

WEDDING INVITATION ETIQUETTE GUIDE

How to Create Elegant Invitations for Your Wedding or other Special Occasion.

Composing YOUR INVITATION, RESPONSE AND RECEPTION CARDS

For truly formal events, there are certain rules of etiquette that are observed when writing an invitation. For less formal situations you can be more creative. Here are some things to remember when you're composing a formal invitation:

- Write out names in full, including middle names. Omit a middle name if necessary, rather than using an initial.
- It's appropriate to use the British spelling for "honour" and "favour", unless you prefer to use the American spelling of these words.
- Spell out all words, including the hour, the date and the year. Spell out all words in the address, including Street, Road and Avenue. The two exceptions to this rule in an address are Saint (St.) and Mount (Mt.)
- Use Roman numerals in names, rather than "the third" or "3rd."
- For ceremonies taking place in a house of worship, use "request the honour of your presence." Ceremonies taking place in a non-religious setting should say, "request the pleasure of your company."

Save the Date ANNOUNCEMENT WORDING

Miss Jane Smith and Mr. Stephen Richardson are very happy to announce our wedding date of September 23, 2004. We are sending this Save the Date Announcement to give you enough notice to reserve this day so you can spend it with us. Your formal invitation will arrive closer to the wedding date. We very much look forward to seeing you there!

Wedding INVITATION WORDING



With so many different types of families out there, wedding invitation wording can be complicated. Below are several **formal wedding invitation** wording examples for different family situations.

If you're composing a **formal party invitation**, include the names of those giving the party, the invitation phrase "request the pleasure of your company" in lieu of "request the honor of your presence", the type of party, the purpose of the party, the date, hour, place and RSVP information.

Wedding invitation wording examples for when the **parents of the bride are issuing the invitation**:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Evans Smith
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Jane Elizabeth

and
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Evans Smith
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Jane Elizabeth

and
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
son of
Mr. and Mrs. John Tyler Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Wedding invitation wording examples for when the **couple is issuing the invitation**:

Jane Elizabeth Smith
and
Stephen James Richardson
request the honour of your presence
at their marriage
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Together with their families
Jane Elizabeth Smith
and
Stephen James Richardson
request the honour of your presence
at their marriage
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Wedding invitation wording examples for when the **groom's parents host** (left) and for when **both sets of parents host** (right).

Jane Elizabeth Smith
and
Stephen James Richardson
request the honour of your presence
at their marriage
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Together with their families
Jane Elizabeth Smith
and
Stephen James Richardson
request the honour of your presence
at their marriage
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Wedding invitation wording examples for when the **bride's divorced and remarried parents co-host** (left) and for when the **bride's remarried mother and husband host** (right).

Mr. and Mrs. William Jones
and
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Evans Smith
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of
Jane Elizabeth Smith
to
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Mr. and Mrs. William Jones
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of Mrs. Jones' daughter
Jane Elizabeth Smith
and
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Wedding invitation wording examples for when the **bride's divorced mother (not remarried) hosts** (left) and for when the **bride's widowed mother/father hosts** (right).

Ms. Julia Franklin Smith
(maiden and married surnames)
or
Ms. Julia Franklin
(maiden name)
requests the honour of your presence
at the marriage of her daughter
Jane Elizabeth Smith
to
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Mr. (or Mrs.) Robert Evans Smith
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of his (or her) daughter
Jane Elizabeth
to
Mr. Stephen James Richardson
on Saturday, the ninth of June
two thousand and four
at two o'clock
First Church of Christ
219 North Granby Road
Granby, Connecticut

Here are two examples of **Reception Cards** The example on the left is for a reception taking place immediately following the ceremony. The example on the right is for a reception taking place later in the day.

Reception
immediately following the ceremony
Hopkinton Country Club
1 Country Club Road
Hopkinton, Massachusetts
Reply card enclosed

Reception Dinner
at seven o'clock
Hopkinton Country Club
1 Country Club Road
Hopkinton, Massachusetts
Reply card enclosed

Your **Response Card** could read as follows:

M _____
Accept _____ Regret _____
for the ninth of June

You can also include menu choices on the response card, if it's necessary to order the guests' meals in advance. You may also wish to include a separate sheet with a map or directions, if the ceremony or reception sites are difficult to find.

