

Marriages by Day of the Week

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”
J.P. Hartley [1895-1972], *The Go-Between* [1953], prologue.

Many events that involve choice do not take place in a random manner. For example, data from 1980 show that most marriages took place on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, with Friday and Saturday accounting for more than 72%. (See Column 3 in the table below.)

But what about earlier periods in history? Column 2, left blank, provides spaces to insert the percentages of marriages that took place on each day of the week in eighteenth-century Westborough, Massachusetts.

The eighteenth-century pattern might have been different, but if it was, what would have been the pattern? Would marriages have been more randomly spread across the week (with about 15% of the marriages taking place on each day)? Or would marriages have been concentrated on one or two days of the week? Which day of the week do you think had the most marriages? The fewest? Or were there any patterns at all? How do you explain your answers?

For the answers, see the next page.

Day of the Week	Percentage of Marriages by Day of Week 18 th -Century Westborough	Percentage of Marriages by Day of Week United States, 1980
Monday		5.2
Tuesday		4.3
Wednesday		4.2
Thursday		5.6
Friday		19.7
Saturday		53.0
Sunday		8.0

Source: Andrew Hacker, ed., *U/S: A Statistical Portrait of the American People* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 103.

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Day of the Week	Percentage of Marriages by Day of Week 18 th -Century Westborough	Percentage of Marriages by Day of Week United States, 1980
Monday	9.6	5.2
Tuesday	20.1	4.3
Wednesday	15.4	4.2
Thursday	48.8	5.6
Friday	2.0	19.7
Saturday	1.0	53.0
Sunday	3.1	8.0

Source: *Vital Records of Westborough, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1849* (Worcester, Mass.: Franklin P. Rice, 1903); Andrew Hacker, ed., *U/S: A Statistical Portrait of the American People* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 103.