

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

Level: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. What usually happens during a wedding?



b. Write all the words that you connect with weddings into the box.

c. Which of your words are in the article?

2 Key words

a. Write the words from the wordpools next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

ceremony

common

couple

groom

instead

1. two people in a romantic relationship with each other _____
2. used for saying a thing or action replaces another _____
3. a formal event with special traditions, actions, or words _____
4. usual, normal, happening often _____
5. a man who is getting married _____

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complex

honeymoon

left out

supportive

upset

6. a holiday that two people take after they get married _____
7. with a lot of details that make it difficult to understand or deal with _____
8. make someone feel sad, worried, or angry _____
9. not included; feel like you are not wanted _____
10. helpful and sympathetic _____

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. If you don't have olive oil, you can use sunflower oil _____.
2. My boss was very _____ when I was ill.
3. After the awards _____, guests will have dinner in the Great Hall.
4. We'd like to spend our _____ in Iceland.
5. Another married _____ with children also live in our block of flats.
6. Our family relationships are quite _____, so holidays and birthdays are often difficult.

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Leah Harper

3 August, 2022

- 1 After two years of Covid chaos, wedding season is here again.
- 2 Because of Covid and because everything is becoming more expensive in the UK, many couples don't have much money. So instead of a large wedding, many couples are deciding to have a secret wedding.
- 3 "We just wanted a relaxed and fun day," says Jess, 29, who married Gerald, 37, in Brighton in March. They only told four people – and they didn't even tell their parents. After the ceremony, they went to the beach for ice-cream and champagne.
- 4 "I've been to friends' weddings where they've been mega-stressed and everything cost so much money," she says. "We didn't have to worry about who would sit where or if people liked the food."
- 5 Reducing the worry and pressure of a big wedding is one reason why many couples now marry in secret. "Secret weddings are becoming more common," says Landis Bejar, whose job is to help brides and grooms manage wedding stress.
- 6 The cost of a formal wedding – around £17,300 in 2021 – can add to the stress. In 2018, Mursh and Tash (both 34) travelled to San Francisco to get married. They didn't tell any of their friends. Afterwards, they had a long honeymoon touring the US – and still spent less than for a traditional ceremony. "I've got a really big family and Bengali people invite hundreds of guests to their weddings," he says. "It would have cost each family £30,000–35,000."
- 7 Another stress factor is the guest list. When family relationships are complex, the guest list for a small wedding can be difficult. It can be easier to get married in secret and tell people later.
- 8 "It did upset some people," says Kerry, 43. "The night before our wedding, I said to Nicky, 38: 'We've still got time; we can phone everyone and tell them we're getting married tomorrow.' But he said, 'No, let's leave it as it is.'"
- 9 "If you have a secret wedding, some people will be hurt," says Bejar. "They will feel left out. Think about how to say, 'This was right for us.'"
- 10 For most couples, however, the reaction from friends and family was positive. "We called the mums about an hour after the ceremony – Gerald's mum thought he was joking!" says Jess. "But everyone was happy and supportive."

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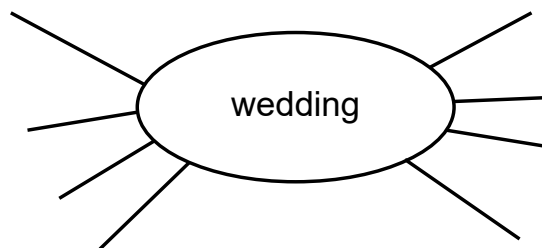
3 Understanding the article

a. Are these statements True or False according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. After Covid, couples in the UK have got a lot more money to spend on weddings.
2. At a secret wedding, you need to plan where everyone will sit and what they will get to eat.
3. The average cost of a formal wedding in the UK is now over thirty thousand pounds.
4. More and more couples in the UK are getting married in secret or just with one or two friends.
5. Secret weddings are usually more stressful for the bride and groom.
6. Because family relationships are often complex, the wedding guest list can be longer than you want it to be.
7. Families and friends are usually happy and supportive but there's usually someone who feels upset or hurt because they didn't go to the wedding.
8. At first, Gerald's mum didn't believe that he had got married without telling her.

4 Key language

a. Look for the word 'wedding' in the article. Write the collocations that appear with the word onto the word map.



b. Add any other collocations you can think of with 'wedding', e.g., *cake*.

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5 Discussion

- a. Talk about a wedding you have been to or your own wedding. Use the collocations from task 4, as well as the words in the prompt box.

ceremony	honeymoon	bride	groom	family	guests	presents	
religious	invitation	reception	traditional	theme	venue	cost	
formal	food	music	flowers	cake	dress	best man	bridesmaid

e.g.:

We had a large formal wedding in ...

My niece got married last year. The wedding was ...

- b. How has the way people get married changed since your parents' or grandparents' wedding?

e.g.:

In the past, weddings were ...

My grandparents got married in ...

6 In your own words

- a. Write an email to your friends and family to tell them about your secret wedding. Here are some things that you can write in your email:

- where and when you got married
- who was there
- what happened
- what it was like
- how you felt
- why you got married in secret
- how you hope they will react.

