

PAPER AFFAIR YORKTOWN | FINE STATIONERY

from Paper Affair.com, as directed from Crane & Co. in Crane's Blue Book of Stationery

WEDDING ETIQUETTE

FROM ANNOUNCING AN ENGAGEMENT TO THE FINAL DETAILS OF WRITING THANK YOU NOTES, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ETIQUETTE KNOWLEDGE THAT GOES INTO PLANNING A WEDDING. THERE ARE ENDLESS GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING STATIONERY ETIQUETTE. WE'VE TOUCHED ON THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BUT IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION NOT ANSWERED ON THIS SITE, YOU MAY EITHER CONTACT US OR REFER TO CRANE'S WEDDING BLUE BOOK, AS THAT IS THE DOCUMENT WE GO TO FOR ANSWERS.

Q I WOULD LIKE TO SEND ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS, BUT I AM AFRAID PEOPLE WILL THINK I AM ASKING FOR A GIFT.

A ONCE YOU BECOME ENGAGED, IT IS NICE TO SHARE THE NEWS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS BY SENDING OUT ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS. YOU MAY ANNOUNCE THE ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEWSPAPER, BUT THEY ONLY REACH THOSE WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THAT PAPER. AN ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT IS NOT A REQUEST FOR A GIFT. IT IS SIMPLY INTENDED TO ANNOUNCE AN EVENT & YOUR ENGAGEMENT. NOBODY RECEIVING AN ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD FEEL OBLIGATED TO SEND A GIFT.

Q WHAT IS A SAVE THE DATE CARD AND HOW DO I KNOW IF I SHOULD SEND ONE?

A IF YOU ARE PLANNING YOUR WEDDING AROUND A HOLIDAY OR DURING A BUSY TRAVEL SEASON LIKE SUMMER, IT IS BEST TO SEND SAVE THE DATE CARDS TO OUT OF TOWN GUESTS. THESE CARDS INFORM FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF YOUR UPCOMING WEDDING SO THAT THEY CAN "SAVE THE DATE" AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY. IT IS BEST TO SEND THESE CARDS FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE A WEDDING. BECAUSE A SAVE THE DATE CARD IS ONE OF THE FIRST ITEMS YOU SEND BEFORE YOUR WEDDING, THEY SHOULD MATCH THE STYLE OF YOUR WEDDING INVITE.

EVEN IF YOUR WEDDING IS TAKING PLACE DURING A NON-BUSY SEASON, YOU MAY WISH TO SEND SAVE THE DATE CARDS TO GUESTS THAT WOULD BE COMING FROM OVERSEAS SO THAT THEY WILL HAVE AMPLE TIME TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS. HOWEVER, IF THEY ARE SENT ONLY TO YOUR OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS, AND YOUR OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS SPEAK TO YOUR IN-TOWN GUESTS, YOUR IN-TOWN GUESTS MIGHT FEEL SLIGHTED, THINKING THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO BE INVITED TO YOUR WEDDING. SO IF YOU PLAN TO SEND THEM OUT, IT'S BEST TO INCLUDE EVERYONE ON YOUR GUEST LIST.

Q WHAT STATIONERY PIECES MAKE UP A TRADITIONAL WEDDING INVITATION SET?

A THERE ARE FIVE BASIC PARTS TO A WEDDING INVITATION SET:

1. INVITATION
2. OUTER ENVELOPE
3. INNER ENVELOPE (OPTIONAL)
4. REPLY CARD
5. RECEPTION CARD (IF THE RECEPTION IS HELD AT A DIFFERENT PLACE THAN THE WEDDING IS HELD)

OTHER ACCESSORIES THAT MAY BE INCLUDED ARE TISSUE PAPER, DIRECTION CARDS, AND ACCOMMODATION CARDS.

Q HOW DO I SELECT MY WEDDING INVITATION?

A YOUR WEDDING INVITATION SHOULD REFLECT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE, AND THE STYLE AND FORMALITY OF YOUR WEDDING. IF YOU ARE HAVING YOUR WEDDING IN A PLACE OF WORSHIP, YOU MAY WISH TO USE A CLASSIC WHITE OR ECRU PAPER PRINTED IN BLACK OR DARK GRAY, INK USING A SCRIPT FONT. THIS WILL TELL THE RECIPIENT THAT THIS WILL BE A FORMAL AFFAIR. IF YOU ARE GETTING MARRIED ON THE BEACH, YOU WILL WANT TO USE SOFTER COLORS AND A MORE CASUAL INVITATION AND TYPESTYLE. THE INVITATION SPECIALISTS AT PAPER AFFAIR WILL GUIDE YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Q WHEN SHOULD I MAIL MY WEDDING INVITATIONS?

