



Etiquette Guide
for *Brides to Be*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why is etiquette important?	3
Social vs. Professional Standards	3
Wedding Invitation Envelopes – One Envelope or Two?	3
Before You Assemble the Invitations	4
Preparing Your Address List	6
Addressing Etiquette - Guests' Names	7
Inner Envelope Etiquette	8
Etiquette No-No's	9
Outer/Inner Envelopes – Impeccable	10
Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Impeccable	10
Outer/Inner Envelopes – Proper	11
Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Proper	11
Outer/Inner Envelopes – Informal	12
Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Informal	12
Religious Titles	13
Military Titles	13
Addressing Envelopes to Dignitaries	14
Assembling the Invitations	14
Place Cards & Escort Cards –Tips for Name Format	15
PenDance Studio - Hand Calligraphy & Computer Calligraphy Services	16
Questions? Comments?	16
Acknowledgements	16





Why is etiquette important?

Etiquette provides us with standards for proper behavior and conduct. It guides us in how relate to others with common courtesy and respect in social situations. Etiquette also serves to make your guests feel welcome.

Since weddings range from very formal to casual affairs, we are presenting this **Addressing Etiquette Guide** in three styles:

1. **Impeccable (Very Formal)**
2. **Proper (Correct)**
3. **Informal (Casual)**

Brides and their families can choose which level of formality they wish to convey on their wedding invitations, place cards, and escort cards.

Social vs. Professional Standards

Weddings are social occasions, so the rules outlined in this guide refer to how to address envelopes for such occasions. Addressing etiquette for professional occasions may be different.

Wedding Invitation Envelopes – One Envelope or Two?

Wedding invitation suites will either include an outer/inner envelope set or a single outer envelope. Most square invitations only come with one outer envelope.

The outer envelope's purpose is to convey the invitation to the address where the guests reside. It is addressed to those who are the owners or renters of that residence.

The inner envelope's purpose is to state who is actually invited to the wedding. Therefore, additional guests, escorts, children or other adults are written only on the inner envelopes. If a person or child is not listed on the inner envelope, then etiquette states that he/she is not invited to the wedding.

All of the invitation pieces will be placed in the inner envelope, which is then slipped names-side-up into the outer envelope.

If you have chosen not to use inner envelopes for your invitations, then your outer envelopes must list all the names of those invited to the wedding.

Before You Assemble the Invitations

- If you would like to personalize each reply card with the names of your guests (so they don't have to write it themselves), ask your stationer to design the RSVP card with several lines to allow for writing in their names. Then you won't have to use the "M" or "Names" text at the beginning of the blank line.
- Addressing envelopes can take quite a bit of time, but the good news is that it can easily be delegated! **Hire a professional calligrapher or enlist the help of friends and family** with neat, legible handwriting, to allow you to spend time on other wedding details!
- If hiring a calligrapher, secure one as soon as possible since many calligraphers can book up weeks or months in advance.
- If you are hiring a calligrapher, plan to order **10-15% extra envelopes** to allow for errors, address changes, forgotten guests, relationship changes, etc. It's less expensive to order extras when placing the order than doing it later, especially if there is a time crunch. If friends or family are helping with addressing, order **15-20% more**.
- Estimate that a calligrapher will need about 1 week turnaround per 100 invitations. For other tips on working with a calligrapher, please visit pendancestudio.com/blog.
- Prepare your address list in numbered, alphabetical, format in a database like Excel. You can merge your list from Excel into Word to create the label format to address from, or hire someone to do that for you. (**PenDance will do this task for clients.**)

- Download PenDance's **Excel template** which includes addressing etiquette tips!
- Merge your Excel list into **Label Format** for addressing, since it's easier to visualize how addresses will appear on the envelopes. You'll catch errors in the addresses that you didn't see in spreadsheet format. A spreadsheet is also more difficult to address from since it's easy to make mistakes by picking up the wrong information as you go across the page.
- If you are using double envelopes, you can list the outer envelope address first, then the inner envelope information underneath or next to it:

Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Silver
 1214 Tussy Mussy Lane
 Tea Pot, Texas 77079

Mr. and Mrs. Silver
 Tiffany and Angelique



Preparing Your Address List

- Alphabetize the list by last name and number the addresses or pages for easier reference.
- Include middle names for very formal affairs. If you do not know a guest's middle name, leave it off and do not use an initial.
- Move international addresses to the top of the list if you want to mail their invitations earlier than the other addresses.
- Make sure all titles have the proper punctuation (Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc.). 'Miss' is not an abbreviation therefore does not have a period at the end.
- Use both upper- and lowercase letters, not all caps.
- Spell out all postal and state abbreviations (Post Office Box, Boulevard, Avenue, Lane, North, West, Texas, California, etc.).
- Spell out numbers one through ten in street addresses, like this: [Eight Mockingbird Lane](#)
- Spell out 'Number', 'Apartment', 'Unit', or 'Suite' and place them on a separate line from the street location. Don't use "Apartment Number" or "Unit Number" since these terms are redundant.
- If you would like to include the number or apartment on the same line as the street by using a bullet symbol like this: [13810 Apple Tree Lane • 100](#)
- Zip codes need to only be 5-digits. The extra 4 digits (additional segment identifier) aren't necessary.



Addressing Etiquette - Guests' Names

- Married couples with different last names are noted with “and” between their names and their names appear on separate lines. The “and” appears at the beginning of the second line.
 - » Some etiquette guides state that the names of couples with different last names should appear on the same line. If you prefer this format, just note that most calligraphers will still count each name as one line even if they are written on the same line, so it will count as two lines for pricing purposes.
 - » Also, having to fit two full names on one line means that they may have to be written smaller to squeeze onto one line, and the address will probably have to be written smaller as well.
- Unmarried couples' names are not joined with “and” and their names appear on separate lines. The woman's name appears first.
- For medical doctors, “Dr.” can be spelled “Doctor” or abbreviated. PhD's are not referred to as ‘Dr.’ in social situations. However, if not using Dr. would cause offense to a PhD, then go ahead and use it.
- Doctoral suffixes (PhD) or ‘Esquire’ are NOT used on social invitations.
- The suffixes ‘junior’ and ‘senior’ are all lowercase when spelled out. If you abbreviate them, use ‘Jr.’ and ‘Sr.’. Examples: Mr. John Smith, junior OR Mr. John Smith, Jr.
- Suffixes are used only on the outer envelopes, NOT the inners.
- Widows generally are addressed using their husbands' first names, unless they prefer otherwise. Example: Mrs. John Smith.
- Using ‘Mrs.’ with a woman's first name connotes that she is a **divorcee**.
- Girls have the title ‘Miss’ until they are married. However, the use of ‘Ms.’ is popular for ladies who are living on their own. Use whichever title is preferred by your guest.

- Boys are titled 'Master' until age 13. After 13 they are 'Mr.'
- Adults who are living together, but not in a relationship with each other, should receive separate invitations. Children who are old enough to bring guests should also receive separate invitations.

Inner Envelope Etiquette

- When using informal names on the inner envelopes such as 'Uncle Joe and Aunt Sherry', reference these guests from the point of view of the person who is hosting the wedding. So, if the bride's mother and father are the hosts, the bride's aunt will not be referred to as 'Aunt Sherry' since she is not the aunt of the mother or father.
- 'and guest' implies that the invitee is welcome to bring a guest. The use of 'and escort' implies that the woman is expected to bring an escort.
- 'guest' and 'family' are usually written all lowercase in formal situations. However, some prefer to capitalize Guest and Family to make the inner envelope names look more balanced.
- Using 'and family' on the inner envelopes gives the invitee carte blanche to invite extended family members to the wedding. It is therefore better to specify the names of the additional family members on the inner envelope rather than use 'and family'. Plus it's more personable.
- Children are listed by first names only, in birth order. Children who are 18 or over or who are welcome to bring a guest should receive their own invitations.
- If an invitee is dating someone whom they are not living with, and you know their date's name, then include the full name of the date on the inner envelope:

