



DIVORCE STATISTICS

By Wayne D. Stocks

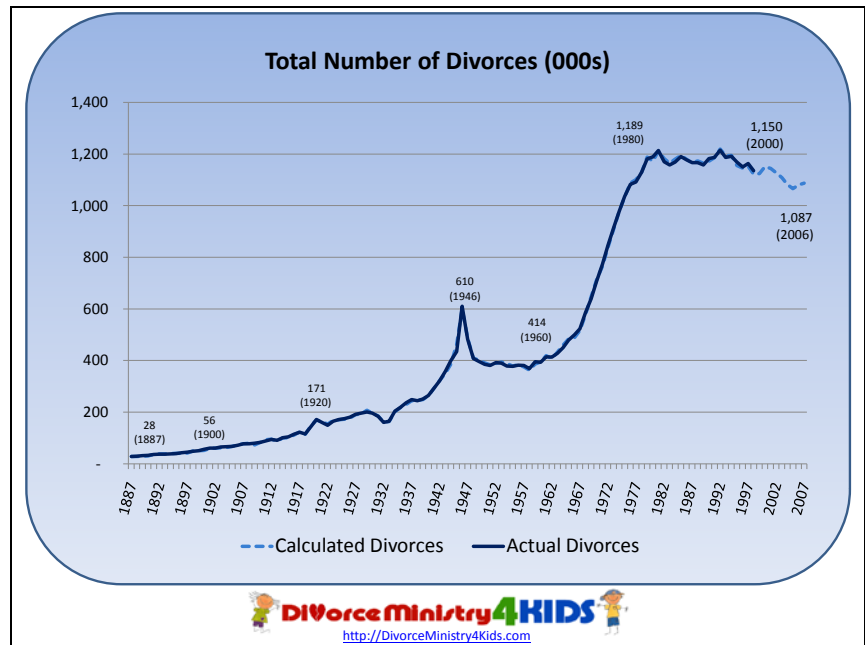
08/03/2011

One widely held view, and oft cited statistic in our country, is that one-half of all marriages end in divorce. While there is some debate about the origin of this statistics, it is generally true, and a swing of 2-3 percent in either direction does not mitigate the overwhelming impact divorce has had on our nation and our children. In order to set the record straight and present a clear picture of divorce in the United States, I have gathered some often cited measures of divorce (we will look at divorce as it affects children in a later article). Have a look at these statistics and consider what they mean for our nation and for the children of our nation.

A complete listing of the data comprising the following charts is included at the end of this paper. Those listings include a notation regarding the source of each data point included in the charts.

This chart summarizes the total raw number of divorces in the United States from 1887 through 2006. In 1887, there were a total of 28,000 divorces in the entire country. Prior to the boom in divorces in the 1960's and 1970's the historical high point was in 1946 following World War 2 with 610,000 divorces. The number of divorces decreased, and at the beginning of the 1960's was at 414,000. In the next twenty years it grew 387% to 1,189,000 divorces. The raw number of divorces has leveled off and decreased since 1980 and stood at 1,087,000 by 2006.

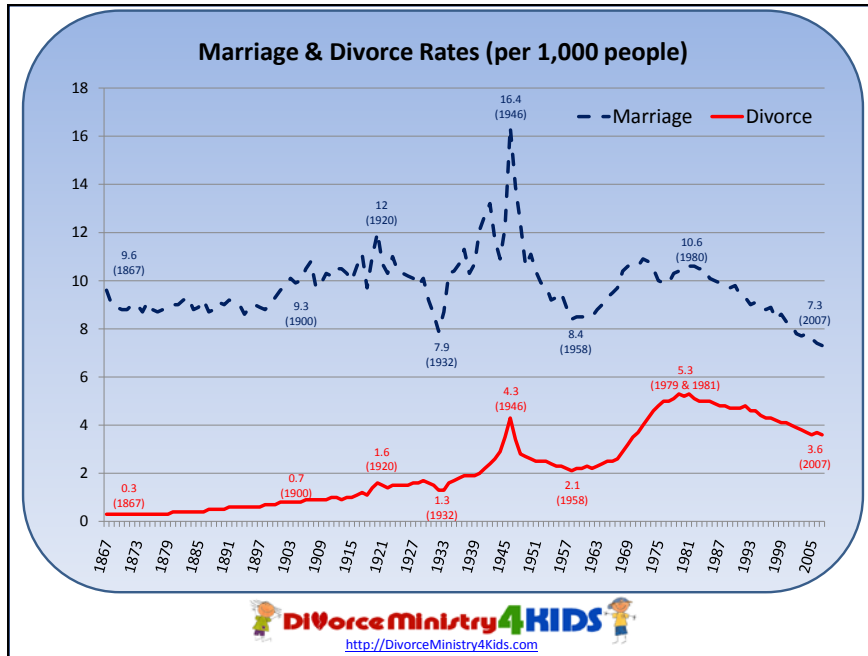
It should be noted that through 1996, total divorces were reported by the Federal Government. After that time, they ceased to publish those numbers. We have estimated the number of divorces based on the ratio of marriages to divorces. You will note that the calculation never deviates significantly from the actual reported amounts evidenced by the fact that you can barely notice the dotted line in the graph.



