

Pre-Reading Activities

A: What Do You Think?

Work in pairs. Today's article is about weddings. Look at the list below and tick what you think **your partner's** dream wedding would be. Tick only one.

- a traditional wedding with hundreds of guests and a large meal
- a small garden wedding with close friends and family
- a secret wedding at a tropical island resort
- an underwater wedding in Thailand
- a wedding on a mountain at a ski resort
- a small, informal wedding at a registry office where you sign your names in front of witnesses
- a wedding at a wedding center in Las Vegas
- a wedding on a beach with many friends and relatives
- a wedding at home followed by a barbecue
- none, because my partner doesn't believe in marriage
- Other: _____

Now show your partner your answer. Does your partner agree with your choice?

B: Vocabulary

With your partner look at the words in **bold and underlined** in **Part One** and use the context to help you match them to their meanings. They are all connected with weddings.

1. a ceremony or celebration in which people get married: _____
2. a man about to get married: _____
3. a party or dinner after a wedding to celebrate two people getting married: _____
4. a woman about to get married: _____
5. an expression or informal way to describe getting married: _____
6. two people in a romantic relationship or partnership: _____
7. a piece of jewelry given to show the intention or promise to marry: _____

Part One

NEW YORK Sat June 01 (Reuters) - Money may not be able to buy you love, but it certainly helps **tie the knot**.

More and more **couples**, as they get married later in life and want more freedom in planning the event, are **picking up the tab** for the **wedding** themselves. But it can all add up to **financial overload** if they haven't saved enough or go overboard with the hoopla, says Sheryl Garrett, a certified financial planner in Shawnee, Kansas.

"Weddings can be extremely expensive, and I really would like people to step back and say, 'Is this expenditure really appropriate for my **income level** and my desires for my financial life?'" said Garb, president of the Garb Planning Network, a group of financial advisors. "We don't have to turn it into a materialistic show."

A wedding is probably the biggest party most people ever throw, with the average U.S. cost at \$20,000 and up. But it doesn't have to **break the bank**. A lavish sit-down dinner for several hundred guests can run up a bill in the tens of thousands of dollars, whereas a backyard barbecue for family and friends is almost certainly within anyone's reach.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS A generation ago, it was the norm for the father of the bride to pay for everything. These days, the **bride** and **groom** themselves pick up the tab about 30 percent of the time; the bride's parents pay about 17 percent of the time; and the rest of the time **the costs are covered** by a variety of sources -- the bride and groom and one or both sets of parents, according to surveys by Bride's magazine.

Marriage doesn't come cheap. The average wedding costs \$22,360, according to a study by the Conde Nast Bridal Group, publisher of Bride's and Modern Bride. The most expensive items are the **reception**, at an average cost of \$7,630, the **engagement ring** at \$3,576 and photography and videotaping, totaling about \$1,814, according to the study.

The lofty price tag has led many couples to extend their engagements to allow themselves more time to save money to cover the costs, said Millie Martini Bratten, editor-in-chief of Bride's. The average engagement is now 16 months, up from 11 months about a decade ago, she said, citing data from reader surveys.

As for the event itself, there are a lot of ways to **shave costs**, experts say. (Continued/...)

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Reading Activities

A: Finding the Main Idea

Read **Part One** of today's article again and choose the headline below that you think gives the main idea of **Part One**. Give reasons for your choice.

1. **Planning a Dream Wedding?**
2. **Paying for a Wedding**
3. **Money Can't Buy You Love**
4. **Long Engagements Now More Fashionable**

B: Scanning

Below are numbers from the article. Scan **Part One** and complete the table by writing what the numbers refer to.

Numbers	What each number refers to
30 percent	
17 percent	
\$22,360	
\$7,630	
\$3,576	
\$1,814	
16 months	
11 months	

C: Summarizing

The following sentences summarize **Part One** of today's article. Fill the gaps in the sentences with a word or phrase from the article. Be careful; you need to change the form of some of the words.

1. Because many _____ are choosing to _____ when they are older and be involved in _____ the wedding, they also want to pay for it themselves.
2. A wedding can be very _____ and financial planners ask that people don't spend more than than is right for their _____.
3. Although an extravagant dinner may be too expensive for many, a barbecue at home with _____ is possible for almost everybody.
4. About 20 years ago, it was normal for the _____ to pay for the whole wedding. However, these days the _____ pay for it about a third of the time.
5. The most expensive part of a wedding is the _____.
6. According to reader surveys, the _____ period for many couples is now 5 months longer than it was 10 years ago so that couples can _____ for the wedding.

D: Reading Carefully

Read **Part Two** of the article carefully and then complete the sentences below by matching the beginnings (**1 - 7**) with the endings (**A - J**). (There are more endings than beginnings.)

Beginnings:

1. The editor of Bride's suggests getting married...
2. People the bride and groom haven't seen for ages...
3. It may be a good idea for the bridal party to include...
4. If there are fewer bridesmaids...
5. Hiring a DJ to play music can be cheaper than...
6. Serving wine, beer or soft drinks is a cheaper alternative...
7. An undecorated and less costly cake can be...

