A. Read the Text:

Topic: Age at marriage in India

Year	Men	Women
1951 - 1955	21.3	14.3
1956 – 1960	21.2	15.01
1961 - 1965	22.3	16.3
1971	22.6	17.7
1981	23.4	18.6
1991	24.4	19
2001	22,6	18,3

Rules and restrictions

In India the age to contract a marriage is 18 years for a girl and 21 years for a boy, for all communities. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, defines a child as a person who, if a male, has not completed 21 years of age, and if a female, has not completed 18 years of age. Under Section 5 of this Act whoever performs, conducts or directs any child marriage shall be punishable with simple imprisonment up to three months.

There are places in India, where child marriage is still a custom. For those people, they carry on their lives as their parents have and their grandparents before them. Shockingly, there are still some forced marriages and child brides. 1992/93 more than 40 % of the 20 year old woman in the north Indian State Rajastan told, that they were married before their 15th birthday. But in the south, in Tamil Nadu, only 9 % of the women were married at that age.

Looking for a bride?

Since it is a commonly held belief that brides are the embodiment of that family's honour and pride, the girl must be from good family and have good manners. She should be respectable and have no taint on her name. Does she have the makings of a good wife and mother? Does she want to work after marriage or stay at home? There are so many factors to weigh!

How families connect?

Often, this turns into an interview process where photos are provided of the boy/girl in question along with bio-data about his/her life and family. If that meets with approval, arrangements will be made for the parents to meet the boy/girl and their family. Traditionally, however, the bride and groom would not even see each other until the day of their wedding. Today, while most marriages are still arranged, times are changing. There is usually a small courtship period where the bride and groom can meet and talk under the careful watch of a guardian. Also, if either one of the two does not want the marriage, it is likely to be cancelled. Very few families today "force" marriages upon their children.

(source: NFHS India: 1992-93, http://www.pardesiservices.com/tradition/arrangedmarg.asp)

B. Work:

1. You are an Indian mother/father of a girl/boy. You try to find a husband by internet: Search with Google: "Indian matrimonial" and choose somebody, explain your reasons.