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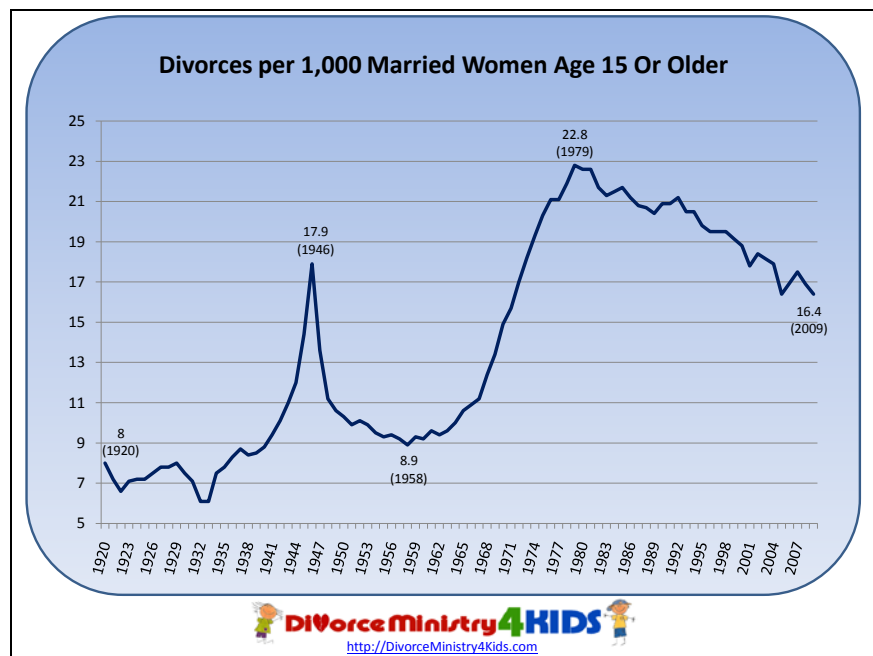
The total number of divorces gives us a good raw number, but it is important to look at rates because the raw numbers are also influenced by increases in population as a whole.

This chart presents what is called the crude rate of marriages and divorces (number per 1,000 total population). You will note that for divorces, the chart roughly equates to the first chart. In 1867, there were 0.3 divorces for every 1,000 people in the country. In 1932, the rate was still only 1.3 per thousand. The rate spiked at 4.3 following World War II then dropped to 2.1 just prior to the 1960's in 1958. The highest rates were recorded in 1979 and 1981 when the level reached 5.3 per thousand people. That rate has actually fallen, due primarily to changes in marital patterns like waiting longer to marry and cohabitation, and stood at 3.6 in 2007.

The crude divorce rate is a good measure, and allows the statistics to be easily compared to other nations (see the last chart below), but it does not represent the ideal divorce rate. In this chart, we look at the rate of divorces amongst those people who are actually married (women age 15 or older).

The rate stood at 8 in 1920 and rose after World War II to 17.9 divorces per 1,000 married women. The rate was only 8.9 prior to the 1960's. By 1979, the rate has soared to 22.8 divorces per one thousand married women. Like the crude divorce rate, this measure has decreased by 20.8% to 16.4 in 2009.

Like the other decreases, the decrease in recent years is related to changes in marital habits including cohabitation. Dissolution of cohabiting relationships is not included in these statistics.

