

Let's see if you can correctly answer the following question: At what age are Latter-day Saint youth allowed to date? Of course, you probably immediately said, "16". OK, then, how about this one: At what age are you allowed to have a boyfriend or girlfriend? You may be thinking, "Um, 16. Didn't I just answer that?" Well, if that was your answer, then, even though you **aced** the first question, you missed the second one. Just because you can date when you turn 16 doesn't mean you should immediately start looking for a steady boyfriend or girlfriend.

For decades, prophets have preached that youth who are in no position to marry should not pair off exclusively. For instance, President Hinckley (1910-2008) said, "When you are young, do not get involved in steady dating. When you reach an age where you think of marriage, then is the time to become so involved. But you boys who are in high school don't need this, and neither do the girls". So what does this counsel really mean, and what are the reasons for it?

To begin with, there are two different types of dating: casual dating and steady (or serious) dating. The distinction between the two has to do with exclusivity. With casual dating, there is no exclusivity. The two people aren't "a couple" or "an item", and they don't refer to each other as a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend". They don't pair off. People who are casually dating are simply friends. This is the kind of dating the Church encourages you to do after you turn 16. You should put aside a need to find a "one and only". If you're dating casually, you don't expect a relationship to become a romance. You have fun; you do a variety of things with a variety of people. On the other hand, steady dating means the couple is exclusive with one another. They expect each other not to date anyone else or to be emotionally or physically close with other people. Couples who date seriously consider the future, because there is a real possibility they could stay together. This is the kind of dating the Church encourages young adults (generally, people in their 20s) to progress toward because that's the age when they should be thinking of marrying. You should avoid becoming exclusive as teenagers because an exclusive relationship requires a high level of commitment from both partners, and you're not in a position to make that kind of commitment as teens – neither emotionally, physically, nor in terms of your future plans. As President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said to the youth, "Avoid steady dating. Steady dating is courtship, and surely the beginning of courtship ought to be delayed until you have emerged from your teens".

1. It can be **inferred** from the **first paragraph** that _____.
 - A. dating doesn't mean having exclusive boyfriend or girlfriend
 - B. teenagers are supposed to have a steady boyfriend or girlfriend
 - C. teenagers date as many boyfriends or girlfriends as they can
 - D. young people shouldn't be allowed to date at 16
2. The word "**aced**" in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to _____.
 - A. gave up
 - B. misled
 - C. succeeded in
 - D. understood
3. According to the passage, what is **NOT true** about casual dating?
 - A. You can be friends with each other.
 - B. You don't pair off exclusively.
 - C. You find your "one and only".

- D. You meet different kinds of people.
4. It is stated in the passage that **steady dating** ____.
- A. includes a variety of things with a variety of people
 - B. is courtship that you ought to have in your teens
 - C. requires hardly any commitment
 - D. suits people who are in their 20s
5. Which of the following would serve as the **best title** for the passage?
- A. At what age are young people allowed to date?
 - B. Casual dating or steady dating.
 - C. Make your teenage dating by keeping it casual.
 - D. Popular kinds of dating for teenagers.