

# Essay about marriage and cohabitation

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Cohabitation Research Paper Cohabitation and marriage both share effective similarities and differences. Within the last 40 years both have grown closely to represent two individuals that have a motive in life which involves commitment, financial responsibility, and the disposition to spend a majority of your life with one person. The subject of cohabitation is a popular one among many college students, upperclassmen, and middle aged divorced individuals in this day and age.

In this essay we will be looking at the detailed facts in why people cohabit before they are married, why they do it and most importantly why cohabitation is not considered immoral behavior in the twenty first century as it was 40 years ago. This research will also contain real individual perspectives which will widen our thoughts and assumptions behind the theory of cohabitation. In today's society there are many couples that are living together before getting married. The US Census Bureau calls cohabitation POSSLQ (pronounced possel-kews), which is understood as “shaking up”.

The number of unmarried couples in the U. S. has increased from 0. 4 million in 1960 to almost 7 million in 2008. In the mid 1990's more than 60 percent of American's cohabited. (Benokraitis, pg. 246) There are advantages and disadvantages when considering cohabitation. Some of the rewards of living together before marriage are some such as getting to know your partner better, learning about one's ability/habits, if they are able to satisfy your expectations, finding common grounds, and most of all to gain that special commitment with one another.

On the other end there are disadvantages in living together before marriage, some being, not having much of personal space, religious outlooks, not being able to handle fights in a proper manner, going against family values, and most of all doing it for the wrong reasons. Almost half of young Americans say they will not marry someone unless they live with them first but on the other hand most Americans reject cohabitation on moral and religious grounds. Cohabitation has increased dramatically from 40 years ago, “ In 1970, about 530, 000 couples reportedly lived together outside of marriage.

This number increased to 1. 6 million in 1980, 2. 9 million in 1990, 4. 2 million in 1998, and 5. 5 million in the year 2000. ” (Diduck, Alison. Marriage and Cohabitation. Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008. Print. ) As statistics show, there has been a huge change in our life styles over the years. Unmarried couples over sees 17 percent of all relationships today. This trend is mostly happening in the younger age groups, ages 18 until 30 and for the older age groups the percentage is considerably lower.

This is because many cohabiters, if they are still together by then after many years, they tend to eventually get married. There are many different types of cohabitation, the most common ones are, dating cohabitation, premarital cohabitation, trial marriage and substitute marriage. Dating cohabitation usually occurs with young adults sometime during or after college. These young adults take place in cohabiting for a combination of reasons, some being for convenience, sexual needs, companionship, and financial benefits.

This kind of relationship is somewhat like being single and for that reason is tends to terminate faster than any other. Premarital cohabitation is a basic “

test” for the couple to see if they are committed enough to move to the next step, which is marriage. Trial marriage is a type of cohabitation for partners that doubt they can succeed in a marriage and everything that it holds. Finally, substitute marriage is a long term relationship between two people living together that don't plan on getting married. Cohabitation is followed with more detailed than what is classified, but is outlined with these characteristics.

This has created a percentage that nine out of ten women will spend one point in their lives in an unmarried cohabiting relationship, an extensively higher percentage than woman who will get married at some point in their life. (Glenn T. Stanton. The Ring Makes All the Difference) This seems to be slowly devaluating the importance of marriage and the secrets involved in it. Also, studies have shown that when individuals are cohabiting they don't fully understand the adaptation that is needed; this comes from the lack of commitment and stableness for that next step.

The cohabitation effect naturally takes place in most situations, people tend to accept their living status with their partner and treat it as a marriage. Cohabiting gives the individual something to hold on to it a relationship which shows they aren't in a stable environment to begin with. Studies show that woman try holding on to every relationship they are involved in by cohabiting. When this is done woman are usually left pregnant or with children, without a partner and in poverty. Statistics show that woman who cohabit two or more times end up in divorce 141 percent higher than the average woman who only cohabits with the person they marry. Many

authors, such as Linda J Waite have made comments stating, “ These tentative and uncommitted relationships are bound together by the ‘ cohabitation deal’ rather than the ‘ marriage bargain,’ but that deal has costs. ” The “ cohabitation deal,” will have especially disappointing outcomes for people who expect it to deliver the same benefits the “ marriage bargain” delivers. People who cohabit often say that marriage is just about a piece of paper. However, that there is quite a bit of difference between being married and living together. ” (Waite, Linda J. and Christine Bachrach. *The Ties That Bind: Perspectives on Marriage and Cohabitation.* ) Results have shown that when couples cohabit together, they’re usually shortly lived, and typically don’t last longer than two years, after that it either goes into the next level which is marriage or dissolves into a break up. There are no signs that cohabitation is forming in a long term alternative to marriage in the United States. Cohabitation still remains in the status of temporary convenience for growing relationships but just because an individual lives with their partner doesn’t mean it’s considered a stable social arrangement between the two.

Researchers says that the convenience of moving in together does not compare on the same level to making a thought through decision on committing to one person for the rest of your life. This has nothing to do with just having it on paper or not, people tend to get the statement mixed into the actual concept. The process of getting married includes the commitment, responsibility, maturity, devotion, respect, genuine love and experience that shows this is what you are asking for in a life partner, but not because we can or want to just live together.