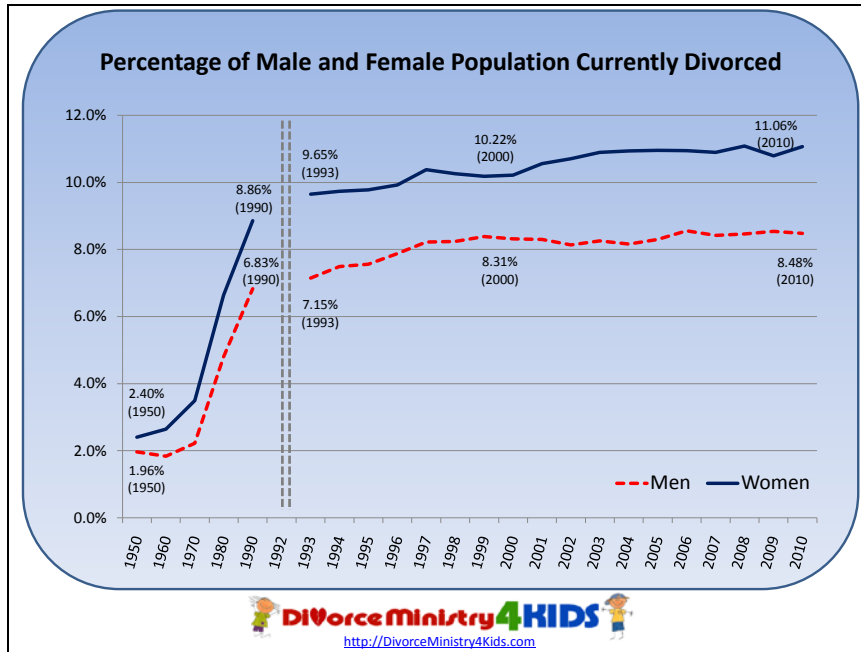




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Another measure used to quantify the extent of divorce in our country is the percentage of men and women who are currently divorced. Like the last chart this is a measure of men or women 15 years of age and older.

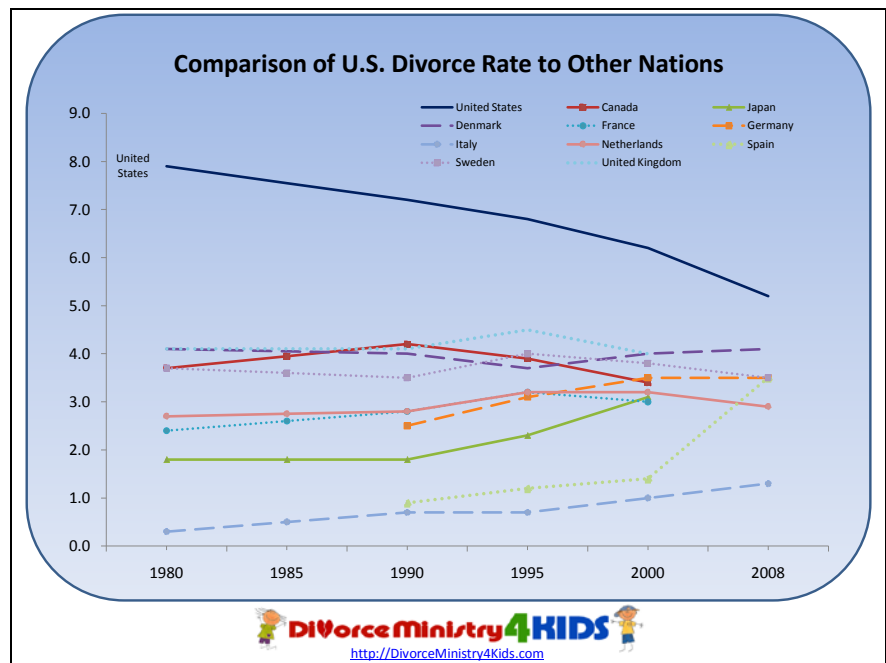
In 1950, only 2.40% of women and 1.96% of men were divorced. By 1990, those figures were up to 8.86% for women and 6.83% for men. That is an increase of 269% for women and 248% for men.

In 1993 the rates were up slightly to 9.65% for women and 7.15% for men. By 2010, the rates were 11.06% for women and 8.48% for men. That means the proportion of divorced women to total women has increased 361% in the 60 years from 1950 to 2010. The ratio for men has increased at a similar rate of 333% during the same time period.

