

'We called the mums about an hour after the ceremony': the rise of secret weddings

Level: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: Why getting married in secret without friends or family present is becoming increasingly popular.

Time: 90 minutes

Skills: Reading, speaking, writing

Language focus: Vocabulary, speaking, writing

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. If possible, have students do this task before they see the article. First, they brainstorm words and phrases they associate with weddings.
- b.-c. Next, they say which are used exclusively to talk about weddings, e.g., *bride*, and which can be used to talk about other events and situations, e.g., *ceremony*.
- d. Now provide the students with the article (if they don't have it already) so they can find out which of the words they suggested appear there.

2. Key words

- a. Students write the correct word from the wordpool next to the definitions on the lines provided. Then students find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>nuptials</i> | 9. <i>honeymoon</i> |
| 2. <i>scale back</i> | 10. <i>hassle</i> |
| 3. <i>temptation</i> | 11. <i>struggle</i> |
| 4. <i>circles</i> | 12. <i>complex</i> |
| 5. <i>ceremony</i> | 13. <i>thrilled</i> |
| 6. <i>appeal</i> | 14. <i>upset</i> |
| 7. <i>groom</i> | 15. <i>navigate</i> |
| 8. <i>deceptive</i> | |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>temptation</i> | 5. <i>scale back</i> |
| 2. <i>complex</i> | 6. <i>thrilled</i> |
| 3. <i>hassle</i> | 7. <i>ceremony</i> |
| 4. <i>navigate</i> | 8. <i>circles</i> |

3. Understanding the article

- a. Students answer the questions using information from the article.

Key:

1. *£17,300*
2. *Celebrities are increasingly getting married in secret and this is influencing others in the way they decide to hold their nuptials.*
3. *The cost-of-living crisis – mostly due to high levels of inflation – means that people have less disposable income. They may also have lost jobs or be living on reduced incomes due to the Covid pandemic.*
4. *They used it to go on a month-long holiday travelling around the US.*
5. *being in the spotlight, wedding planning in general, having complex family situations, having friends and relatives spread around the world, not being able to keep the wedding small because of the danger of offending people who are not invited*
6. *that people will not understand and feel offended that they were not invited, that people might question your reasons – perhaps thinking that you 'have' to get married because someone is ill, etc.*

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4. Key language

- a. Students find phrases that fit with the meanings.

Key:

1. *go all out*
2. *feel the pinch*
3. *all the rage*
4. *tie the knot*
5. *cost a fortune*
6. *get out of the spotlight*
7. *get hitched*
8. *in question*
9. *keep something under wraps*
10. *short notice*

- b. Next they use them to talk about the article.

- c. Then they use each of them in sentences or short anecdotes of their own that are not related to the article.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions related to the article expanding their answers and referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. This task can be set as homework or as a semi-collaborative exercise in which students discuss with a partner what to write and how best to word the email and then write it together. In either case, the emails can be shared amongst the class and feedback given as to how they would feel if they'd received the emails.