Wedding INVITATION ENVELOPE WORDING

Unsure of how to address wedding invitations? Below are various examples of the wording for formal wedding invitation outer and inner envelopes.

	Outer Envelope	Inner Envelope
	Single Guests	
Unmarried Woman over 18 or a Divorced Woman who retains her maiden name	Miss (or Ms.) Amy Smithers	Miss (or Ms.) Smithers and Guest
Divorced Woman who uses her married name	Mrs. Amy Carter	Mrs. Carter and Guest
Unmarried or Divorced Man	Mr. Howard Croft	Mr. Croft and Guest
	Couples	
Married Couples	Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Caldwell	Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell
Married Couple - when the woman kept maiden name	Mrs. Carol Thompson	Mrs. Thompson
Unmarried couples who do not share the same residence. You should send the invitation to the closest friend	Mr. John Sigenthaler	Mr. Sigenthaler
Unmarried couples who live together address alphabetically by last name	Miss (or Ms.) Amy Carter	Miss (or Ms.) Carter
Same gender couples - alphabetically by last name	Mr. John Stevenson	Mr. Stevenson
Children over 18 years old should be considered adults and receive their own invitation, even if still at the home of their parents who will also be invited to your wedding	Miss (or Ms.) Melissa Franklyn	Miss (or Ms.) Franklyn
	Miss (or Ms.) Stella Ziegler	Miss (or Ms.) Ziegler
	Miss Amy Carter	Miss Carter and Guest
	or	or
	Mr. Brian Atwater	Mr. Atwater and Guest
	Other	
Judge	The Honorable Thurgood Thompson (If Single)	Judge Thurgood
	The Honorable and Mrs. Thurgood Thompson (If married)	Judge Thurgood and Mrs. Thompson
Doctor (Medical)	Doctor Michael Stokes (If Single)	Doctor Stokes and Guest
	Doctor and Mrs. Michael Stokes (If married)	Doctor and Mrs. Stokes
Doctor (Ph.D.)	Dr. Harry Keller	Dr. Keller and Guest
Married Woman Doctor	Doctor Patricia Neddles	Doctor Neddles
	Mr. Charles Lyons	Mr. Lyons
Married Couple, Both Doctors	Doctors Sam and Mary Hepler	The Doctors Hepler
Clergy	The Reverend Jeremiah Whetheral	The Reverend Whetheral
Officer - Male who is active duty or retired from the service	General and Mrs. Barry Lynch	General and Mrs. Lynch
Officer - Female who is active duty or retired from the service	Captain Sandra Kellerman, U. S. Army	Lieutenant Kellerman
	Mr. Anthony Giminiani	Mr. Giminiani

Assembling YOUR INVITATIONS

Traditionally, there is a specific order for assembling invitations for mailing.

- With the back of the large envelope and the front of the invitation facing you, put the invitation and its protective tissue sheet in, folded edge first.
- On top of that, put in the reception invitation also facing up.
- Last, put in the response card, also printed side up. It should be lying within the flap of the small response envelope (which faces down).
- Any other insertions, such as a map or directions, should go in last.
- Address the outer envelope and the response envelope by hand. Use calligraphy if possible.
- Choose an attractive postage stamp that will complement the overall look of your invitations.
- Mail your invitations at least six to eight weeks in advance of your event so that your guests have ample time to make plans to attend.
- If you bring your invitations to the post office, you can request that they be hand cancelled that will minimize any unsightly marks or damage caused by machine cancelling.

Wedding Announcements WORDING and ETIQUETTE

Announcement cards are sent on the day of or shortly after a wedding if there were no invitations sent. They are often sent instead of invitations to friends who live at too far a distance to easily attend the ceremony. Announcements require no acknowledgment although it is customary for the recipient to send either a brief note expressing their best wishes; a gift is always appropriate but not required. The announcement can either be made on a formal invitation card or on fine cotton-fiber wedding stationery. This is the preferred form for the announcement card:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jones
announce the marriage of their daughter
Amy Rachael
with
Mr. Michael Allan Richardson
on Thursday, May the first
two thousand and four

When responding to a wedding announcement, you should first call the mother of the bride and then the bride herself to offer your good wishes.