As a nation, we pride ourselves on leading the world in many regards. The chart to the right reveals one area where we should not be so proud. Although the data is limited in time (only since 1980), this chart shows that the United States has consistently led the world when it comes to the divorce rate measured as number of divorces per 1,000 people aged 15-64.

In 1980, the United States led the pack with a rate of 7.9 followed by both Denmark and the United Kingdom who both had a rate of 4.1. Lowest that year was Italy with a rate of 0.3 per thousand people.

By 2008, the U.S. rate had dropped to 5.2 but still led this list of countries. Second was Denmark at 4.1. The lowest rate was still Italy, but their rate had increased to 1.3.





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This chart presents the data for the first three graphs above.

Year	Actual Divorces (000s)	Calculated Divorces (000s)	Marriage Rate (per 1,000 pop.)	Divorce Rate (per 1,000 pop.)	Sources [Statistical Abstract (Table)]	Divorce Rate (per 1,000 Married Women 15 and older)	Sources [Statistical Abstract (Table) or State of Our Unions Report]
1867			9.6	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1868			9.0	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1869			8.9	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1870			8.8	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1871			8.8	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1872			9.0	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1873			9.0	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1874			8.7	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1875			9.1	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1876			8.8	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1877			8.7	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1878			8.8	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1879			8.9	0.3	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1880			9.0	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1881			9.0	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1882			9.2	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1883			9.3	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1884			8.8	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1885			8.9	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1886			9.2	0.4	1789-1945 (C77-78)		
1887	28	28	8.7	0.5	1944 (99)		
1888	29	29	8.8	0.5	1944 (99)		
1889	32	29	9.1	0.5	1944 (99)		
1890	33	30	9.0	0.5	1944 (99)		
1891	36	37	9.2	0.6	1944 (99)		
1892	37	38	9.1	0.6	1944 (99)		
1893	37	39	9.0	0.6	1944 (99)		
1894	38	39	8.6	0.6	1944 (99)		





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1895	40	40	8.9	0.6	1944 (99)		
1896	43	41	9.0	0.6	1944 (99)		
1897	45	42	8.9	0.6	1944 (99)		
1898	48	50	8.8	0.7	1944 (99)		
1899	51	51	9.0	0.7	1944 (99)		
1900	56	52	9.3	0.7	1960 (51)		
1901	61	60	9.6	0.8	1944 (99)		
1902	61	60	9.8	0.8	1944 (99)		
1903	65	62	10.1	0.8	1944 (99)		
1904	66	63	9.9	0.8	1944 (99)		
1905	68	67	10.0	0.8	1960 (51)		
1906	72	73	10.5	0.9	1944 (99)		
1907	77	78	10.8	0.9	1944 (99)		
1908	77	80	9.7	0.9	1944 (99)		
1909	80	73	9.9	0.9	1944 (99)		
1910	83	83	10.3	0.9	1985 (80)		
1911	89	94	10.2	1.0	1944 (99)		
1912	94	96	10.5	1.0	1944 (99)		
1913	91	88	10.5	0.9	1944 (99)		
1914	101	100	10.3	1.0	1944 (99)		
1915	104	101	10.0	1.0	1985 (80)		
1916	114	112	10.6	1.1	1944 (99)		
1917	122	124	11.1	1.2	1944 (99)		
1918	116	113	9.7	1.1	1944 (99)		
1919	142	146	11.0	1.4	1944 (99)		
1920	171	170	12.0	1.6	1985 (80)	8.0	1974 (93)
1921	160	163	10.7	1.5	1944 (99)	7.2	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1922	149	154	10.3	1.4	1944 (99)	6.6	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1923	165	168	11.0	1.5	1944 (99)	7.1	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1924	171	171	10.4	1.5	1944 (99)	7.2	Col.-1970 (B214-220)





