

Courtship in the 19th Century: Love Was Not Enough



Read the text and do the multiple choice questions.

In the past, choosing a partner involved families, finances, and formal behavior

About 150 years ago, courtship followed strict social rules. Marriage was rarely only about love. It was also about family, money, and reputation. For many young people, choosing a partner was not a private decision but a family matter.

One important part of courtship was the dowry. A dowry was money, land, or valuable objects that a woman's family gave to the man she married. This was meant to provide financial security for the couple, but it also influenced who could marry whom. Families with larger dowries had more choices, while others had fewer opportunities.

Courtship was also carefully supervised. Young couples were rarely alone together. Meetings often took place in family homes, with a chaperone present. A chaperone, usually an older female relative, was there to protect the young woman's reputation. A single mistake could damage not only one person's future but the honor of the entire family.

Communication was formal and slow. Instead of text messages or phone calls, people wrote letters. These letters were polite and respectful, and they were sometimes read by family members before being sent. This made courtship a long and cautious process.

Although these rules limited personal freedom, they also provided clarity. Everyone knew what was expected of them. Today, relationships offer more choice, but they can also be confusing. Looking back at 19th-century courtship helps us understand how social values shape the way people form relationships.

1 According to the text, why was marriage often a family matter 150 years ago?

- A Because young people were not allowed to choose their partners
- B Because marriage affected family money and social reputation
- C Because people did not believe in romantic relationships
- D Because families wanted couples to marry quickly

2. What was the main purpose of a dowry?

- A To show how wealthy the woman's family was
- B To guarantee that the woman would be respected
- C To provide financial security and influence marriage choices
- D To pay for the wedding ceremony

3. Why were chaperones present during courtship?

- A To help couples communicate better
- B To make courtship more enjoyable
- C To decide whether the couple were suitable
- D To protect the woman's reputation and family honor

4. What does the writer suggest about communication in the past?

- A It was more romantic than today
- B It was informal and private
- C It was slow, careful, and sometimes supervised
- D It was controlled mainly by the man

5. What contrast does the writer make between past and present relationships?

- A Past rules limited freedom, while modern relationships can be confusing
- B Past relationships were easier because people married younger
- C Modern relationships are less serious
- D Modern relationships are more controlled by families

6. Which statement best reflects the writer's overall view?

- A Traditional courtship was better than modern dating
- B Modern relationships have removed all social rules
- C Love has always been the most important factor in marriage
- D Social values influence how relationships are formed