

## THE PLANNER

STATIONERY



# Invitations 101

Wondering about wording? Confused by card enclosures? From conceiving a personalized design to mailing the finished product, here's your definitive guide to the what, when, and how of wedding invites.

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**GOOD TO KNOW**  
*If you enclose directions or a map card, you can leave the street address of the venue off the invitation. Just make sure you choose a clearly legible typeface, such as a blocky sans serif, so the inserts are easy to read (and follow!).*



### ANATOMY OF A SUITE

Here are the most common parts of a standard package, laid out in the order in which they'd be assembled. But there's no set number of elements that an invitation *must* include. Feel free to add or subtract things, depending on the formality of your affair.

3. Invitation

THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY  
IS REQUESTED AT THE MARRIAGE  
OF  
Mr. Murphy and Ms. Kelly

CALLIE ANN PARKER

· TO ·

KYLE STROUD BRADFORD

SATURDAY, THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER  
TWO THOUSAND THIRTY-THREE  
AT HALF PAST FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON  
· BEAULIEU GARDE ·  
Rutherford, California

dinner & dancing to follow

5. Reception Card

CELEBRATE

JOIN US AFTER THE CEREMONY  
FOR COCKTAILS AT FIVE O'CLOCK  
DINNER AT HALF PAST SIX  
· ON THE TERRACE ·

6. Reply Envelope

7. Reply Card

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### CREATING YOUR SUITE

First comes budgeting and brainstorming, then the fun of designing.

### 2. CHOOSE YOUR DESIGN

A few guests may skip the cake or miss the first dance, but every attendee will open an invitation. Because it's so visible—and seen early in the wedding timeline, your stationery should capture the spirit of the event.

Let your venue and palette inform your choices: If you're getting married by a lei-wearing officiant on a

Hawaiian beach, opt for a colorful, modern suite with a seaside motif. A religious ceremony at a house of worship, on the other hand, calls for the traditional wording of a formal invitation.

### 4. SUBMIT YOUR ORDER

Whether you're working with a stationer to customize your suite or buying pre-designed invitations online, put in your order at least three months before your wedding. This should leave plenty of time for the invites to be printed, assembled, addressed, and slipped into the mail at least four weeks before the big day. Be sure to request physical proofs of your invitations before committing to a larger order. Once you've reviewed those and are completely satisfied, buy 10 percent more than you think you'll need in case your list changes or you damage a few while handling. Any leftover pieces make touching keepsakes, too.

### I. SET YOUR BUDGET

This initial step simply can't be skipped: Knowing what you can spend will help keep you focused as you shop. While costs vary widely depending on the printing method, ink, number of enclosures, and quantity ordered, the good news is that stationery should eat up only 2 to 3 percent of your overall budget—a small price for one of the most impactful details of your day.

### 3. PICK YOUR PRINTING PROCESS

The print method you select is integral to your suite design. These are the most common options:

**Letterpress** Blocks of metal with raised type are inked and pressed onto paper, leaving deep impressions on the surface. Creative types love this pricey technique for its hand-done, one-of-a-kind effect.

**Engraving** A design is etched onto a copper plate and filled with ink. When a heavy weight pushes paper onto it, crisp, raised type is formed. One of the oldest methods (and often the most expensive), it's still the gold standard for black-tie affairs.

**Thermography** Raised letters are created by applying ink to paper, dusting it with a resinous powder, then heating the mix. If you want a look similar to engraving at about half the cost, this simpler process is a good choice.



**Flat Printing** A catch-all term for offset and digital techniques, this inexpensive, informal, and very flexible method produces stationery that's smooth to the touch, with no raised or recessed type.

### Invitation Etiquette: Kids or No Kids?

When sending invites, it's not one per person, but one per family. Which brings up a question we hear often: How do I let guests know their kids aren't welcome? Technically, when a child's name is left off the envelope (inner *and* outer if your suite has both), he or she is not invited. But since many people aren't aware of this protocol, it's best to let your guests know—politely—via old fashioned word-of-mouth; have friends or relatives spread the news.

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### WORKING THE WORDING

The text on an invite is chock-full of hidden meaning. And the placement of the names depends largely on who's footing the bill. Use our CliffsNotes to four common scenarios.

#### 2. WHEN BOTH FAMILIES ARE HOSTING

Put the bride's parents' names at the top of the invite, then the groom's parents' names.

"Pleasure of your company" indicates that the ceremony will be held at a secular venue.

List your mom first, dad second, but don't use "and" to connect the two; they each get their own separate line.

Include this line when the ceremony and reception are taking place in the same location.

On a ceremony invite, "to" should be the joining word between the couple's names—except for Jewish and Catholic services, which take "and" as the connector.

