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World record 80 years of marriage

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0506/050602-married-e.html>

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2 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

World record 80 years of marriage

BNE: A British couple has broken the world record for having the longest marriage. Percy Arrowsmith, 105, and 100-year-old Florence celebrated their eightieth wedding anniversary on June 1. They got married on June 1, 1925, in Hereford, England. They also hold the world record for the oldest married couple's combined age – 205 years.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth sent the world record-breaking pair a congratulatory card. She said their marriage was a "splendid achievement" and sent them "warm congratulations". The record breakers celebrated their anniversary with a party in their home, surrounded by family and a few close friends.

The couple's daughter, Jane Woolley, said both her parents were "as fit as fiddles". She said they still have a very loving relationship. She also said they have "stuck together through thick and thin". She described their relationship as being very close, just like "two peas in a pod".

The couple gave their secret to a lasting marriage – always apologize after every argument and never go to sleep without apologizing. They also recommended kissing and holding hands before going to bed. Mrs. Arrowsmith told the BBC: "I think we're very blessed. We still love one another, that's the most important part."

WARM-UPS

1. LONG MARRIAGE: Imagine you have been married for 80 years. Walk around the class talking to other students who have also been “married” a long, long, time. Ask questions about their married lives and explain the secrets to your long marriage.

Variation: Walk around the class with your “partner” and talk to other “partners”.

2. MARRIAGE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “marriage”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Guinness Book of Records / married couples / very old people / Britain’s Queen Elizabeth / peas / apologizing / kissing / holding hands / love

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. 80 YEARS: Eighty years is a long time. In pairs / groups, talk about which of these things you would like to / hope to do for 80 years. Which is most / least desirable?

- Live
- Be married
- Stay in the same job
- Live in the same house
- Be able to run a marathon
- Other _____
- Keep your own hair and teeth
- Have the same mobile phone
- Keep an active mind
- Stay fit and healthy
- Study English

5. PER CENT STATEMENTS: In pairs/ groups, give a percentage to each of these statements to show how much you agree with them. (E.g. I 80 per cent agree with the first one; I only 10 per cent agree with “h”. etc.)

- a. I would totally, totally love to be married for 80 years.
- b. Eighty different partners in 80 years would be nice.
- c. I would get very tired of being with the same person for 80 years.
- d. Marriage is too much hard work. Staying free and single is best.
- e. I want a card from the British Queen on my wedding anniversary.
- f. After 80 years of marriage, there’s nothing new to discover – that’s boring.
- g. Staying married for 80 years means the couple was made for each other.
- h. Love is the most important thing in the world.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A couple has two world records for having a long marriage. | T / F |
| b. The couple's combined age is 180. | T / F |
| c. Britain's Queen sent the couple a congratulatory card. | T / F |
| d. The couple celebrated their anniversary at a top London hotel. | T / F |
| e. Each partner plays the fiddle and violin. | T / F |
| f. The husband and wife love peas. | T / F |
| g. They said the key to a long marriage is to never apologize. | T / F |
| h. The wife said love plays only a small part in a successful marriage. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. couple | added |
| b. got married | say sorry |
| c. combined | good times and bad |
| d. splendid | good |
| e. close | tied the knot |
| f. fit | lucky |
| g. thick and thin | healthy |
| h. lasting | pair |
| i. apologize | long-term |
| j. blessed | wonderful |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. broken | and thin |
| b. celebrated their | congratulations |
| c. sent them warm | in a pod |
| d. surrounded by | the world record |
| e. as fit | a lasting marriage |
| f. a very loving | together |
| g. stuck | family and a few close friends |
| h. through thick | eightieth wedding anniversary |
| i. like two peas | relationship |
| j. secret to | as fiddles |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD?: Circle the correct word from each pair in *italics*.

World record 80 years of marriage

BNE: A British couple has *broken / break* the world record for having the longest *marriage / wedding*. Percy Arrowsmith, 105, and 100-year-old Florence *celebrated / celebration* their eightieth wedding anniversary on June 1. They got married on June 1, 1925, in Hereford, England. They also *grip / hold* the world record for the oldest married couple's *combined / comb* age – 205 years.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth *sent / scent* the world record-breaking *pair / trio* a congratulatory card. She said their marriage was a "splendid achievement" and sent them "*hot / warm* congratulations". The record breakers celebrated their *annual / anniversary* with a party in their home, surrounded by family and a few close *fiends / friends*.

The couple's daughter, Jane Woolley, said both her parents were "as fit as *violins / fiddles*". She said they still have a very *loving / loveless* relationship. She also said they have "*stuck / glued* together through thick and *sickness / thin*". She described their relationship as being very close, just like "two peas in a *pod / pad*".

