

Chapter 4 Families and households

Topic 5 Changing family patterns

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Activity: Discussion

Cohabitation is becoming 'marriage by another name'.

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify the similarities and differences between marriage and cohabitation.
 - Evaluate the view that marriage and cohabitation are becoming increasingly similar.
- A. Divide into groups of four. Half the groups will prepare five-minute presentations on marriage and the other half will prepare five-minute presentations on cohabitation.

Here are some points to help you get started. Add as many more as you can:

1. Read the sections relating to marriage and cohabitation (pages 215-217).
 2. Consider issues such as: is cohabitation a temporary phase before marriage; same sex couples; why some couples choose to cohabit permanently rather than marry; the significance of higher divorce rates.
 3. Use the internet to find further information related to marriage and cohabitation. For example, are there rules relating to tax or property that affect married and cohabiting couples differently?
 4. Use examples from your knowledge and experience of your own or other people's families/households to illustrate your points.
- B. Each group should make their presentations to the rest of the class. The first group should be 'marriage' group, the second a 'cohabitation' group and so on.
- C. Based on the presentations, conduct a class discussion on the statement: 'Cohabitation is becoming marriage by another name'.
- D. Then vote on whether you agree with the statement. When making your choice, you must only consider the evidence presented during the discussion.
- E. Write a summary of the different arguments for and against the view that 'Cohabitation is becoming marriage by another name'. Which arguments do you find most convincing?