

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

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

### 2. Key words

- a. Students find words in the article that match the definitions and write them on the lines provided.

**Key:**

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>scaled back</i> | 8. <i>get out of the spotlight</i> |
| 2. <i>postponed</i>   | 9. <i>honeymoon</i>                |
| 3. <i>ceremony</i>    | 10. <i>complex</i>                 |
| 4. <i>fortune</i>     | 11. <i>invitation</i>              |
| 5. <i>anxiety</i>     | 12. <i>upset</i>                   |
| 6. <i>common</i>      |                                    |
| 7. <i>grooms</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>invitation</i> | 4. <i>spotlight</i> |
| 2. <i>complex</i>    | 5. <i>postponed</i> |
| 3. <i>ceremony</i>   | 6. <i>fortune</i>   |

### 3. Understanding the article

- a. Students read the statements and decide whether they are true or false according to the article. They should correct any that are false in detail.

**Key:**

1. *False. During the two years of the covid pandemic, weddings in the UK were postponed, cancelled or scaled back.*
2. *False. The current high cost of living (inflation, energy costs, etc.) and the effects Covid had on jobs and income mean people have less money to spend.*
3. *False. The average cost of a formal wedding in the UK is now around seventeen thousand pounds.*
4. *True*
5. *False. Secret weddings are usually less stressful for the bride and groom.*
6. *True*
7. *True*
8. *False. It's good to know how to deal with people who feel hurt or left out. The advice in the article is to think about how to tell these people that a secret or small wedding was right for you.*

### 4. Key language

- a. Students choose the right form of the words from the box to complete the sentences. Hold a brief group discussion about the differences between the words and when to use each one. Ask students to come up with other example sentences.

**Key:**

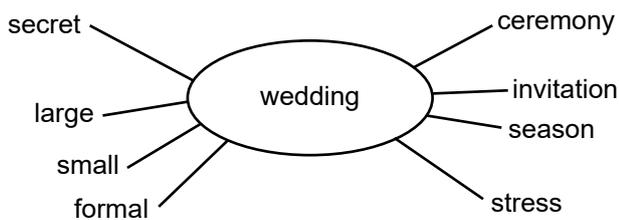
1. *are married* (got married is possible, but are married or be married are not possible in item 2)
2. *get married*
3. *marry*
4. *marriage*

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- b. Next they find collocations with the word *wedding* in the article and write them onto the word spider.

**Key:**



- c. Then they add any further 'wedding' collocations (e.g., wedding cake) they can think of and share them with other students.

### 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.