When can a person marry without parents’ consent? At age 18, you can marry without the consent of your parents.

What is the youngest age at which a person can marry with parents’ consent? The youngest age at which a person may marry with parents’ consent is 16. Tex. Fam. Code Ann. § 2.102.

Is a marriage a contract? Yes, it is a contract between a man and a woman. State law creates the relationship and describes the consequences of divorce or other marital problems.

How does one get a marriage license? You apply to the county clerk no more than 30 days, but at least 72 hours, before the marriage ceremony and pay the application fee.

What is required for a valid ceremonial marriage? All you need is:

- A valid marriage license
- An authorized official (generally a clergyman, judge, or others authorized to perform marriages under the law)
- A marriage ceremony

Does Texas recognize “informal” or common law marriages? Yes, a valid marriage may also be provided by the execution of a Declaration of Informal Marriage form at the County Clerk’s office or
by proof that: (1) the parties, free to marry, agree to be married; (2) live together as husband and wife in this state; and (3) represent to others that they are married. There is no specific amount of time they must live together. An informal marriage is as valid as a ceremonial marriage, and a divorce must be obtained to end it. However, if a claim of informal marriage is not made within two years of the date the relationship ended, there is a rebuttable presumption that there was no agreement made.

**In a marriage, who has to provide support?** Both husband and wife have an obligation to provide for support of the other and of all minor children. Either spouse may be held liable for necessities furnished to the other, or to all minor children.

**What happens in a divorce?** A judge will consider child custody, child support, and property division. As a general rule, all assets and debts acquired during the marriage are divided equally.

**What are the grounds for divorce?** There are 7 grounds for divorce in Texas. These are enumerated in Section 6.001 - 6.007 of the Texas Family Code. Texas has two “no fault” grounds for divorce. One is “insupportability,” where the legitimate ends of the marriage have been destroyed and the parties have no reasonable expectation of reconciling. The other no-fault ground is living apart for a period of three years.

**Can a father be required to support a child if he is not married?**
Yes. The child, the child’s mother, a child support agency, or certain other parties can sue a father. A wage assignment can be obtained that will automatically deduct the amount from the father’s paycheck.

**What if the man denies that he is the child’s father?** The child, the child’s mother, a child support agency, or certain other parties can start a paternity action. The court will require blood tests. Very accurate blood tests now exist. If the question is not settled, a trial will be held to determine who is the child’s father.

**May a parent’s rights be terminated?** Yes. A court may terminate parental rights for a variety of reasons, including abandonment, failure to support, endangerment of the physical or emotional well being of the child, and various other grounds.

**Does an abused spouse have to start a divorce action to get assistance from the courts?** No. You can get a protective order from the court if you or a member of your family or household have been subject to abuse and the court finds that abuse is likely to occur in the foreseeable future. The order may contain a wide variety of remedies. Failure to comply with the terms of the order can be punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Consult the Yellow Pages under Social Services Organizations for contact information of groups serving abused spouses. (Not limited to battered wives...some women beat up their husbands too!)
What kinds of protection can an abused spouse receive from a court while a divorce action is pending? In Texas the same relief under protective orders, as stated above, is available to a spouse while a divorce action is pending.

Can an abused spouse have a criminal complaint pursued against the offending spouse? Yes. If you are abused, immediately call the police or prosecuting attorney’s office. Get hospital treatment and keep records of injuries, witnesses, police officers, and medical attendants. Get copies of medical reports. A temporary protective order may be requested to keep your spouse away from your home and place of employment.

Can an abused spouse bring an action for personal injuries against the offending spouse? Yes. To do so, a civil action must be started. You should see an attorney to discuss the sufficiency of evidence, the facts that must be proven, and the amount of damages or other remedies you could obtain.