

BEFORE YOU SAY “I DO”

1 FOCUS ON THE TOPIC



1. Look at the photo. What's happening?
2. What do you think this unit will be about?
3. Read the following statements about marriage. Do you agree or disagree with them? Discuss your opinions with a partner.
 - In most marriages, only one person can get what he or she wants.
 - To have a happy marriage, the couple must be good friends.
 - You should choose your spouse¹ carefully before marriage, but after marriage you should accept his or her mistakes.

¹ spouse: husband or wife

2 FOCUS ON LISTENING

LISTENING ONE A PRENUPTIAL¹ AGREEMENT

VOCABULARY

-   Read and listen to information about a prenuptial agreement. Notice the boldfaced words.

A prenuptial agreement is a written agreement between two people who are going to tie the knot.² Most prenuptial agreements concern what will happen to a couple's money, property, or children if the marriage ends. It is used only if a problem **occurs** and the couple decides to get divorced. However, some prenuptial agreements also describe how the husband and wife must act during the marriage. Steve and Karen Parsons made this type of agreement. They wrote a **contract** with rules for how they must behave in almost every part of their daily lives.

MARRIAGE CONTRACT Steve and Karen Parsons

1.0 Daily Habits

- 1.1 We will go to sleep by 11:00 P.M. and wake up by 6:00 A.M. on weekdays. Bedtime on weekends will be more **flexible**.
- 1.2 We will not drive over the speed limit and will always wear our seatbelts.
- 1.3 We will eat healthy food that is low in fat and sugar.

2.0 Household Chores

- 2.1 Meals: Karen will cook the meals. Steve will wash the dishes and clean the kitchen.
- 2.2 Cleaning: Steve will clean the house. Karen will take care of the garden.
- 2.3 Laundry: Dirty clothes must be put in the laundry bag. Steve will wash and dry the clothes. Karen will fold the clothes and put them away.
- 2.4 Shopping: Karen will do the grocery shopping. She will buy things on sale and not go over our weekly **budget**.

3.0 Communication

- 3.1 If something **bothers** us, we will talk about it immediately.
- 3.2 If we disagree about something, we will **work out** the problem and find a compromise.
- 3.3 We promise not to criticize each other's **quirks** or habits.

¹ prenuptial: before marriage (pronounced: /pre-'nep-shəl/)

² tie the knot: to get married

4.0 Children

- 4.1 We will wait for two years before we have a child. We will have two children.
4.2 After our first child is born, the partner who makes less money will quit his or her job and stay home with the child. The partner who makes more money will become the **breadwinner** for the family.

We each understand the other's **expectations** for how to behave in our marriage. We can **check up on** each other to make sure the other is following the rules.

Signed,

Steve Parsons

Karen Parsons

2 Match the words with the definitions. Write the correct letter.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. occur | a. to happen |
| _____ 2. contract | b. to solve |
| _____ 3. flexible | c. the person who earns money to support the family |
| _____ 4. budget | d. to annoy |
| _____ 5. bother | e. to find out what someone is doing |
| _____ 6. work out | f. a legal agreement between two people |
| _____ 7. quirk | g. a strange or unusual habit |
| _____ 8. breadwinner | h. a belief or hope that something will happen |
| _____ 9. expectation | i. a plan for how to spend money |
| _____ 10. check up on | j. able to change easily in a new situation |

GO TO MyEnglishLab FOR MORE VOCABULARY PRACTICE.

PREVIEW

Steve and Karen Parsons appear on a radio show to talk about their prenuptial agreement.



🎧 Listen to an excerpt from the interview. Read two questions the host will ask Steve and Karen later in the interview. How do you think they will answer? Write your predictions.

1. "So, I'd like to start off by asking you what everybody is probably wondering. Why did you decide to write this agreement?"

Predicted answer: _____

2. "Do you think other couples should follow your example and write marriage contracts of their own?"

Predicted answer: _____

MAIN IDEAS

1 🎧 Listen to the whole interview. Look again at your predictions from the Preview section. How did your predictions help you understand the interview?

2 In the interview, Steve and Karen discuss several problems that married people have. Check (✓) the four problems mentioned in the interview.

