



INVITATION ETIQUETTE

The wording of your invitation and its accompanying papers should match its design and the mood of your wedding—and it should also reflect your personality. We hope this guide helps you understand the tradition behind wedding invitation wording and helps you decide what to follow...and what to forget!

HOST LINE

Given the complicated dynamics of today's families, this is perhaps the one line that causes the most confusion. Traditionally, the hosts are whoever is paying for the wedding, but many couples wish to be more inclusive.

bride's parents hosting

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Carver

bride's and groom's parents sharing

[the bride's parents are always listed first]

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Carver
Dr. and Mrs. Emory Smith

bride's parents hosting, wanting to mention groom's parents

[this wording lets them be included even when they're not planning or paying for the wedding]

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Carver
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Andrea Ruth
to
Mr. Tyler Douglas Smith
son of Dr. and Mrs. Emory Smith

divorced parents hosting

[names are listed on separate lines (without 'and'), mother's name first. This example also shows wording if a parent has remarried]

Mrs. Ruth Carver
Mr. and Mrs. Nick Carver

couple hosting

Andrea Carver
and
Tyler Smith

couple hosting: want to include both families

[this is also a good solution for complex or delicate situations]

Together with their families
Andrea Carver
and
Tyler Smith

parent has passed away

[it's not traditional to include a deceased parent, but many people feel strongly about doing so. wording should make it clear that the deceased parent is not issuing the invitation]

The pleasure of your company is requested
at the marriage of
Andrea Ruth Carver
daughter of Nick Carver and the late Ruth Carver
to
Tyler Douglas Smith



REQUEST LINE

This is one of the few places on the invitation where you can be more creative with the wording, though invitations to ceremonies held in a place of worship traditionally follow conventional language, signifying the solemnity of the event.

ceremony at a place of worship
[british spelling is used on formal invitations] request the honour of your presence at the marriage of their daughter

ceremony at a secular location
[this is a common, less formal wording] request the pleasure of your company at the marriage of their daughter

informal, parents hosting
[you may use similar wording or think of your own] would be delighted by your presence at the wedding of their children

informal, couple hosting invite you to join them in celebrating their wedding

SOCIAL TITLES 101

Social titles, such as Mr. and Mrs. are used for the host line, and if you like, the bride and groom line, using *Miss* or *Ms.* for the bride.

For married hosts, the man's name follows the titles (*Mr. and Mrs. Michael Turnbull*); if you want the wife's name to appear, omit titles (*Michael and Patricia Turnbull*).

If a wife has kept her maiden name, list her name after her husband's, joined by *and*, and use Ms. (*Mr. Michael Turnbull and Ms. Patricia James*) or omit titles.

If titles are used, the person with the higher clerical, military, or governmental rank goes first.

BRIDE AND GROOM LINES

The names are listed on separate lines, with the bride's name first. They may be linked by "to" or by "and," which is customary for Jewish weddings.

traditional
[the bride's first name stands alone; the groom's name is preceded by "Mr.," and his last name is used] Andrea Ruth
to
Mr. Tyler Douglas Smith

contemporary
[you may use titles for both or omit them entirely; this is also appropriate when both sets of parents are hosting] Andrea Carver
to
Tyler Smith

DATE AND TIME LINES

It's not necessary to use a.m. or p.m., since the hour usually makes this obvious, but you can if you like. Alternately, you may substitute "in the morning," "noon," "in the afternoon," or "in the evening" as appropriate.

traditional
[the day and the month are capitalized; year and time are not. the year may also be omitted.] Saturday, the twenty-second of April
two thousand and ten
at half after four o'clock

contemporary
[this is still formal enough for a black tie wedding if it seems more suited to the design of the invitation] Saturday, April 22, 2010
at 4:30 p.m.

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LOCATION LINE

City landmarks and well-known locations don't require addresses. As shown, line breaks are used instead of commas, except to separate city and state.

ceremony at a place of worship

[for formal invitations, spell out "saint" and other common abbreviations]

Saint Bartholomew's Church
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

ceremony held in a location other than a place of worship

San Jacinto Ballroom
Four Seasons Hotel
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

unfamiliar location with address

[words like "our home" or "at the residence of" may precede the address. spelling out street numbers under twenty is most formal.]

The Carver House
6993 Darnell Lane
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

SPECIAL DETAILS

If you're having a cocktail reception or a punch-and-cake event, it's a good idea to say so on the invitation or reception card so no one will arrive expecting a full meal. Use wording such as *and afterward in the garden for cocktails* in place of the reception line.

If the style of dress is important, include an attire line in the bottom right corner of the invitation or on the reception card. it may specify *black tie* or *white tie*, or even *casual attire*, say, for a beach wedding.

And while it may seem practical to include details such as where you're registered or that you don't want gifts, it is *never* appropriate to do so on the invitation. Information like this is best conveyed by your relatives, or *only* when guests inquire.

RECEPTION LINE/RECEPTION CARD

Including a line on the invitation is most common these days, but if only some guests are invited to the ceremony, a separate card will be necessary.

on invitation—reception & ceremony at same location

and afterward at the reception

on invitation—reception and ceremony at different locations

Reception immediately following the ceremony
Four Seasons Hotel

separate reception card

[if the reception and the ceremony are in different places, and you want to include an address, a card keeps the invitation from looking too busy. when the reception doesn't immediately follow the ceremony, mention the time.]

Reception
seven o'clock

The Carver House
6993 Darnell Lane
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

RSVP LINE/REPLY CARD

While an r.s.v.p. line on the invitation is classic and very formal, enclosing a separate response card is an easier way to solicit a reliable head count.

on invitation

[place in lower left; include address if different from that on envelopes' flap. guests reply on their own stationary]

R.s.v.p.

separate response card

[clearly requests a reply, but blank space invites guests to write a personal note]

The favour of a reply is requested
before the first of April

separate "fill-in" response card

[a modern option, this also works well in the form of a postcard that guests return]

Please respond before the first of April

M _____
will _____ attend