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1925	175	173	10.3	1.5	1985 (80)	7.2	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1926	181	177	10.2	1.5	1944 (99)	7.5	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1927	192	190	10.1	1.6	1944 (99)	7.8	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1928	196	193	9.8	1.6	1944 (99)	7.8	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1929	201	208	10.1	1.7	1944 (99)	8.0	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1930	196	196	9.2	1.6	1985 (80)	7.5	1974 (93)
1931	184	185	8.6	1.5	1944 (99)	7.1	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1932	160	162	7.9	1.3	1944 (99)	6.1	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1933	165	164	8.7	1.3	1944 (99)	6.1	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1934	204	202	10.3	1.6	1944 (99)	7.5	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1935	218	217	10.4	1.7	1985 (80)	7.8	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1936	236	230	10.7	1.8	1950 (64)	8.3	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1937	249	244	11.3	1.9	1950 (64)	8.7	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1938	244	246	10.3	1.9	1950 (64)	8.4	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1939	251	249	10.7	1.9	1950 (64)	8.5	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1940	264	264	12.1	2.0	1985 (80)	8.8	1974 (93)
1941	293	294	12.7	2.2	1950 (64)	9.4	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1942	321	322	13.2	2.4	1955 (56)	10.1	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1943	359	350	11.7	2.6	1955 (56)	11.0	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1944	400	386	10.9	2.9	1955 (56)	12.0	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1945	435	463	12.2	3.5	1985 (80)	14.4	1965 (70)
1946	610	601	16.4	4.3	1955 (56)	17.9	1960 (78)
1947	483	487	13.9	3.4	1955 (56)	13.6	1960 (78)
1948	408	409	12.4	2.8	1955 (56)	11.2	1960 (78)
1949	397	402	10.6	2.7	1955 (56)	10.6	1965 (70)
1950	385	390	11.1	2.6	2004 (70)	10.3	1974 (93)
1951	381	383	10.4	2.5	1955 (56)	9.9	1965 (70)
1952	392	389	9.9	2.5	1955 (56)	10.1	1965 (70)
1953	390	394	9.8	2.5	1960 (52)	9.9	1965 (70)
1954	379	389	9.2	2.4	1960 (52)	9.5	1965 (70)





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1955	377	379	9.3	2.3	2004 (70)	9.3	1974 (93)
1956	382	384	9.5	2.3	1960 (52)	9.4	1965 (70)
1957	381	375	8.9	2.2	2004 (70)	9.2	1965 (70)
1958	368	363	8.4	2.1	1960 (52)	8.9	1965 (70)
1959	395	387	8.5	2.2	1965 (46)	9.3	1965 (70)
1960	393	394	8.5	2.2	2011 (78)	9.2	1985 (120)
1961	414	419	8.5	2.3	1970 (53)	9.6	1965 (70)
1962	413	408	8.5	2.2	1974 (67)	9.4	1965 (70)
1963	428	432	8.8	2.3	1974 (67)	9.6	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1964	450	460	9.0	2.4	1974 (67)	10.0	Col.-1970 (B214-220)
1965	479	484	9.3	2.5	2000 (77)	10.6	1985 (120)
1966	499	489	9.5	2.5	1985 (80)	10.9	1970 (75)
1967	523	517	9.7	2.6	1985 (80)	11.2	1971 (79)
1968	584	577	10.4	2.9	1985 (80)	12.4	1971 (79)
1969	639	648	10.6	3.2	1985 (80)	13.4	1971 (79)
1970	708	713	10.6	3.5	2011 (78)	14.9	2000 (144)
1971	773	764	10.6	3.7	2011 (78)	15.7	1974 (93)
1972	845	837	10.9	4.0	2011 (78)	17.0	1976 (97)
1973	915	909	10.8	4.3	2011 (78)	18.2	1976 (97)
1974	977	977	10.5	4.6	2011 (78)	19.3	1976 (97)
1975	1,036	1,033	10.0	4.8	2011 (78)	20.3	2000 (144)
1976	1,083	1,088	9.9	5.0	2011 (78)	21.1	1985 (120)
1977	1,091	1,100	9.9	5.0	2011 (78)	21.1	1985 (120)
1978	1,130	1,130	10.3	5.1	2011 (78)	21.9	1985 (120)
1979	1,181	1,188	10.4	5.3	2011 (78)	22.8	1985 (120)
1980	1,189	1,172	10.6	5.2	2011 (78)	22.6	2000 (144)
1981	1,213	1,211	10.6	5.3	2011 (78)	22.6	1985 (120)
1982	1,170	1,182	10.6	5.1	2011 (78)	21.7	1990 (126)
1983	1,158	1,165	10.5	5.0	2011 (78)	21.3	1995 (142)
1984	1,169	1,180	10.5	5.0	2011 (78)	21.5	2000 (144)





