



PERSUASIVE ESSAY SAMPLE

There are two main ways of selecting a spouse in Japan: by dating and by using a matchmaker for an arranged marriage. Traditionally, people in the United States meet future spouses through dating. Unfamiliar with arranged marriages, most Americans reject them without knowing what they are really like. In an arranged marriage, prospective spouses meet each other through a matchmaker, and they have the opportunity to meet many different possible mates. At the same time, they can refuse any of the matches proposed by the matchmaker, which means they are not obligated to marry anyone the matchmaker introduces to them. Marriage is a serious matter everywhere: It is not merely for playing house, nor is it just for fun. When people make a mature decision to get married and resolve that their first marriage will be their last one, it is time to get married. Comparing dating and arranged marriage as ways to find the right mate, I am sure that arranged marriages result in more successful marriages.

In an arranged marriage, both prospective spouses are committed and have a very clear objective: marriage. They are both serious about getting married and have a mature attitude toward marriage. This point becomes very clear when we consider that the average age of Japanese seeking an arranged marriage is higher than the average marrying age. In arranged marriages, the average is 28 for women and 32 for men. With a clear objective in mind and a mature outlook, one is more likely to choose a mate who will help build a long, successful marriage. On the other hand, marriages which are the result of dating are not always approached with the same commitment. Although a woman may want to continue working instead of getting married, very often her fiancé will pressure her to quit working and get married. Moreover, many young couples get married because they are curious about married life, which they think will make them seem older and more sophisticated. If only one partner wants to marry, or if one marries only to seem older, there is not a full commitment to marriage.

People choosing an arranged marriage follow more mature criteria when selecting a mate than people who marry after dating. Seventy-eight percent of Japanese women seeking an arranged marriage put a strong earning potential as their first requirement for the prospective husband. This does not mean that he must have a lot of money but rather that he should have a stable job, which will contribute greatly to the success of the marriage. Financial problems are always painful, and in marriage they can be destructive. The criteria which men follow usually stress the social status of the woman's family. Women from good families make good wives. Women from good families are also often traditional wives who are obedient, respectful, and content to be home. On the other hand, young people who are dating follow different criteria in choosing dates, and predictably, spouses. They are primarily interested in the appearance of the other person and in having fun. They are also interested in gaining experience by having relationships with different kinds of people. The criteria they follow are not as mature as the ones couples in an arranged marriage follow. And divorce statistics suggest that the criteria young people follow in entering a love marriage in both the United States and Japan do not lead to success. Over 40 percent of Americans get divorced, and one out of five Japanese marriages ends in divorce.



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The matchmaker, or go-between, in an arranged marriage also plays a role in ensuring the marriage's success. First, the matchmaker will look for someone of similar background and temperament. When people apply for an arranged marriage, they give the matchmaker a list of their personal qualifications to let the matchmaker know their background: educational level, work experience, family background, hobbies, and even salaries. The matchmaker will concentrate on finding someone who is similar. Even though many people claim not to care about the educational level of their spouse, for example, a discrepancy in how well each partner is educated can cause a couple to be at each other's throats when they are married. Second, the matchmaker will screen many potential candidates and propose only ones that he/she can put a seal of approval on, ones that are found to be totally suitable. Since the matchmaker is usually someone older and wiser as well as a friend or relative of at least one of the people seeking marriage, he/she can be trusted to make the best possible match. Last, the matchmaker has an interest in seeing that the marriage succeeds. If there are problems later in the marriage, the matchmaker will attempt to help the couple iron out the problems.

A successful marriage needs the support and commitment of both the husband and wife. In order to have success in marriage, a young man or woman needs to find a suitable mate because an unsuitable one will not make a successful marriage. A suitable mate is not only a partner that one gets along well with. A couple is suited to each other when they look at life in the same way and understand each other. A person must be mature to choose a suitable mate, but, to tell the truth, this is difficult for young people to do by themselves. Fortunately, there are matchmakers who can lead young people along the right way to choosing a spouse. Arranged marriages will create more success in marriage.

(Yumiko Asano, Japan)