A INVITATIONS CAN BE MAILED UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT DEPENDING ON WHERE THEY ARE BEING MAILED TO. WE SUGGEST MAILING OUT OF TOWN INVITES 8 WEEKS IN ADVANCE AND IN TOWN 6 WEEKS IN ADVANCE. MAKE SURE YOU CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE FOR EXACT MAILING COSTS.

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WEDDING ETIQUETTE, CONTINUED

Q THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO COMPOSE WEDDING INVITATIONS, HOW DO I DECIDE?

A YOU DECIDE BY CHOOSING THE WORDING THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO YOUR OCCASION AND THERE ARE VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD GUIDELINES IF YOU WOULD LIKE THE MOST TRADITIONAL WORDING. TYPICALLY, A WEDDING INVITATION IS ISSUED BY THE PARENTS OF THE BRIDE. IF THE CEREMONY IS TAKING PLACE IN A PLACE OF WORSHIP, YOU WOULD "REQUEST THE HONOUR OF ONE'S PRESENCE". IF OUTSIDE A PLACE OF WORSHIP, IT IS CUSTOMARY TO "REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF ONE'S COMPANY". MANY INVITATIONS NOW DAYS INCLUDE THE GROOM'S PARENTS AS WELL. TO VIEW WORDING SAMPLES, REFER TO OUR SUGGESTED WORDING WITHIN THE ORDER WIZARD ADJACENT TO WHERE YOU ENTER YOUR COPY.

Q MY FATHER GOES BY HIS MIDDLE NAME AND HE HATES HIS FIRST NAME. HOW DO I WORD THE INVITATION?

A THERE ARE VERY FEW EVENTS IN LIFE IN WHICH YOU MAY USE YOUR FULL BIRTH NAME. A WEDDING IS ONE OF THOSE OCCASIONS. FORMAL WEDDING INVITATIONS REQUIRE THE USE OF FULL NAMES. NICKNAMES AND INITIALS SHOULD NOT BE USED. THE ONLY ABBREVIATIONS THAT SHOULD BE USED INCLUDE MR., MRS., JR., SR. AND DR. IF THE DOCTOR'S NAME IS EXCEPTIONALLY LONG. IF YOUR FATHER INSISTS ON NOT USING HIS FIRST NAME, IT IS BETTER TO OMIT IT ENTIRELY THAN TO USE AN INITIAL. IF SOMEONE FEELS VERY STRONGLY ABOUT THE LISTING OF THEIR NAME, WE RECOMMEND YOU DO WHAT MAKES ALL PARTIES MOST COMFORTABLE.

Q MY PARENTS ARE DIVORCED. HOW DO I LIST THEIR NAMES ON THE INVITATION?

A SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN WORDING WEDDING INVITATIONS OCCUR WHEN THE PARENTS OF THE BRIDE ARE DIVORCED. THERE ARE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD RULES TO HANDLE THESE SITUATIONS BUT ETIQUETTE SHOULD NEVER BE ADHERED TO AT THE COST OF DAMAGING A RELATIONSHIP. ITS PURPOSE IS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIP, NOT TO HARM THEM. THERE ARE WAYS TO HANDLE ANY SITUATION THAT WILL ACCOMMODATE EVERYBODY INVOLVED.

THE PROPER WAY TO WORD AN INVITATION WHEN THE BRIDE'S PARENTS ARE DIVORCED IS TO LIST THE NAMES OF THE BRIDE'S PARENTS AT THE TOP OF THE INVITATION. HER MOTHER'S NAME IS ON THE FIRST LINE AND HER FATHER'S NAME IS ON THE LINE BENEATH IT. THE LINES ARE NOT SEPARATED BY "AND."

IF THE BRIDE'S MOTHER HAS NOT REMARRIED, SHE USES "MRS." FOLLOWED BY HER FIRST NAME, MIDDLE/MAIDEN NAME AND HER LAST NAME. THE OLD ETIQUETTE CALLED FOR USING JUST HER MAIDEN NAME AND HER LAST NAME, PRECEDED BY "MRS." THE CHANGE EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS AS IT WAS INCREASINGLY FELT THAT THE OLD USAGE WAS TOO IMPERSONAL.

