

Expository Essay Examples for High School

Example 1: The History of the Wedding

Weddings seem like a natural part of our human existence. But they did not pop out of nowhere: they originated from ancient traditions. There are countless wedding traditions from across the globe, and it is difficult to pinpoint when weddings started to take place. However, through evidence and approximation, we can assume various facts about when the first weddings took place.

Approximately 23,000 years ago, when people started to grow their own food, and began to live in more compact communities, marriages probably were initiated. People staying closer together, instead of being nomadic, was most likely the first cause of marriages. Before agriculture, it might have been common for people to have a spouse for a few years and then move onto another partner due to the nomadic way of life and a lack of organization in terms of settlement (Adshade, Marina). According to the website Yesterday, “Early marriage was borne of ancient societies’ need to secure a safe environment in which to breed, handle the granting of property rights, and protect bloodlines. But even in these early times, marriage was much about love and desire as it was social and economic stability” (Yesterday Channel). It is surprising, but the reason for marriage has hardly changed since ancient times, with finances and feelings intermixed in the decision to get married.

Like many things, marriage by law began in ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptian society coalesced around 3100 BC (Digital Egypt for Universities), and unfortunately incest was an integral part of the royal Egyptian society at that time. According to Wedding Zone, “Many Pharaohs took sisters and daughters amongst their numerous wives, the idea being to keep their dynastic bloodline truer than it would otherwise had been. Although, this practice was not that common among middle and lower classes. Here, the marriage also existed as a legally enforceable fact, and the wives actually had more rights in this ancient land than for a large segment of modern western history, including the right of divorce” (Wedding Zone). In its turn, the wedding engagement was also founded in Egypt, where the couple would retain all the rights one would have in an actual wedding and would be a test period for the actual marriage. Like many ancient cultures, a dowry was involved. Unlike dowries in India, the man would pay the bride’s family money in order to show that he was capable of providing for his future wife. The wedding itself involved loads of colors, songs, dancing, and fresh wheat being thrown by participants to wish the married couple fertility.

Since ancient Egyptian society and culture was so grandiose and influential, it is no surprise that other societies around that time started to have weddings as well. In the Old Testament, there are several instances describing marriage and weddings in ancient Israel. According to Bible Odyssey, “First, although girls were expected to be virgins when they got married—and according to Deut 22:21 could even be put to death if they were found not to be—men were allowed to marry multiple women. It is hard to know how common polygamy really was in ancient Israel.

Also, the evidence suggests that compared to women, men had more control over whom they married. Most likely, girls were married around puberty whereas men were somewhat older. Though unions were generally based more on economic or social considerations than romantic ones, some texts, including the Song of Songs, show us that ideas of passion and sexual love were also present in ancient Israel” (Covenant in the Hebrew Bible). But it was not until the Roman Empire that marriage started to incorporate the modern practices of handing over rings and such. It was believed in ancient Rome that marriage was the only legitimate way to produce children and to have a dignified standing in society. Also, iron rings were given in wedding ceremonies, and soon after the couple would sacrifice an animal and ask blessings from the gods for their marriage. The basis of western weddings came from the Roman Empire (Rome Across Europe).

There can be volumes more to say about the development of the wedding ceremony, however we have limited space in this essay. But we should mention that weddings developed out of agriculture, which made communities less nomadic. Weddings began as a way to secure a family unit, though marrying within the family (incest) and being polygamy was not often frowned upon in the ancient world. It was not until the end of the Roman Empire that polygamy was formally banned. From then on, monogamy became more of a standard, and what we often know of today as married life in the modern world.

References

Adshade, Marina. “The Origin of Marriage (And the Evolution of Divorce).” Big Think, Big Think, 28 Apr. 2012, bigthink.com/dollars-and-sex/the-origin-of-marriage-and-the-evolution-of-divorce.

“Chronology.” Digital Egypt for Universities, University College London. Archived from the original on 16 March 2008.

“The History of Weddings.” Wedding Zone, www.weddingzone.net/px-pl079.htm.

“A Brief History of Marriage | History | Yesterday Channel.” Historical Figures | History | Yesterday Channel, UKTV, 24 Oct. 2013, yesterday.uktv.co.uk/article/brief-history-marriage/.

“Weddings and Marriage Traditions in Ancient Israel by Tracy M. Lemos.” Covenant in the Hebrew Bible, www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/related-articles/weddings-and-marriage-traditions-in-ancient-israel.

“Marriage in Ancient Rome.” Rome Across Europe, 20 Sept. 2015, www.romeacrosseurope.com/?p=2659#sthash.k1l2NGQD.dpbs.