The couple gave their secret to a *last / lasting* marriage – always apologize after every *arrangement / argument* and never go to sleep without apologizing. They also recommended *cussing / kissing* and holding hands before going to bed. Mrs. Arrowsmith told the BBC: "I think we're very *blessing / blessed*. We still love one another, that's the most important *part / portion*."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**world**' and '**record**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD?: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about any relationships between the words in italics. Try to explain why the incorrect word is wrong.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MARRIAGE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about marriage.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| • broken | • fiddles |
| • eightieth | • stuck |
| • combined | • peas |
| • Queen | • secret |
| • splendid | • hands |
| • surrounded | • most important part |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did you like the headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you think there should be more happy stories like this in the news or do you prefer to read about heavier, more serious topics?
- d. Would you like to be married for 80 years?
- e. What do you think 80 years of marriage would be like?
- f. Do you think their love grew stronger every year?
- g. What do you think they talk about over breakfast every morning?
- h. Do you think they still go on dates?
- i. Do you think they still have a lot to learn about each other?
- j. Would their life story together make a good movie?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. How did this news make you feel?
- c. Do you think being married for 80 years is an "achievement"?
- d. Describe a couple you know, who has been married a long time.
- e. What wedding anniversary present would you buy a couple that has been together for 80 years?
- f. How would you celebrate your 80th wedding anniversary?
- g. What is the secret to a lasting marriage?
- h. What world record would you like to break?
- i. Have you ever stuck with anything / anyone through thick and thin?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WEDDING WORDS: Match the wedding / marriage words on the left with their meanings on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. (to) get down on one knee | a) A man and woman have to marry because the woman is pregnant with the man's child. |
| 2. (to) tie the knot | b) A promise made at the wedding ceremony to live together forever. |
| 3. Mr. (Ms.) Right | c) Very comfortable and happy together. |
| 4. (to be) all roses and light | d) How someone physically proposes by half-kneeling. |
| 5. A match made in heaven | e) Everything is always perfect. |
| 6. A shotgun wedding | f) The big day – the day of the wedding. |
| 7. (to be) like two peas in a pod | g) The perfect person to marry. |
| 8. The happy day | h) To ask someone to marry you. |
| 9. To pop the question | i) To get married. |
| 10. "Until death do us part" | j) Two people are made for each other. |

- i. Check your answers after you have finished.
- ii. In pairs / groups, talk about each expression. Do you like them? Is there a similar expression in your own language?
- iii. In pairs, write one question for each of the expressions. Change partners and ask each other your questions.
- iv. Pool your questions and write down any unknown vocabulary. Talk about the questions you like.
- v. Try to tell a story to your partner using all of the expressions.
- vi. Use each of the expressions to describe your own wedding (imagined or real).

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

World record 80 years of marriage

BNE: A British couple has broken the world record for having _____ . Percy Arrowsmith, 105, and 100-year-old Florence _____ wedding anniversary on June 1. They got married on June 1, 1925, in Hereford, England. They also hold the world record for the oldest married couple's _____ - 205 years.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth sent the world _____ a congratulatory card. She said their marriage was a "splendid achievement" and sent them "warm congratulations". The record breakers _____ anniversary with a party in their home, surrounded by family and _____ .

The couple's daughter, Jane Woolley, said both her parents were "_____". She said they still have a very loving relationship. She also said they have "_____ through _____". She described their relationship as being very close, just like "_____".

The couple gave their secret _____ - always apologize after every argument and never go to sleep _____. They also recommended kissing and holding hands before going to bed. Mrs. Arrowsmith told the BBC: "I think we're _____. We still love one another, that's the most important part."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on centenarians. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. THE KEY TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE: Write your own "guide" on how to have a long-lasting marriage. Include the most important tips that will make the marriage successful. Show your guide to your classmates in your next lesson. Talk about your ideas.

4. LETTER TO PERCY & FLORENCE: Write a letter to the new record breakers telling them what you think of their achievement. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did your classmates write similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. couple	pair
b. got married	tied the knot
c. combined	added
d. splendid	wonderful
e. close	good
f. fit	healthy
g. thick and thin	good times and bad
h. lasting	long-term
i. apologize	say sorry
j. blessed	lucky

PHRASE MATCH:

a. broken	the world record
b. celebrated their	eightieth wedding anniversary
c. sent them warm	congratulations
d. surrounded by	family and a few close friends
e. as fit	as fiddles
f. a very loving	relationship
g. stuck	together
h. through thick	and thin
i. like two peas	in a pod
j. secret to	a lasting marriage

WHICH WORD?:

World record 80 years of marriage

BNE: A British couple has **broken** the world record for having the longest **marriage**. Percy Arrowsmith, 105, and 100-year-old Florence **celebrated** their eightieth wedding anniversary on June 1. They got married on June 1, 1925, in Hereford, England. They also **hold** the world record for the oldest married couple's **combined** age – 205 years.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth **sent** the world record-breaking **pair** a congratulatory card. She said their marriage was a "splendid achievement" and sent them "**warm** congratulations". The record breakers celebrated their **anniversary** with a party in their home, surrounded by family and a few close **friends**.

The couple's daughter, Jane Woolley, said both her parents were "as fit as **fiddles**". She said they still have a very **loving** relationship. She also said they have "**stuck** together through thick and **thin**". She described their relationship as being very close, just like "two peas in a **pod**".

The couple gave their secret to a **lasting** marriage – always apologize after every **argument** and never go to sleep without apologizing. They also recommended **kissing** and holding hands before going to bed. Mrs. Arrowsmith told the BBC: "I think we're very **blessed**. We still love one another, that's the most important **part**."

SPEAKING:

1. d 2. i 3. g 4. e 5. j 6. a 7. c 8. f 9. h 10. b