

Love and marriage go together like... a horse and carriage!

Neil

That's right, and when was the last time you saw a horse and carriage?

Rob

Well that would have been a while ago – they are quite rare these days. Not an everyday sight.

Neil

Indeed. And according to recent statistics, marriage in the UK is getting rarer too. Not as rare as seeing a horse and carriage, but the numbers are falling. Before we look at this topic in a bit more detail, a little quiz for our listeners.

Rob

Yes, according to UK's Office for National Statistics, how many opposite-sex marriages were there in 2015?

Was it:

- a) 239,000
- b) 309,000
- c) 339,000

Any idea Neil?

Neil

I have no idea but I'm going to have a guess and say a) 239,000.

Rob

We'll reveal the answer a little later in this programme. And whatever the correct number, the **trend** is downwards. Year on year there are fewer opposite sex couples getting married in the UK.

Neil

So why might this be? Are we falling out of love with marriage? Let's hear from a couple of people with different views. First, here's Tom from BBC Learning English - what doesn't he like about the idea or **concept** of getting married?

Tom Banks

I'm not that enthusiastic about the idea of marriage, to tell you the truth. I think it's a bit of an **archaic concept** these days and I'm a bit of a **commitment phobe** – I don't like the idea of signing a piece of paper that says I have to be with someone for the rest of my life and can never escape from that person I suppose – although I am in a very happy relationship at the moment.

Rob

So that was Tom there. Not a fan of marriage. But what were his objections Neil?

Neil

Well, he described marriage as an **archaic concept**. When someone describes something as **archaic** they think it is very old fashioned, out of date – belonging to a different time.

Rob

So that was one of his problems with marriage, but he also said that he was a **commitment phobe**. The suffix **phobe** means someone who is afraid of something. In some cases it can also be used as a standalone word, but it means the same. So a **commitment phobe** is someone who is afraid of, or doesn't like the idea of **commitment**.

Neil

And when talking about relationships, **commitment** means being with one person and giving up the idea of being free to do whatever you want and see whoever you want romantically.

Rob

So for **commitment phobes**, **commitment** means losing something.

Neil

But that's not true for everyone. Here's Dan, also from BBC Learning English. What's his view of marriage?

Dan O'Brien

In general I think it's quite good. It has a very **stabilising** effect on society and it declares publicly to the world that you have found the right person for you and that you're in a committed relationship.

Rob

So Dan is a fan. He thinks marriage has a **stabilising** effect on society. He sees marriage as being good for society as a whole - it makes society stronger, more stable.

Neil

And he also sees it as a way to say to everyone that you have a strong relationship, you are with the one person you love.

Rob

So for Dan, **commitment** and being in a committed relationship is a good thing. Now, back to our question at the top of the programme. I asked how many opposite-sex couples got married in the UK in 2015?

Neil

And I took a guess didn't I and I said a) 239,000. Am I right?

Rob

You are definitely right. The answer is 239,000 or 239,020 to be precise. That figure was 3.4% lower than 2014. So what do relationship experts think is the reason fewer people are getting married?

Neil

Well there could be lots of reasons. In some countries the way society is changing means that there is less pressure to get married or stay married. As a result, there are more divorces. So perhaps children of divorced parents are less likely to get married themselves. Right, well before we go, let's recap the vocabulary we highlighted today. The first word was **trend**.

Rob

A **trend** is the direction that something is changing over time. When it comes to marriage, the trend is for fewer marriages. And the trend for 6-Minute listeners is the opposite, going up, particularly when you are presenting, Neil

Neil

Ah, that's very nice of you, you're very kind. The next two words were an **archaic concept**. **Archaic** is an adjective for something dated or old-fashioned.

Rob

A bit like your fashion sense!

Neil

Just when I was beginning to like you!

Rob

Sorry about that, you know I don't mean it. In the interview **archaic** was used to describe

the **concept** of marriage, not your fashion sense. **Concept** is another word for an idea or belief. So an **archaic concept** is an old-fashioned idea.

Neil

Our next expression was **commitment phobe**. We use this phrase to talk about someone who is scared of the idea of a long-term relationship because they see it as giving up some freedoms. You're obviously a *compliment phobe*! You're afraid of saying nice things about someone so you always say something nasty as well!

Rob

I said I was sorry.

Neil

And finally we had the adjective **stabilising**. Something that is stable is strong and something that makes something strong can be described as **stabilising**. Dan expressed his belief that marriage had a **stabilising** effect on society. Well, that's it for this programme. For more, find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and our YouTube pages, and of course our website at bbclearningenglish.com where you can find all kinds of other activities, videos and quizzes and things to help you improve your English. Thanks for joining us and goodbye!

Rob

Bye!