Example 2: The Dangers of Uber

If someone told you ten years ago that you would eagerly sit in a car of a stranger whom you found online, and feel completely safe while doing so, you probably would not believe it. Today,

however, millions of users around the world do it on an everyday basis: Uber, the famous application allowing people to catch a ride anywhere, is what changed the way people thought about taxi services. If you own a car, you can become an Uber driver; if you have the application, you are almost guaranteed to have a car pick you up.

If you are for some reason not familiar with how Uber works, here is a short heads up. As a passenger, all you need to do is to open the application and insert the address you need to go to. Using GPS, the program will start looking for Uber drivers closest to your location. When you sit in the car, the application tracks your location until you arrive to your destination. You can pay with cash or with a card. After the ride is finished, you can rate the the services you were provided with. On the other hand, when taking orders as a driver, you never see neither destination, nor the cost of the ride—this information becomes available only if you accept the order. Both passengers and drivers can be fined for cancelling an order that has already been taken.

As practice shows, the service works fine. There are, however, several drawbacks—and even dangers—that not many people are aware of. As in the case of any system, flaws occur. And although Uber still remains one of the most convenient and safe taxi services, it is important to know about them. In particular, the list of dangers passengers may be subjected to includes rape and sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, burglary, and even death—mostly because of car accidents, but sometimes because of shooting as well (Benedettolaw.com). But how does it become possible?

The major problem, perhaps, is that almost anyone owning a car can become a driver. If you have a clean criminal record, are healthy, drive responsibly, and your vehicle is in order, working for Uber might be a nice career option for you. You will have to pass a DMV and background check to ensure the safety of your passengers, and voila, you are hired. However, it turns out that these background checks are not always performed as thoroughly as they should. According to a journalistic investigation conducted by NBC4 for three months, many drivers working for Uber do have criminal records in the not-so-distant past. Among others, their crimes were burglary, reckless driving and/or driving under the influence of alcohol, and assault. During the course of the investigation, NBC4 offered a reformed ex-convict woman with a history of drug possession, assault, and burglary to apply to become a driver for Uber. She went through all the registering procedures, and was informed about the background check. Normally, she would have been denied of the possibility to work as an Uber driver. However, four weeks later she was hired. This proves that sometimes the company treats the security of its passengers irresponsibly (Supermoney).

As a driver, however, you are sometimes even less safe. Even statistically, if you work on about 20 orders per day, five days a week, it equals riding with about 400 people per month. The chances someone among them might be violent, mentally ill, or just aggressive, are high. Of course, everyone knows that Uber tracks the location of both drivers and their passengers, so it should prevent potential attackers from acting out; there are other security measures as well. But still, the risks may be considerable. Besides, you may have problems with your insurance

company if something goes wrong. For example, if you damage your car while working for Uber, your expenses may not be covered, as the insurance company can claim the case is beyond coverage (Neckerman Insurance Agency).

This can be especially worrying when you read the company's Terms and Conditions carefully. As with many other companies, it does not take responsibility in the case of your death, rape, or trauma. So do many regular cab services, but their levels of security are higher. For instance, in addition to traditional documents such as a driver's licence and criminal record, San Francisco taxi drivers need to have proof of residency, good health, and hygiene. In Los Angeles, they are obliged to provide their fingerprints and undergo a nationwide FBI criminal background check. With Uber, you have to rely on their background checks—which, as we have seen already, may not be thorough enough. There were several tragic incidents already. For example, in 2014 an Uber driver abducted a woman. In 2016, a driver named Jason Dalton killed six people on a shooting spree. Another driver, Roberto Chicas, attacked his passenger with a hammer (Supermoney). Of course, these cases are exceptional, and can happen anytime, regardless of the taxi service you are using. But still, this is a danger all passengers should be aware of.

Although Uber and other similar services such as Lyft are statistically safe, convenient, and popular around the world, there are several dangers to be aware of. The major problem is posed by the company's background checks: according to journalistic investigations, sometimes Uber drivers have a criminal record in the recent past. There were several cases of assault and kidnapping as well. Although such incidents are exceptional, it is important to treat one's security responsibly, and take necessary precautionary measures.

Works Cited

Bawden-Davis, Julie. "5 Reasons Uber Can Be A Risky Choice (For Drivers And Passengers)." SuperMoney, 24 June 2017, www.supermoney.com/2016/05/5-reasons-uber-can-risky-choice-drivers-passengers/.

Benedetto, Conrad. "The Hidden Dangers of Uber and Lyft." Benedettolaw.com, www.benedettolaw.com/the-hidden-dangers-of-uber-and-lyft.

"The Dangers of Uber and Other Ride-Sharing Apps." Neckerman Insurance Agency, 5 July 2017, neckerman.com/the-dangers-uber-ride-sharing-apps/.