

Knowledge organiser

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • L018 • v1.0

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Why has marriage changed?

Concept	Meaning
Marriage	A legally recognised partnership with socially defined expectations.
Cohabitation	Living together as a couple without being married or civil partnered to each other.
Count	The total number of specified events or cases.
Rate	Events expressed relative to a specified population and period.
Postponement	Moving an event to a later point in the life course.
Non-marriage	Not entering marriage; a current unmarried status alone cannot establish a lifetime pattern.
Secularisation	A decline in the social influence of religion; its extent needs evidence.
Individualisation	Greater expectation that people construct their own life choices, within unequal conditions.

Test explanations fairly

Concept	Meaning
Opportunity cost	An option forgone when time or resources are used elsewhere.
Institutional constraint	A rule or organisation that limits available choices.
Cohort	People sharing a starting event or historical period, such as birth years.
Life course	The sequence of experiences and transitions across a person's life.
Civil partnership	A legally registered partnership distinct from marriage.
Remarriage	Marriage after an earlier marriage has ended.
Population composition	The mix of groups within a population, such as its age distribution.
Causal mechanism	The process through which a proposed cause could produce an outcome.

Worked explanation

Rowan and Jules illustrate postponement linked to resources; Priya and Ellis describe a current alternative. Neither account establishes a rejection of commitment.

Avoid these confusions

ONS 2023 England and Wales release dated 18 November 2025: 231,949 combines marriages and civil partnerships; 253,776 is the corresponding 2022 total. Opposite-sex marriage rates for men: 18.1 in 2023 and 20.3 in 2022 per 1,000 unmarried men. The ONS denominator includes adults not in a legal partnership, including previously married people; do not label it never-married men or first-marriage risk. Do not treat one annual fall as a lifetime trend. The figures cover events in England and Wales, not all UK residents. Pandemic disruption affects timing. Proposed mechanisms are not established causes in the fictional cases.

Retrieve later

Tomorrow: define marriage and cohabitation. In one week: explain a case mechanism and one limit without notes.