Miss Brown

Mr. James Black



Etiquette No-No's

- Don't use a woman's first name with "Mrs." if she is married. This format connotes that she is a divorcee. On envelopes, escort cards, or place cards, don't use "Mrs. Jane Smith" for the wife when the husband is not attending the wedding. She is either "Mrs. John Smith" or Jane Smith.
- If you prefer that a wife's first name appears on the outer envelope, do NOT use this form:

Mr. and Mrs. John and Jane Smith <<<< *incorrect* >>>>

Instead, use either of these forms of address:

Jane and John Smith

(traditionally, a man's first name is not separated from his last name)

OR

Jane Smith

and John Smith

- To be frightfully correct, "Ms." is only used when the marital status of a woman is unknown or irrelevant. It was first used in the workplace so that a woman wouldn't have to reveal whether or not she was married.

Ideally, one should use Miss for any woman who has never been married. If in doubt, you can always ask your female guests if they prefer Miss or Ms.



Outer/Inner Envelopes – Impeccable



Outer Envelope Names	Impeccable - Outer Envelope	Impeccable - Inner Envelope
Married Couple	Mr. and Mrs. John Emerson Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith
Single Woman and guest	Miss Julie Elizabeth Brown	Miss Brown and guest
Single Man and guest	Mr. James Robert White	Mr. White and guest
Unmarried couple living together	Miss Tamara Louise Green Mr. Robert Elliot Williams	Miss Green Mr. Williams
Husband is a judge	The Honorable Brian Edward Wilson and Mrs. Wilson	Judge and Mrs. Wilson
Wife is a judge	The Honorable Sally Jane Wilson and Mr. Brian Edward Wilson	Judge Wilson and Mr. Wilson
Husband is a doctor	Doctor and Mrs. Thomas Edward McInroe	Doctor and Mrs. McInroe
Wife is a doctor	Doctor Susan Grace McInroe and Mr. Thomas Edward McInroe	Doctor McInroe and Mr. McInroe
Married, both doctors	Doctor Martha Ann Johnson and Doctor Mark Allen Johnson	The Doctors Johnson
Married couple, children under 18	Mr. and Mrs. John Emerson Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith Johnathan and MacKenzie
Same sex couple - women, different last names, married	Ms. Mary Ellen Grey and Ms. Jennifer Abigail McCall	Ms. Grey and Ms. McCall
Same sex couple - women, same last name, married	Mesdames Mary and Jennifer McCall	Mesdames McCall
Same sex couple - men, different last names, married	Mr. Steven Robert Palmer and Mr. Joshua Edward Wilson	Mr. Palmer and Mr. Wilson
Same sex couple - men, same last names, married	Messrs. Steven and Joshua Palmer	Messrs. Palmer

Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Impeccable

Outer Envelope Names	Impeccable - Outer Envelope
Single Woman and guest	Miss Julie Ann Brown and guest (Line 1)
Single Man and guest	Mr. James Calvin White and guest (Line 1)
Married Couple, children under 18	Mr. and Mrs. Cody Steven Bash (Line 1) Thomas, Nathan, and Susannah (Line 2) With only 1 child? Mr. and Mrs. Cody Steven Bash (Line 1) Mr. Thomas Bash (Line 2)

