

Age and Marital Status of Bridegrooms and Brides.—Almost 92 p.c. of the marriages in 1956 were between persons who had not previously been married; almost 5 p.c. of both brides and bridegrooms had been widowed, and well over 3 p.c. of the marriages were of divorced persons. The average age at marriage of bachelors was just over 26 and that of spinsters just under 23 years and six months. The average age of widowers and widows at the time of remarriage was double that of bachelors and spinsters. Over 90 p.c. of spinsters married in 1956 were under 30 years of age—76 p.c. under 25 years. Over 83 p.c. of bachelors were under 30 years with 55 p.c. of these under 25 years of age.

As has been the case in several other countries in recent years, couples are marrying younger than was the case a generation ago. Since 1940 the average age of men at the time of their first marriage has dropped from 28 years to just past their 26th birthday; that of girls from 24 years and eight months to 23 years and five months. Table 21 shows the age pattern at marriage for all brides and bridegrooms for the years 1955 and 1956.

21.—Brides and Bridegrooms by Age and Marital Status 1955 and 1956

Year and Age Group	BRIDES							
	Numbers				Percentages			
	Spinsters	Widows	Divorced	Total	Spinsters	Widows	Divorced	Total
1955								
Under 20 years.....	34,357	17	22	34,396	29.4	0.3	0.5	26.9
20 — 24 ".....	53,749	152	478	54,379	46.0	2.4	10.2	42.6
25 — 29 ".....	17,721	359	1,063	19,143	15.2	5.8	22.7	15.0
30 — 34 ".....	5,907	584	1,110	7,601	5.1	9.4	23.7	5.9
35 — 39 ".....	2,440	670	772	3,882	2.1	10.7	16.5	3.0
40 — 44 ".....	1,288	763	623	2,674	1.1	12.2	13.3	2.1
45 — 49 ".....	687	833	321	1,841	0.6	13.4	6.9	1.4
50 — 54 ".....	359	794	167	1,320	0.3	12.7	3.6	1.0
55 — 59 ".....	179	717	80	976	0.2	11.5	1.7	0.8
60 — 64 ".....	93	570	33	696	0.1	9.1	0.7	0.5
65 years or over.....	72	774	12	858	0.1	12.4	0.3	0.7
Ages not stated.....	11	—	—	11	—	—	—	—
Totals, All Ages.....	116,863	6,233	4,681	127,777	91.5	4.9	3.7	100.0
Average ages.....	23.5	48.5	34.9	25.1
1956								
Under 20 years.....	37,657	8	21	37,686	31.0	0.1	0.4	28.4
20 — 24 ".....	55,124	152	462	55,738	45.3	2.4	9.7	42.0
25 — 29 ".....	17,808	400	1,101	19,309	14.6	6.3	23.0	14.5
30 — 34 ".....	5,863	562	1,093	7,518	4.8	8.9	22.9	5.7
35 — 39 ".....	2,429	669	867	3,965	2.0	10.5	18.1	3.0
40 — 44 ".....	1,226	847	577	2,650	1.0	13.3	12.1	2.0
45 — 49 ".....	728	876	358	1,962	0.6	13.8	7.5	1.5
50 — 54 ".....	388	785	168	1,341	0.3	12.4	3.5	1.0
55 — 59 ".....	197	666	85	948	0.2	10.5	1.8	0.7
60 — 64 ".....	95	584	33	712	0.1	9.2	0.7	0.5
65 years or over.....	67	798	14	879	0.1	12.6	0.3	0.7
Ages not stated.....	3	2	—	5	—	—	—	—
Totals, All Ages.....	121,585	6,349	4,779	132,713	91.6	4.8	3.6	100.0
Average ages.....	23.4	48.4	35.0	25.0