MR. AND MRS. MICHAEL PETER ROBISON AND  
MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEPHEN HALLER  
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY  
AT THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR CHILDREN  
**LIANNA ROSE & ANDREW LIAM**  
SATURDAY, THE FOURTEENTH OF JUNE  
AT HALF AFTER FIVE O'CLOCK  
CHURCHILL DOWNS  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY  
AND AFTERWARD AT THE RECEPTION

MRS. MARJORIE HOLLOWAY HARMON  
MR. ELI DAVID HARMON  
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY  
AT THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR DAUGHTER  
  
JESSY LOUISE  
TO  
MR. BROOKS JEFFREY SIMON  
  
SATURDAY, THE TWENTY-THIRD OF AUGUST  
TWO THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN AT SEVEN O'CLOCK  
ARCTIC CLUB HOTEL - SEATTLE, WASHINGTON  
AND  
AFTERWARD AT THE RECEPTION

#### 1. WHEN THE BRIDE'S (STILL-MARRIED) PARENTS ARE HOSTING

*Mr. and Mrs. Robert John Carroll  
request the honour  
of your presence at the marriage  
of their daughter*

*Maria Christine*

*to  
Mr. Gareth William Forster  
  
Saturday, the thirty-first of May  
Two thousand and fourteen  
at six o'clock  
St. Paul's Church*

Always include your parents' full names, with middle names, and never their initials.

Use "honour" when the vows are taking place in a house of worship.

You don't need to include the year, but if you choose to, spell it out and cap the first "T" in "Two thousand."

**KATHRYN JANE DABLOW  
AND  
JEREMIAH AARON LEWIS**

INVITE YOU TO SHARE IN  
THEIR WEDDING  
SATURDAY, THE NINETEENTH  
OF JULY  
AT TWO O'CLOCK

501 UNION STREET  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

*Ceremony and dancing to follow*

Traditionalists will tell you that the bride's parents, if still alive, should appear at the top of the invitation no matter who's paying. Though today, many couples add the opening line, "Together with their parents..."

## ADDRESSING YOUR GUESTS

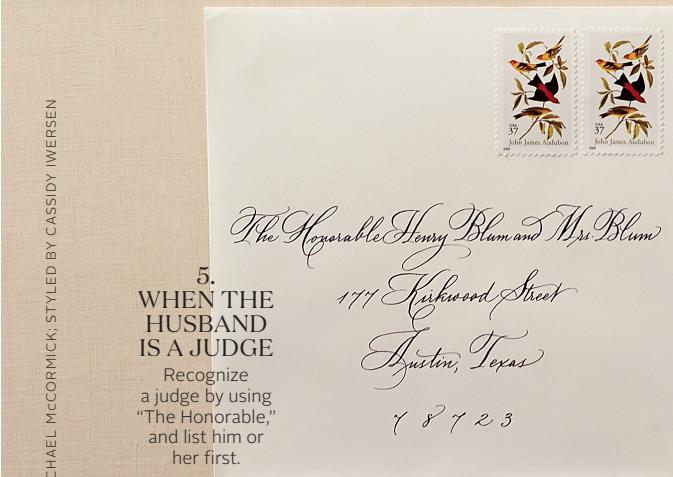
In this case, what's on the outside counts, too. Here's how to annotate your envelopes.



3.

### TO A FAMILY OF FIVE

Even when kids are invited, the outside envelope should be addressed only to their parents. Children's names should appear on the inner envelope on the line beneath Mom and Dad's. Start with the oldest, followed by his or her siblings in order of diminishing age.



ART DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MCCORMICK; STYLED BY CASSIDY IVERSEN

*Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Lee*

342 Apple Lane  
Bend, Oregon 97701



### 1. TO A MARRIED COUPLE

No need to have the husband's middle name, but if you do, write it out in full rather than using an initial.

### 2. TO A COUPLE WITH DIFFERENT LAST NAMES

Whether they're living together or not, address the female guest first. If it's a married couple in which the wife has chosen to keep her maiden name, "Ms." can be used.



*Ms. Caroline Kelly and Mr. Dean Murphy  
847 Kensington Avenue  
Ames, Iowa 50010*

### 4. WHEN THE WIFE IS A DOCTOR

We're about to get old-school on you: Technically, since her degree "outranks" her husband's social title of "Mr.," the wife should be listed first, with "Doctor" spelled out.



DOCTOR MARGARET STOWE AND MR. KEN POWERS

5492 SCENIC VALLEY DRIVE

HENDERSON, NEVADA 89012

### Etiquette for Adding a Plus-One

Spouses of attendees should always be invited. When it comes to your pals' significant others or dates, to add or not to add becomes a question. Use your discretion depending on your budget and how long the couple have been together (six months is a good gauge). If you are inviting someone with a plus-one, try to find out the name and address of his or her date and send two separate invitations. If that's not possible, address the outside envelope to the primary invitee, with the inside envelope reading "Ms. Jane Doe and Guest."

+ For more wording advice and suite inspiration, check out martha stewartweddings.com/stationery