WHEN THE BRIDE'S MOTHER IS DIVORCED FROM THE BRIDE'S FATHER AND HAS REMARRIED, SHE USES "MRS." FOLLOWED BY HER HUSBAND'S FULL NAME.

Q MY FATHER PASSED AWAY LAST YEAR AND I WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE HIS NAME ON MY WEDDING INVITATION. HOW IS THAT DONE?

A WHEN ONE OF THE BRIDE'S PARENTS IS DECEASED, HER WEDDING INVITATIONS ARE ISSUED BY HER SURVIVING PARENT. HIS OR HER NAME APPEARS ALONE ON THE INVITATIONAL LINE.

A WIDOW RETAINS THE USE OF HER HUSBAND'S NAME. IF SHE HAS NOT REMARRIED, SHE CONTINUES TO BE KNOWN AS "MRS. MORTON TYLER WILLIAMS." A DIVORCED WOMAN USES "MRS." FOLLOWED BY HER FIRST, MIDDLE/MAIDEN, AND MARRIED NAMES. IF YOUR MOTHER WOULD RATHER USE HER FIRST NAME, SHE SHOULD DO SO WITHOUT HER TITLE. USING NAMES WITHOUT TITLES ON AN INVITATION, HOWEVER, IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED INCORRECT AND MAKES THE INVITATION LESS FORMAL THAN IT OTHERWISE WOULD BE. IF YOUR MOTHER'S TITLE IS OMITTED, ALL OTHER TITLES SHOULD BE LEFT OFF THE INVITATION AS WELL TO KEEP THE WORDING OF THE INVITATION CONSISTENT.

WHILE WISHING TO INCLUDE A DECEASED PARENT'S NAME ON A WEDDING INVITATION IS A LOVELY SENTIMENT, IT IS NOT PROPER TO DO SO (EXCEPT IN LATIN AMERICA). YOUR FATHER'S NAME IS, OF COURSE, MENTIONED IN YOUR NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENT AND MAY ALSO BE MENTIONED IN THE WEDDING PROGRAM AND DURING A PRAYER SAID DURING THE SERVICE. YOUR WEDDING IS A JOYOUS OCCASION. REMINDING YOUR GUESTS OF YOUR FATHER'S DEATH BY ADDING "AND THE LATE MR. MORTON TYLER WILLIAMS" INTRODUCES AN ELEMENT OF SADNESS TO AN OTHERWISE JOYOUS OCCASION.

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WEDDING ETIQUETTE, CONTINUED

Q MY FIANCÉ AND I ARE PAYING FOR OUR WEDDING. HOW IS THAT INDICATED?

A AS LONG AS THEY ARE ALIVE, YOUR PARENTS PROPERLY ISSUE YOUR WEDDING INVITATIONS, REGARDLESS OF WHO IS PAYING. WEDDING INVITATIONS ARE WORDED THE WAY THEY ARE TO REFLECT THE TRADITION OF THE BRIDE'S FAMILY GRACIOUSLY GIVING AWAY THE BRIDE WHILE INVITING FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO JOIN THEM FOR THIS HAPPY OCCASION. THEREFORE, THERE IS NO PLACE TO INDICATE WHO IS PAYING THE BILLS. IF AFTER THIS EXPLANATION, YOU STILL FEEL A NEED TO LET PEOPLE KNOW WHO IS PICKING UP THE TAB, MOST PEOPLE WILL ASSUME THAT THE TWO OF YOU ARE PAYING FOR YOUR WEDDING IF YOUR PARENTS' NAMES ARE NOT MENTIONED.

Q MY WEDDING IS TAKING PLACE AT 5:30 P.M. HOW WOULD I WORD THE DATE AND TIME ON MY INVITATION?