Outer/Inner Envelopes – Proper



Outer Envelope Names	Proper - Outer Envelope	Proper - Inner Envelope
Married Couple	Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith
Single Woman and guest	Miss Julie Brown	Miss Brown and guest
Single Man and guest	Mr. James White	Mr. White and guest
Unmarried couple living together	Miss Tamara Green Mr. Robert Williams	Miss Green Mr. Williams
Husband is a judge	The Honorable and Mrs. Brian Wilson	Judge and Mrs. Wilson
Wife is a judge	The Honorable Sally Wilson and Mr. Brian Wilson	Judge Wilson and Mr. Wilson
Husband is a doctor	Doctor and Mrs. Thomas McInroe	Doctor and Mrs. McInroe
Wife is a doctor	Doctor Susan McInroe and Mr. Thomas McInroe	Doctor McInroe and Mr. McInroe
Married, both doctors	Doctor Martha Johnson and Doctor Mark Johnson	The Doctors Johnson
Married couple, children under 18	Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith Johnathan and MacKenzie
Same sex couple - women, different last names, married	Ms. Mary Grey and Ms. Jennifer McCall	Ms. Grey and Ms. McCall
Same sex couple - women, same last name, married	Mesdames Mary and Jennifer McCall	Mesdames McCall
Same sex couple - men, different last names, married	Mr. Steven Palmer and Mr. Joshua Wilson	Mr. Palmer and Mr. Wilson
Same sex couple - men, same last names, married	Messrs. Steven and Joshua Palmer	Messrs. Palmer

Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Proper

Outer Envelope Names	Proper - Outer Envelope
Single Woman and guest	Miss Julie Brown and guest (Line 1)
Single Man and guest	Mr. James White and guest (Line 1)
Married Couple, children under 18	Mr. and Mrs. Cody Bash (Line 1) Thomas, Nathan, and Susannah (Line 2) With only 1 child? Mr. and Mrs. Cody Steven Bash (Line 1) Mr. Thomas Bash (Line 2)

Outer/Inner Envelopes – Informal



Outer Envelope Names	Informal - Outer Envelope	Informal - Inner Envelope
Married Couple	Heather and John Smith	Heather and John
Single Woman and guest	Julie Brown	Julie and guest
Single Man and guest	James White	James and guest
Unmarried couple living together	Tamara Green Robert Williams	Tamara Robert
Husband is a judge	Judge Wilson and Sally Wilson	Jed and Sally
Wife is a judge	Judge Wilson and Jed Wilson	Sally and Jed
Husband is a doctor	Dr. John McInroe and Sue McInroe	John and Susan
Wife is a doctor	Dr. Susan McInroe and Thomas McInroe	Susan and Thomas
Married, both doctors	Drs. Martha and Mark Johnson	Martha and Mark
Married couple, children under 18	Mr. and Mrs. John Smith	Mr. and Mrs. Smith Johnathan and MacKenzie
Same sex couple - women, different last names, married	Mary Grey and Jennifer McCall	Mary and Jennifer
Same sex couple - women, same last name, married	Mary and Jennifer McCall	Mary and Jennifer
Same sex couple - men, different last names, married	Steven Palmer and Joshua Wilson	Steven and Joshua
Same sex couple - men, same last names, married	Steven and Joshua Palmer	Steven and Joshua

Outer Envelopes Only (No Inner) – Informal

Outer Envelope Names	Informal - Outer Envelope
Single Woman and guest	Julie Brown and guest (Line 1)
Single Man and guest	James White and guest (Line 1)
Married Couple, children under 18	Stephanie and Cody Bash (Line 1) Thomas, Nathan, and Susannah (Line 2) With only 1 child? Stephanie and Cody Bash (Line 1) Thomas Bash (Line 2)

Religious Titles



JEWISH

Jewish Rabbi
Cantor

Rabbi John Cohen
Cantor Steven Goldstein

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Archbishop or Bishop
Monsignor
Priest
Brother
Nun

The Most Reverend Robert Allen White, Bishop of Georgia
The Right Reverend Monsignor William McGill
The Reverend Father Edward Doty
Brother Julian Bates
Sister Jean Marie Green

PROTESTANT

Clergyman with Doctorate
Episcopal Bishop
Methodist Bishop
Dean
Archdeacon
Canon

The Reverend Doctor John Witherspoon
The Right Reverend Henry Johnson
The Reverend Mary Jensen
The Very Reverend Nathan Hollaway
The Venerable Evan Arcy
The Reverend Pierce Brown

MUSLIM

Imam

The Imam Rehman

MORMON

President of the Temple

Mr. John Black, President of the _____ Temple

Military Titles

Military titles should include title or rank and the full name, followed by a comma and the initials of the branch of service.