Marriage basically finalizes that this is the path you picked for yourself and not because it was wanted at the time or an easy change but because it was truly wanted. When two people agree on marriage this shows they are developed enough where they want to share what they have built of themselves with their partner and share that success as they grow together rather than trying to complete one another without much thought. This is what separates cohabitation and marriage, in marriage one has seen things at its worst and knows the effort it will need to keep the relationship strong and healthy.

This is done because both parties have the determined thought through agreement established and because of that, cohabitation will never replace marriage. One opinionated advantage of living with your partner before marriage is getting to know a person that you might marry with. It is important for a person to know almost everything about the other person that he/she is going to get marry to. People need to know how a person is handling his/her life from all aspects such as behavior, emotional, mental, financial and other things before a person decides to get married to them.

This can't be analyzed just by seeing them when out on dates, it is said that it's important to live together for a while before deciding whether it is the right choice for marriage or not. On another note, unmarried couples do not have the same rights as married individuals. Through my face to face 6 interviews, it was noticed that a cohabiting relationship depends on each individual, their style, family background, emotional status, age, and the morals and values they established for their lives.

I interviewed five women from the ages of 23 to 26 and one 30 year old male. When asking interviewee A what her views were towards marriage, she responded saying, " marriage is similar to a business partner, and both individuals need to be devolved on their own so that both can bring something into the relationship. " This was followed by asking what her views were about couples who live together who are not married, " I think if you are ready for marriage and starting a family with the person you love then settling to move in with them will not fulfill your goals. Her statement gave me a reminder to the saying " why buy the cow when the milk is free" this is true, because cohabiting can just be a way of delaying a marriage from happening. Interviewee A- " cohabitation cannot default into marriage, reason being, marriage is completely different then just living together, this is when your lives become one and so many responsibilities fall into line that wouldn't be talked about if only living together. Does a premarital living arrangement make for a stronger marriage down the line? One should not need to live with their partner first in order to make a stronger marriage. If the couples are in the correct mind set then it should only bring in positives such as love and support. When you come from a certain culture, cohabitation is not accepted, that's why this also depends on ones background. Marriage is classic, traditional, cultural, and most of all marriage is something sacred between two people, and the idea of cohabitation growing takes away the value of marriage until it vanishes. (Interviewee A, age 25, in a three year relationship, denied her boyfriend from moving in with her, interview took place for 30 minutes face to face on Oct. 30th 2011) Second interview took place with Interviewee B, which responses took a

different tour. When asking interviewee B what her views of marriage were, she said “ marriage is a beautiful thing that joins two people together in order to fulfill a happy life, experiencing things emotionally, physically, mentally, and socially together. Interviewee B is “ pro-cohabitation” because she feels that it is very important to experience life with someone first by living with them to see if it’s a right “ fit” for your life style. She feels this also helps marriages from later on ending up in divorce. When getting in to depth, interviewee B said, “ It is important to first make sure this is a person you love and want to make a future with before moving in, at least know them for a year. Marriage is not defaulted in, living together is the test and if you pass the test then marriage is the next step up!

I feel the longer one cohabits, the stronger the relationship is because you know what you’re getting into and continue together on the say level. Depending on the individual, this can create dependence, but shouldn’t if you’re not trying to fill an empty spot in yourself. A lot of people move in together because of family issues, and moving in makes life easier. If men can have it their way, marriage would disappear but it won’t as long as it’s still every little girls dream to have her special wedding. (Interviewee B, age 23, recently came out of a two-year cohabiting experience, boyfriend changed after moving in together; interview took place for 30 minutes face to face on Nov. 1st 2011) Interviewee’s C and D both had the same thoughts towards cohabitation which might be because they both come from the same cultural background. When asking interviewees their views towards marriage they responded, “ A marriage is something sacred between two people in love. God gave us the gift to have feelings for someone else and because of

that we should cherish and respect it. Interviewee C, moving in together before marriage defeats the purpose of a marriage and the outcome wouldn't be the right one. " Interviewee D " Woman give in too easily and will fall for anything if it has to do with some kind of commitment. Everything comes at the right time, cohabiting is not one of them" Both interviewees, " It depends on the situation, but a lot of times they default into marriage only because they became so used to the person they live with and other times they don't get marriage because they moved too fast. Interviewees both agreed that cohabiting builds rapport, love and support but only because one is living with someone they invested in and these characteristics come naturally by default. " Interviewee C, " I think that one day people will one longer get married because America accepts and influences the cohabitation behavior, if its accepted in society, it will take over" Interviewee D, " I don't think it will happen unless the law changes, but as of now you don't get the same benefits when you cohabit which makes them different" Both interviewees said, " The U.