A ON MOST WEDDING INVITATIONS, THE DATE AND TIME ARE ALWAYS FULLY WRITTEN OUT. ABBREVIATIONS AND NUMERALS SHOULD NEVER BE USED. THE DATE LINE SHOULD READ, "SATURDAY, THE FOURTH OF DECEMBER" AND ON THE NEXT LINE, THE YEAR, "TWO THOUSAND AND FIVE". THE TIME LINE ON THE INVITATION SHOULD BE IN ALL LOWER CASE AND READ "AT HALF AFTER FIVE O'CLOCK." IT IS IMPORTANT TO ALSO INCLUDE WHETHER THE WEDDING IS TAKING PLACE IN THE MORNING, AFTERNOON OR EVENING IF IT IS UNCLEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU ARE MARRYING AT 8:00 P.M., IT SHOULD READ "AT EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING" BUT FOR A MID-DAY WEDDING, IT'S CLEAR WHEN IT WILL BE OCCURRING, SO "AT TWO O'CLOCK" IS ALL THAT'S REQUIRED.

Q IS IT IMPROPER TO INCLUDE THE RECEPTION INVITATION ON THE WEDDING INVITATION?

A WHEN THE WEDDING AND RECEPTION TAKE PLACE AT THE SAME LOCATION, IT IS PROPER TO ADD A LINE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE INVITATION, AFTER THE CITY AND STATE OF THE CEREMONY LOCATION, READING, "AND AFTERWARDS AT THE RECEPTION" OR "RECEPTION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING." HOWEVER, IF THE RECEPTION IS HELD AT A DIFFERENT LOCATION FROM THE CEREMONY, A SEPARATE CARD SHOULD BE USED.

Q WHAT IS THE "M" FOR ON A RESPONSE CARD?

A THE "M" IS PROVIDED TO LEAD YOU INTO YOUR TITLE. IF YOU ARE A MRS., YOU WOULD SIMPLY FILL IN THE REST OF THE LINE WITH A "RS." IF YOU ARE MARRIED, YOU WOULD FILL THE LINE LIKE SO: MR. AND MRS. JOHN DOE.

Q WHAT DATE SHOULD I PUT AS MY RESPOND BY DATE ON THE RESPONSE CARDS?

A UNLESS YOUR CATERER REQUIRES MORE LEAD TIME, TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE.

Q IS IT IMPROPER TO INCLUDE WHERE I AM REGISTERED ON MY WEDDING INVITATION?

A YES! YOU ARE BASICALLY ASKING FOR A GIFT WHEN YOU DO SO. IT IS BEST TO JUST WAIT TO BE ASKED BY THE GUEST.

Q MY WEDDING IS VERY FORMAL, HOW SHOULD I LET MY GUESTS KNOW SO THEY CAN DRESS PROPERLY?

A IT IS IN POOR TASTE TO INCLUDE A DRESS CODE ON YOUR INVITATION, EVEN IF YOU ARE REQUESTING BLACK-TIE. THE FORMALITY OF THE INVITATION ITSELF SHOULD EXPRESS THE DRESS CODE FOR THE PARTY.

Q HOW DO I ASSEMBLE MY WEDDING INVITATIONS?

A FOR THE MOST PART, WEDDING INVITATIONS ARE ASSEMBLED IN SIZE ORDER. THE INVITATION ITSELF IS FIRST. THE ENCLOSURE CARDS ARE STACKED ON TOP OF THE INVITATIONS, NOT INSIDE ANY FOLDS. THE RECEPTION CARD IS PLACED ON TOP OF THE INVITATION. THEN THE REPLY ENVELOPE IS PLACED FACE DOWN ON THE RECEPTION CARD. THE REPLY CARD IS SLIPPED FACE UP BENEATH THE FLAP OF THE REPLY ENVELOPE. THESE ARE THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED ENCLOSURES. ANY OTHER ENCLOSURES ARE ADDED FACE UP IN SIZE ORDER (USUALLY AT-HOME CARD, DIRECTION CARD, ACCOMMODATION CARD, PEW CARD, ETC.) WITH ALL WORDING IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS THE INVITATION.

HOLD THE INVITATION AND ITS ENCLOSURES WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND AND INSERT THEM INTO THE INNER ENVELOPE, WHICH IS IN YOUR LEFT HAND. IF WHEN INSERTING, YOU CAN READ THE INVITATION WITHOUT TURNING IT, IT IS STUFFED CORRECTLY. ONCE STUFFED, THE INNER ENVELOPES ARE INSERTED INTO THE OUTER ENVELOPES SO THAT THE FRONT OF THE INNER ENVELOPE FACES THE BACK OF THE OUTER ENVELOPE.

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Q WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TISSUE INCLUDED IN WEDDING INVITATIONS?

