

# Wedding Invitations

Compiling a guest list is, for many couples, the most difficult part of their wedding plans. First determine the size of your wedding based on your budget. Then divide that number into thirds between your friends and those of each of the two families. Now you can ask your families for their lists, giving them these guidelines. Whenever possible, all guests should be invited to both the wedding and the reception.

Your wedding invitation can help set the mood and style for your wedding. You will find selections from traditional designs with formal wording to contemporary designs which may incorporate your own specially created message. You may want to coordinate the color and style of your invitations to complement the color and style of attire in the wedding party.

Formal wedding invitations are usually thermographed or engraved. Order them well in advance to allow time for them to be addressed and mailed six weeks before the wedding. Your printer will show you various styles and appropriate wording. Spell out all numbers and names, including the wedding date and time. Abbreviations, initials and nicknames are never used, except for Mr. or Mrs., Jr. or Dr.

Be sure to order enough invitations. You will need one for every married couple, each single adult guest, each attendant and their parents (if invited), your attendants' dates (if single), everyone in the groom's family and, of course, your officiant and guest. Order extra invitations for emergencies and keepsakes. For beautiful hand addressed invitations, you may choose a calligrapher.

Be sure to order response cards with pre-addressed envelopes if space is limited at the ceremony or if you are planning to serve a meal. Your caterer will ask for a guest count, so the timely return of response cards is necessary.

The response envelope is usually addressed to the bride's parents, but may be to the bride if the couple is paying for the wedding. Response envelopes should include proper postage.

Announcements are sent to those friends, relatives and associates whom you would like to tell about your marriage, but could not have at your wedding. Announcements are similar to your invitations in size, paper and style, but may be from the couple or from either of their families.

Hand address all envelopes in blue or black ink. Remember to use full names, no initials. The invitation is inserted into the inner envelope with enclosure cards and printed side facing the back flap. Insert this inner envelope into your addressed outer envelope. The (addressed side) of the inner envelope faces the back flap of the outer envelope.

Wedding programs are used to show the order of the ceremony, the names of the attendants, parents, officiant and any other participants. Also included are the music selections and perhaps a quote or note from the bride and groom.

Auxiliary items should also be considered at the time you select your paper trousseau. Accessories include attendants' gifts, guest book, plumed pen, toasting goblets, ring bearer pillow, napkins, matches and more.

Answers to your questions involving coordination, etiquette for wording of invitations, and addressing can be provided by invitation specialists.

Finally, be sure to order "Thank You" notes and most importantly, be sure to send them as soon as possible.