NEWS LESSON

Would You Sign a Contract Before Getting Married?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Do you think couples should discuss money before they marry?
2. Have you ever avoided a difficult talk about money with someone close to you?
3. What makes a contract feel fair to both sides?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**commitment**	☐	A	to have enough money to pay for something
2	**attitudes**	☐	B	rude and likely to upset someone
3	**shifting**	☐	C	a change that more and more people follow
4	**afford**	☐	D	people who say what is wrong with something
5	**critics**	☐	E	slowly changing
6	**insulting**	☐	F	a serious promise to stay with someone or do something
7	**trend**	☐	G	the way you think and feel about something
8	**unnecessary**	☐	H	not needed

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

More young Americans are signing prenuptial agreements before their weddings. Is planning for a divorce unromantic, or is it honest and sensible?

1 A wedding is supposed to celebrate love and commitment, not remind people that relationships sometimes end. Yet an increasing number of young couples in the United States appear willing to discuss divorce before they even get married. Their tool is a prenuptial agreement, usually shortened to prenup, which sets out arrangements for money and property if the marriage breaks down. What used to seem like something only very rich people needed is becoming a more ordinary part of wedding planning.

2 A Guardian feature published on 11 November 2026 described young Americans who see prenups as a form of protection rather than a prediction of failure. The article cited a Harris Poll conducted with Bloomberg this year, in which 53% of engaged or married Americans under the age of 45 said they had signed one. That does not prove that most young couples everywhere are following the trend. Nevertheless, it illustrates how attitudes towards discussing finances before marriage may be shifting.

3 For supporters, the logic is straightforward. Couples talk about where they want to live, whether they want children and what kind of wedding they can afford. Why should they avoid discussing debts, savings or property? A prenup can encourage both partners to lay their cards on the table. It may help protect a family business or an inheritance and reduce uncertainty if things go wrong. Some young couples even describe the process as an act of intimacy because it demands honesty about subjects people often find embarrassing.

4 Critics see a different problem. Sitting down to plan for a possible divorce can feel like starting a marriage with one foot out of the door. The conversation may become particularly uncomfortable if one partner earns far more than the other. A contract that appears fair today might look very different after years of childcare, career sacrifices or unexpected illness. There is also the risk that someone signs an agreement without fully understanding its consequences, simply because they do not want to upset their future spouse.

5 Legal arrangements vary between countries, and the details matter. A prenup is not a magic solution, and its treatment by courts depends on local law and individual circumstances. Anyone considering one would need proper advice rather than following a trend on social media. At the same time, the debate reveals something broader: many couples are becoming more comfortable talking openly about financial independence within a shared life.

6 Perhaps we have created a false choice between romance and practical thinking. Successful relationships often involve difficult conversations, whether about money, caring responsibilities or plans for the future. A prenup might help some people feel secure, while others may see it as unnecessary or even insulting. The agreement itself may matter less than whether both partners can discuss it honestly. If someone you loved asked you to sign one, would you see it as a sensible precaution or a warning sign?

Sources: The Guardian, The young women driving the US prenup boom: 'I want to protect myself'; Los Angeles Times, Prenups shed their stigma. Gen Z is getting them. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Some young Americans think of a prenup as protection, not as a prediction that the marriage will fail. T F NG
2. The writer believes the poll shows that most young couples everywhere sign prenups. T F NG
3. Most couples who sign a prenup later use it in court. T F NG
4. An agreement that looks fair at the start may stop being fair later. T F NG
5. The writer says courts everywhere treat prenups in the same way. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

cited	consequences	predict	reduce	sacrifices	straightforward	temporary	willing

1. More couples are _____ to discuss money openly, which was rare a generation ago.
2. Someone may sign an agreement without fully understanding its _____ .
3. Years of career _____ , such as staying at home with children, can change what seems fair.
4. The writer _____ a Harris Poll as evidence, but warns against reading too much into it.
5. The legal position is not always _____ , because it depends on local law.
6. A clear agreement may help to _____ uncertainty if the marriage ends.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. A Guardian feature _____ on 11 November 2026. (PUBLISH)
2. By the time they married, the couple _____ a prenup. (SIGN)
3. The conversation may _____ uncomfortable if one partner earns far more than the other. (BECOME)
4. If someone you loved _____ you to sign one, would you agree? (ASK)
5. Legal arrangements _____ between countries. (VARY)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Check the whole phrase, not just one word. If a word sounds odd with its partner, it is probably wrong, even when the meaning is close.

carry	heated	joint	raise	reach	run	tight

1. The couple tried to _____ an agreement that felt fair to both of them.
2. One partner may step back from work to _____ children.
3. If one partner wants to _____ a family business, an agreement can protect it.
4. Money can lead to a _____ argument, even between people who love each other.
5. Some couples keep a _____ bank account for bills.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Can making plans for a divorce strengthen a relationship?
2. If your partner asked you to sign a prenup, would you see it as a precaution or a warning sign?
3. How should couples deal with big differences in income before they marry?

9 Role-play: should we sign a prenup?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the partner who wants a prenup

You own a small business and have savings from your grandparents. You'd like a prenup before the wedding. Explain why it isn't a sign that you don't love your partner.

Student B · the partner who isn't sure

Planning for a divorce before the wedding feels cold to you. Ask why your partner wants a prenup, say how you feel, and try to find a deal you both like.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk about money before the wedding.

I'm not saying we don't trust each other.

It doesn't feel very romantic to me.

What if we got advice from a lawyer first?

That's a fair point, but I'm still worried.

Could we agree on something we're both happy with?

Afterwards, tell the class: did you agree to sign a prenup, and what did you decide to include?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 F · 2 G · 3 E · 4 A · 5 D · 6 B · 7 C · 8 H

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 willing · 2 consequences · 3 sacrifices · 4 cited · 5 straightforward · 6 reduce

6 Verb forms

1 was published · 2 had signed · 3 become · 4 asked · 5 vary

7 Language focus

1 reach · 2 raise · 3 run · 4 heated · 5 joint

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