A ALL WEDDING INVITATIONS WERE ONCE SHIPPED WITH SMALL PIECES OF TISSUE SEPARATING EACH INVITATION. THIS PREVENTED THE SLOW-DRYING INK FROM SMUDGING. BEFORE MAILING, THEY WERE REMOVED, AS THEY WERE MERELY PACKING MATERIAL AND SERVED NO POINT OF ETIQUETTE. THROUGH THE YEARS, MANY BRIDES, UNAWARE OF THE IMPROPRIETY OF SENDING TISSUED INVITATIONS, LEFT THE TISSUES IN. AS THIS PRACTICE GREW, TISSUED INVITATIONS BECAME AS PROPER AS NONTISSUED INVITATIONS.

TODAY, WEDDING INVITATIONS ARE PROPERLY SENT BOTH WAYS. TISSUES ARE STARTING TO SERVE AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION ONCE AGAIN AS THE POSTAL SERVICE'S SORTING EQUIPMENT CAN CAUSE SMUDGING ON INVITATIONS WITHOUT TISSUES. IF YOU ARE SENDING INVITATIONS WITHOUT TISSUES, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO ASK THE POST OFFICE TO HAND CANCEL THEM. HAND CANCELING ALSO PREVENTS THE POSTAL SERVICE FROM PRINTING THEIR ADVERTISING, DISGUISED AS A PART OF THE CANCELLATION MARK, ON YOUR WEDDING INVITATIONS.

THE TISSUES SHOULD BE PLACED OVER THE COPY ON EACH INVITATION AND ENCLOSURE.

Q WHY DID MY WEDDING INVITATIONS COME WITH DOUBLE ENVELOPES?

A WEDDING INVITATIONS WERE ONCE DELIVERED BY HAND. IF YOU WERE A BRIDE BACK IN THOSE DAYS, YOUR FOOTMAN DELIVERED YOUR INVITATIONS TO YOUR GUESTS' HOMES. THEIR SERVANTS RECEIVED THE INVITATIONS AND REMOVED THEM FROM THEIR MAILING ENVELOPE, AN ENVELOPE MUCH TOO PEDESTRIAN FOR YOUR GUESTS TO HANDLE THEMSELVES. THE SERVANTS, THEN, PRESENTED THE INVITATION TO YOUR GUESTS IN ITS PRISTINE INSIDE ENVELOPE. BECAUSE THE INVITATIONS WERE ALREADY AT THEIR DESTINATION, THE INSIDE ENVELOPES HAD ONLY THE NAMES OF YOUR GUESTS WRITTEN ON THEM. THE ADDRESS WAS NO LONGER NEEDED. THEY JUST HAD TO BE DIRECTED TO THE APPROPRIATE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

WEDDING INVITATIONS ARE STILL SENT IN TWO ENVELOPES. THE OUTSIDE ENVELOPE IS THE MAILING ENVELOPE. IT'S LARGER AND IS GUMMED. YOUR GUESTS' NAMES ARE REPEATED ON THE INSIDE ENVELOPE, WHICH IS A BIT SMALLER AND NOT GUMMED. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, ONLY THEIR TITLES AND SURNAMES ARE USED. IF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN ARE INVITED, THEIR FIRST NAMES WOULD APPEAR ON A LINE BENEATH THEIR PARENTS' NAMES.

Q MY WEDDING PAPERS DO NOT OFFER A DOUBLE ENVELOPE AS IT'S A HANDMADE PAPER FROM ITALY. HOW DO I HANDLE ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPES?

A DOUBLE ENVELOPES ARE LESS ETIQUETTE THAN THEY ARE TRADITION AND MOST POPULAR IN AMERICA THAN EUROPE. SEE ENVELOPE ADDRESSING ETIQUETTE FOR SUGGESTIONS ON ADDRESSING OUTER ONLY ENVELOPES.

Q IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO SEND THANK-YOU NOTES BEFORE MY WEDDING?

A YOU CERTAINLY MAY SEND THANK-YOU NOTES BEFORE YOUR WEDDING. SENDING THEM AS YOU RECEIVE THE GIFTS IS NOT ONLY A COURTESY TO THE PEOPLE WHO SENT THEM, IT ALSO CUTS DOWN THE NUMBER YOU WILL NEED TO SEND AFTERWARDS. HOWEVER, REMEMBER AT THAT POINT YOU STILL NEED TO USE STATIONERY PERSONALIZED WITH YOUR MAIDEN-NAME MONOGRAM.