S. is liberal to many different things, which are followed with different cultures and religions. The way one is raised dictates whether or not people are influenced by cohabitation. Everything makes a difference, race, culture, religion, morals, values, and each lifestyle. We value ourselves too much to just live with someone without any ties attached. If you are a strong individual, you wouldn't find a need to live with someone before marriage. (Interviewees C and D, twin sisters, 24, both still live with their parents at home and will never cohabit under any condition; interview took place for 40 minutes face to face on December 1st 2011) Interviewee E was the final

interview which completed the variety of opinions. Interviewee E, " marriage is something held with a person you trust, value and are able to spend the rest of your life with. Couples who move in together are inexperienced in life and think that moving in with someone will bring them into adulthood, which it doesn't.

It depends on how old and how ready they are to know if they will marry by default. I think cohabiting will only fail the relationship because should only move in together if they are planning on starting a life and family together not because it's easy or saves onemoney. Cohabiting is a train wrack waiting to happen, one will get sick of the other faster than falling in love with them. Nothing can replace the value of marriage except the ones who disrespect the meaning of it.

This would be a bad thing if it did happen because we are breaking traditions that have been around for decades. I feel the people who cohabit were not raised well enough to understand what they are actually doing. "

(Interviewee E, 30, cohabited with the person he ended up divorcing, interview took place for 45 minutes on December 3rd 2011) Interviewee F, " marriage is over rated and misleading to someone who's jumping into a serious relationship. Living with someone before marriage is great because you get the advantage of understanding someone better when living with them.

I think by default cohabiters need to make the next step, either get married, or divorce. This will make a strong marriage because it's basically a marriage just without the legal mess. Anyone who lives with another for a while ends

up sharing something naturally because you're in their presents every moment. Our social structure allows us to do whatever we want, I feel the cohabitation percent will raise which will give people the choice if they want a legal marriage or not. I think the only bad outcome is not getting legal benefits when cohabiting. (Interviewee F, 29, single but has been in 4 different cohabiting relationships, interview took place for 30 minutes on December 3rd 2011) As you can see, all had different perspectives. I believe that comments from interviewee A fell into the same category as researchers and facts based statistics and interviewee B's outlook was more based on emotions and lack of personally experience. Both interviewees C and D had strong outlooks to their opinion and how cohabitation is looked upon.

A greater impact fell with interviewee E because I was able to interview someone who personally experienced the down falls of cohabitation. The after effects from cohabitation seem to lead to a corruption of thoughts on marriage. Studies have also shown that most couples living together before marriage either split up before they are married or wind up in divorce. Interviewee E found out that his partner was cheating during their cohabiting era and in their marriage which caused him to believe cohabiting is built for a failing marriage.

Cohabiting has serious consequences for the well-being of an individual and their relationship. In particular, cohabiting is bad for the women because it could mean there are committed to something untrue which will emotionally drain them and keep them from developing into strong independent

individuals. Evidence shows that marriage is healthier and better than any other marriage “ form” which should never be out sourced. In conclusions, after the collective research and data gathered, a better overview can be developed in greater detail. What advantages does cohabitation have over marriage?

The idea that a cohabiting relationship is equivalent to marriage is undoubtedly unfounded. Research has showed a large difference in the commitment within the two types of relationship. I can see why cohabitation has become more accepted considering society does it for the wrong reasons such as, family and employment issues and trying to find an easy way out, but when doing so this only jeopardizes a future marriage. This is when a new marriage leads to divorce, without self development one is not able to contribute the proper needs and wants in a marriage.

Couples want stability and security, this doesn't happen overnight just because you move in together. A healthy marriage happens when you discover your partner inside and out to the point that you realize you were made to establish a life together, as one. Work Cited 1) Benokraitis, Nijole V. Marriages ; Families: Changes, Choices, and Constraints. 7th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2011. Print. 2) Ihara, Toni Lynne. Living Together a Legal Guide for Unmarried Couples. Berkeley: Nolo, 2006. Print. 3) Diduck, Alison. Marriage and Cohabitation.

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Interviewee A, age 25, in a 3 year relationship, denied her boyfriend from moving in with her, interview took place for 30 minutes face to face on Oct. 30th 2011 6) Interviewee B, age 23, just got out of a 2 year cohabitation, boyfriend changed after them moved in together, interview took place for 30 minutes face to face on Nov. st 2011 7) Interviewee C, 24, still lives with parents at home and will never cohabit under any condition; interview took place for 40 minutes face to face on December 1st 2011 8) Interviewee D, 24, still lives with parents at home and will never cohabit under any condition; interview took place for 40 minutes face to face on December 1st 2011 9) Interviewee E, 30, cohabited with the person he ended up divorcing, interview took place for 45 minutes on December 3rd 2011 10) Interviewee F, 29, single but has been in 4 different cohabiting relationships, interview took place for 30 minutes on December 3rd 2011 11) Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States. Hyattsville, MD: Dept. of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2002. Print. 12) Landale, Nancy S. Statistics on Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States. S. I. : S. n. , 2002. Print. Ser. 23. 13) " Statistics on Living Together Before Marriage. " Ray Fowler . org. Web. 06 Nov. 2011. ; [http://www.rayfowler.org/2008/04/18/statistics-on-living-together-before-marriage/;](http://www.rayfowler.org/2008/04/18/statistics-on-living-together-before-marriage/)