Officer Example

Rear Admiral Natasha Linscomb, USN
Rear Admiral and Mrs. James Alexander, USN

Enlisted Example

Harold White
Seaman, United States Navy

Harold White and Mrs. Harold White
Seaman, United States Navy



Addressing Envelopes to Dignitaries

If you mail wedding invitations to these addresses, you should receive a card of congratulations:

The President and Mrs. Obama The White House Greetings Office, Room 39 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20502	Minnie and Mickey Mouse The Walt Disney Company 500 South Buena Vista Street Burbank, California 91521
His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI Prefettura della Casa Pontifica 00210 Citta del Vaticano, Italia	Minnie and Mickey Mouse The Magic Kingdom 1675 North Buena Vista Drive Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Cinderella and Prince Charming Post Office Box 1000 Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830	

Assembling the Invitations

- Take a fully-assembled invitation to the post office so you are aware of postage cost. To be safe, take it to two different post offices for weighing.
- Select stamps that compliment your invitation. You can order custom stamps online from sources like www.zazzle.com.
- **Apply the stamps to all the reply envelopes first!**
- Write the number of the address on a back corner of each RSVP card that corresponds to the guest's envelope you are stuffing. Write it lightly in pencil. This helps you identify guests who forget to write their names on their RSVP cards.

TIP: You can write the names of the invitees on the RSVP cards so the guests won't have to do it themselves. Ask your stationer to design the RSVP card with several lines so that you have plenty of room to handwrite the guests' names.

- Invitations are assembled with the largest items at the bottom, to the smallest on top. Each enclosure card is placed face up. The reply envelope will be face down.

When using a single card invitation, start from the bottom:

- » Invitation
- » Tissue
- » Reception Card
- » Map
- » Accommodations Card
- » Reply envelope face down, and tuck the RSVP card under the flap.
- » Within the Ribbon card
- » If the invitation is a folded style, enclosures are placed within the folded invitation (not on top).
- » If using 2 envelopes: insert the invitation suite into the inner envelope. Then insert the inner envelope with the names facing up into the outer envelope. When your guests open the outer envelopes, they will see their names first.
- To seal the envelopes, use a makeup wedge sponge or damp cloth to moisten the glue on the envelopes, then press down the flap and hold for a few seconds to seal well.
- You can also invest in an **Advanced Tape Glider gun** which lays down a layer of glue residue and provides a strong seal with no mess. Recommended for assembling thick invitations.
- Request the post office to hand-cancel your invitations to avoid damage from postal machines. The envelopes may still go through a machine, but they should only receive a barcode along the edge of the envelope.

Place Cards & Escort Cards –Tips for Name Format

- » **Place cards** reserve each individual place setting at a dining table (one name per card).
- » **We suggest dropping the titles for place cards.** The names can be written larger on the cards for legibility, and the wives' first names can be used. Exceptions would be to list "Doctor" and the titles of elected officials where applicable.

- » **Escort cards** or table assignment cards (also escort envelopes with insert cards) direct the guests to the table where they are to be seated. Couples can be listed on the same card, as well as their children if they are to be seated at the same table
- » **Use escort envelopes with separate insert cards in the event you are expecting last minute RSVPs.** You can then easily switch the insert cards among the envelopes. Be sure to make additional insert cards for each table over the number you think you need, just in case you do need to switch table assignments.
- » For low lighting situations, select light colored paper for the cards or envelopes, and use dark ink for the names.

PenDance Studio - Hand Calligraphy & Computer Calligraphy Services

We'd love to help you with your invitation design, envelopes, place cards, and escort cards! Please visit www.pendancestudio.com to request a quote!

Questions? Comments?

Request FOR Quote

If you have any questions or comments about this guide, please email Maureen Vickery at pendancestudio@gmail.com.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Berings stationers Mary Grisham and Lucia Lupia for their comments and insight regarding this etiquette guide. They can be reached at stationery01@berings.com.