- 1. Different expectations about marriage
- 2. Problems with other family members

- 3. Quirks that bother the other spouse
- 4. Working too much
- 5. Not knowing what the other spouse wants
- 6. Disagreements about money
- 7. Relationships with other men or women

DETAILS

🎧 Listen again. Read the statements. Write **T** (true) or **F** (false).

- _____ 1. Steve and Karen have a five-page prenuptial agreement.
- _____ 2. Both Steve and Karen have been married before.
- _____ 3. It bothered Steve when his ex-wife left her clothes lying on the floor.
- _____ 4. Karen thinks that working out a compromise is more romantic than flowers and candy.
- _____ 5. Karen says that the prenuptial agreement is like a business contract.
- _____ 6. Karen and Steve argue about their budget.
- _____ 7. Steve and Karen feel that they spend the same amount of time arguing as other couples do.
- _____ 8. Steve and Karen agree about all the rules in the prenuptial agreement.
- _____ 9. Steve and Karen feel that a prenuptial agreement could be useful for other couples.



GO TO MyEnglishLab FOR MORE LISTENING PRACTICE.

MAKE INFERENCES

INFERRING CERTAINTY FROM WORD CHOICE

A speaker may express feeling sure or less sure about an idea. The listener can infer the speaker's certainty by paying attention to word choice.

Certain

*Our prenuptial agreement has **definitely** made us happier.*

*We will **never** fight.*

Less Certain

*Our prenuptial agreement has **most likely** made us happier.*

*I **doubt** that we will fight much.*

🎧 Read and listen to the example. Notice the boldfaced word. Is the speaker certain or less certain?

Example

So, I'd like to start off by asking you what everybody is **probably** wondering: Why did you decide to write this agreement?

By using the word "probably" instead of a more definite word, the speaker shows that she is "less certain" about people's questions.

🎧 Listen to the excerpts. Fill in the blanks with the missing words. Is the speaker "certain" or "less certain" about his / her comments? Circle your answer.

Excerpt One

Host: Well, I'm _____ that some people hearing this report will think that this isn't very romantic.

The speaker is **certain** / **less certain** about the opinions of the audience.

Excerpt Two

STEVE: Yeah, it's unusual, but it _____ makes sense. We _____ want someone home with our kids . . .

The speaker is **certain** / **less certain** about the plan for raising kids.

Excerpt Three

STEVE: Well, it's a lot of work to write something like this . . . but I think it _____ be useful to a lot of people.

The speaker is **certain** / **less certain** about the usefulness of a contract for other couples.

2 Discuss your answers with a partner. Talk about the information that helped you find the answers.

EXPRESS OPINIONS

Work in a small group. Discuss the questions.

1. Do you agree or disagree with Steve and Karen's opinions about marriage? Work individually to make a list of the ideas that you agree and disagree with. Then discuss your ideas.
2. What would you say if your fiancé / fiancée¹ asked you to write a prenuptial agreement like Steve and Karen's? Why?

GO TO MyEnglishLab TO GIVE YOUR OPINION ABOUT ANOTHER QUESTION.

LISTENING TWO REACTIONS TO THE PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT

VOCABULARY

1 Read the advice and facts about marriage. Notice the boldfaced words.

1. If you have a problem, **open up** and discuss it calmly with your spouse.
2. Don't **blow up** and yell at your partner.
3. The decision to get married should be made carefully. Couples should not **rush into it**.
4. A marriage license is a **legal** document that shows that two people are married.
5. To get divorced, a couple must go to **court** and talk to the judge.

2 Match the boldfaced words with the definitions. Write the words.

- _____ a. to say what you really think
- _____ b. a place where decisions are made according to the law
- _____ c. to become very angry
- _____ d. to decide to do something too quickly
- _____ e. allowed by the law

¹ fiancé / fiancée: the man / woman you are going to marry

COMPREHENSION

🎧 Listen to different people calling the talk show to share their reactions to Steve and Karen's prenuptial agreement. Do they think the agreement is a good idea or a bad idea? Check (✓) each caller's opinion. Then identify the reason for the caller's opinion. Write the correct letter. One reason isn't mentioned in the listening.