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1985	1,190	1,195	10.1	5.0	2011 (78)	21.7	2000 (144)
1986	1,178	1,179	10.0	4.9	2011 (78)	21.2	2000 (144)
1987	1,166	1,165	9.9	4.8	2011 (78)	20.8	2000 (144)
1988	1,167	1,174	9.8	4.8	2011 (78)	20.7	2000 (144)
1989	1,157	1,164	9.7	4.7	2011 (78)	20.4	2000 (144)
1990	1,182	1,172	9.8	4.7	2011 (78)	20.9	2000 (144)
1991	1,187	1,186	9.4	4.7	2011 (78)	20.9	2000 (144)
1992	1,215	1,219	9.3	4.8	2011 (78)	21.2	2000 (144)
1993	1,187	1,193	9.0	4.6	2011 (78)	20.5	2000 (144)
1994	1,191	1,194	9.1	4.6	2011 (78)	20.5	2000 (144)
1995	1,169	1,155	8.9	4.4	2011 (78)	19.8	2000 (144)
1996	1,150	1,145	8.8	4.3	2011 (78)	19.5	2000 (144)
1997	1,163	1,152	8.9	4.3	2011 (78)	19.5	Data not available - avg.
1998	1,135	1,122	8.4	4.2	2011 (78)	19.5	State of Our Unions 2001
1999		1,124	8.6	4.1	2011 (78)	19.2	Data not available - avg.
2000		1,150	8.3	4.1	2011 (78)	18.8	State of Our Unions 2010
2001		1,144	8.2	4.0	2011 (78)	17.8	State of Our Unions 2003
2002		1,127	7.8	3.9	2011 (78)	18.4	State of Our Unions 2004
2003		1,108	7.7	3.8	2011 (78)	18.2	Data not available - avg.
2004		1,081	7.8	3.7	2011 (78)	17.9	State of Our Unions 2006
2005		1,065	7.6	3.6	2011 (78)	16.4	State of Our Unions 2007
2006		1,080	7.4	3.7	2011 (78)	17.0	Data not available - avg.
2007		1,087	7.3	3.6	2011 (78)	17.5	State of Our Unions 2009
2008						16.9	State of Our Unions 2009
2009						16.4	State of Our Unions 2010





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The following chart includes data for the fourth graph included above:

Year	MALE		FEMALE		Source
	Married	Divorced	Married	Divorced	
1950	67.52%	1.96%	65.81%	2.40%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1960	69.32%	1.83%	65.91%	2.64%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1970	66.77%	2.22%	61.91%	3.49%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1980	63.23%	4.80%	58.91%	6.64%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1990	60.72%	6.83%	56.89%	8.86%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1993	59.92%	7.15%	56.41%	9.65%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1994	58.97%	7.49%	55.93%	9.74%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1995	58.92%	7.56%	56.16%	9.78%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1996	58.48%	7.88%	55.55%	9.92%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1997	57.83%	8.22%	54.94%	10.38%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1998	57.98%	8.24%	54.85%	10.26%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
1999	57.85%	8.38%	54.73%	10.18%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2000	57.88%	8.31%	54.70%	10.22%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2001	57.97%	8.29%	54.55%	10.56%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2002	57.36%	8.13%	54.17%	10.70%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2003	57.17%	8.26%	54.05%	10.89%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2004	56.83%	8.16%	54.00%	10.94%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2005	56.67%	8.30%	53.84%	10.96%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2006	56.32%	8.56%	53.45%	10.94%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2007	56.48%	8.41%	53.72%	10.89%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2008	55.55%	8.46%	52.81%	11.08%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2009	55.58%	8.54%	53.18%	10.79%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1
2010	54.83%	8.48%	52.43%	11.06%	Current Population Survey - Time Series MS1





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This final chart includes the international divorce rates used in the fifth graph above:

Country	Divorces Per 1,000 population aged 15-64				
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2008
United States	7.9	7.2	6.8	6.2	5.2
Canada	3.7	4.2	3.9	3.4	
Denmark	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.1
France	2.4	2.8	3.2	3.0	
Germany		2.5	3.1	3.5	3.5
Italy	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.3
Japan	1.8	1.8	2.3	3.1	
Netherlands	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.9
Spain		0.9	1.2	1.4	3.5
Sweden	3.7	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.5
United Kingdom	4.1	4.1	4.5	4.0	
Source [Statistical Abstract Year (Table)]	2011 (1335)	2011 (1335)	2004 (1327)	2011 (1335)	2011 (1335)