Caller 1



Caller 2



Caller 3



Caller 4



Caller 5

	GOOD IDEA	BAD IDEA	REASON
CALLER 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CALLER 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CALLER 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CALLER 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CALLER 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Reasons

- Couples learn to open up about their problems.
- It helps couples think carefully before they marry.
- Each spouse has to follow a budget.
- It's not romantic.
- It has too many details.
- It's not legal.

GO TO MyEnglishLab FOR MORE VOCABULARY PRACTICE.

LISTENING SKILL

- 1 Listen to an excerpt from the lawyer's reaction to the marriage contract. What is the lawyer's opinion of the contract?

LISTENING FOR *BUT* TO SIGNAL DISAGREEMENT AND A CONTRASTING OPINION

To disagree politely, a speaker often acknowledges the other person's opinion and then introduces his or her own opinion with *but*.

For instance, if a speaker says "*That's a good point, but I disagree . . .*," the speaker's main point is "I disagree."

- 2 Read and listen to the example. Notice the word *but*, used to signal disagreement and introduce the speaker's main point. What is the speaker's main point?

Example

CALLER 5: *Yeah, I know a lot of people might think that this contract idea is crazy, but I think . . . I think it could be useful to help couples decide if they really should get married.*

After the word *but*, the speaker says that the contract would be useful. This is the speaker's main point.

- 2 Listen to the excerpts. What is the speaker's main point? Circle the correct answer.

Excerpt One

The speaker's main point is that . . .

- a. she's glad Karen and Steve are happy.
- b. she doesn't want to sign a prenuptial agreement.
- c. she doesn't think prenuptial agreements can make people happy.

Excerpt Two

The speaker's main point is that . . .

- a. the contract is not necessary.
- b. the contract has too many details.
- c. the contract is a good idea.

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Excerpt Three

The speaker's main point is that . . .

- a. the contract is legal.
- b. the contract looks like it is legal.
- c. the contract is not legal.

GO TO MyEnglishLab FOR MORE SKILL PRACTICE.

CONNECT THE LISTENINGS

STEP 1: Organize

🎧 Listen to Listenings One and Two again. Then complete the chart with arguments for and against prenuptial agreements. Add an example to illustrate each argument.

LISTENING ONE: Arguments for Prenuptial Agreements	EXAMPLES
• help couples talk about problems	• Karen—told Steve about problems with ex-husband
• _____	• Caller 5—people rush into marriage without thinking
• make expectations clearer	• _____
• _____	• Karen and Steve—spend less time arguing

LISTENING TWO: Arguments Against Prenuptial Agreements	EXAMPLES
• too structured and not flexible	• Karen and Steve—11:00 P.M. bedtime, can't go to bed earlier or later
• _____	• Caller 1—if you love someone, you don't need to write things down
• too many details	• _____
• _____	• Caller 4—contract won't hold up in court

STEP 2: Synthesize

Work with a partner. Debate the topic of prenuptial agreements. One person takes the pro position (in favor) and the other person takes the con position (against). Use the reasons and examples from Step 1: Organize.

Switch partners and repeat the debate, with each person taking the opposite position.

GO TO MyEnglishLab TO CHECK WHAT YOU LEARNED.

3 FOCUS ON SPEAKING

VOCABULARY

REVIEW

1 Make words from the scrambled letters. Write one letter in each square. (Don't worry about the numbers below the boxes. You will use them in the next exercise.)

1. Problems often UCROC in a marriage when the husband and wife don't communicate well.

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41 28

2. When my wife and I have a problem, we ROKWTUO a solution we both agree on.

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33 12 30

3. We made a BUTDEG so we don't spend too much money.

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39 21 9

4. It really STHEBOR me when my husband leaves dirty dishes in the sink.

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23 4

5. I trust my wife, so I can really NOEPPU and tell her how I feel.

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31 20

6. Our marriage CATTOCNR states that if we have children, they will have the same last name as their mother.

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3 22

7. Traditionally, a husband is the DREWEBRANNI for the family.

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32 7 35 19

8. My parents and I have different PAXTOETEINSC about whom I will marry.

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13 16 11 6 36

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