Endings:

- A. ... a large undecorated cake to eat.
- B. ... the cost of flowers could be less.
- C. ... may not need to be invited.
- D. ... in the off season.
- E. ... employing a live band.
- F. ... asking parents for money.
- G. ... to serving a full range of alcoholic drinks.
- H. ... fewer bridesmaids and groomsmen.
- I. ... served instead of an expensive wedding cake.
- J. ... getting married in a hotel.

Part Two

SCALING BACK

(.../Continued) Among the tips, says Bride's magazine's Bratten, are to book the wedding for a non-peak time of year - such as mid-week in January instead of a Saturday night in June -- and to trim the guest list, eliminating all of those long-lost acquaintances.

Bratten also suggests streamlining the bridal party, which cuts down the flower budget as well as thank-you gifts and meals; hiring a band with fewer musicians or going for a DJ, which generally costs less than live music; serving wine, beer and soft drinks at the reception instead of having a fully stocked bar and displaying a small, beautifully decorated wedding cake

but having a larger, undecorated -- and less *costly* -- cake in the back to serve the guests.

Especially now that more couples are helping *finance* their weddings themselves, they tend not to lose control over costs because they don't want to start out their married lives together in financial trouble, said Wallensky.

"The young adults getting married today are very realistic about what the costs are and where they're coming from," he said. "They're not going to sacrifice their future to have one big blowout party."

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E: Language

The article contains a number of expressions associated with money.

finance, picking up the tab, costly, shave costs, financial overload, costs are covered, income level, break the bank

Look back at **Parts One** and **Two** of the article and try to understand the meaning of the words. (The words are in ***italics*** in the article.) Complete the sentences below by writing the most appropriate word or phrase in the gap. Look carefully at the form of each word or phrase.

1. When we go on honeymoon, we don't want to spent too much. We don't want the trip to _____ .
2. _____ for the bridesmaids' dresses is usually done by the bride. The dresses are a present.
3. Travel insurance can be very handy when you go on your honeymoon because if something goes wrong, the _____.
4. We tried to _____ on the reception by doing a lot of the cooking ourselves.
5. We can't go on a cruise for our honeymoon as the high cost would put us in _____ .
6. Our _____ is not very high so we had a small home wedding.
7. A traditional wedding cake was so _____ we got a chocolate one instead.
8. We decided to _____ our own wedding because we wanted to control which guests we invited.



Post-Reading Activities

You may do one or more of these.

A: Traditional Weddings

Look at pictures of traditional clothes worn by couples on their wedding days. With a partner match the pictures to the places they represent from this list: **Finland, Japan, Sardinia (Italy), Scotland**



B: Find Someone Who

Your teacher will give everyone a different card describing a wedding tradition from a country. (There are 8 different countries.) Read the description on your card and make sure you understand what it means.

Your teacher will also give you a **"Find Someone Who..."** worksheet. Your goal is to complete your **"Find Someone Who..."** worksheet by walking around the class and asking other students questions about the wedding traditions found on your worksheet. Each person represents a different country. You will need to change the information on your worksheet into questions.

For example, 'Find someone who represents a country where people throw peas at a wedding' becomes 'Do people throw peas at weddings in your country?'

Note: Write your own name next to any wedding traditions on your worksheet that apply to the card you were given.

When you find someone who can answer one of your questions, write their name down on your worksheet and the country they represent, according to their card.

C: Writing

Compare the following statements:

More and more couples, as they get married later in life, want more freedom in planning their own wedding.

Many people feel that a wedding provides a good opportunity for parents to invite old acquaintances and business associates so they can offer them hospitality. The wedding belongs to the parents, as well as to the couple getting married, if the parents are paying for it.

Which of these ideas do you most agree with?
Write a 250-word persuasive essay on this topic.
Include the following information:

- an introduction stating your opinion
- arguments for your opinion
- evidence to support your argument
- arguments against your opinion
- supporting evidence
- a conclusion where you restate your opinion

TEACHERS' NOTES AND ANSWER KEY

Pre-Reading Activities

A: What Do You Think? - Notes

This activity gives students an opportunity to think about weddings. Place the students in pairs and set a time limit for them to think about their partner's choice and then tick an option. Students can then compare answers. Write a list of the most popular choices on the board.

B: Vocabulary - Answers

- wedding, 2. groom, 3. reception, 4. bride, 5. tie the knot, 6. couple, 7. engagement ring

Reading Activities

A: Finding the Main Idea - Answer

Paying for a Wedding (2)

The headline *Planning a Dream Wedding?* isn't suitable because it does not include anything about the cost of a wedding. *Money Can't Buy You Love* is not really related to what the article is about. The headline *Long Engagements Now More Fashionable* is not correct as it is only a detail.

B: Scanning - Answers

Number:	What it refers to:
in the tens of thousands of dollars	a lavish dinner for hundreds of guests
30 percent	the percentage of the brides and grooms who pay for the wedding
17 percent	the percentage of the bride's parents who pay for the wedding
\$22,360	average cost of a wedding
\$7,630	average cost of a reception
\$3,576	average cost of an engagement ring
\$1,814	cost of photos and video
16 months	length of engagement now
11 months	length of engagement 10 years ago

C: Summarizing - Suggested Answers

- Because many **couples** are choosing to **get married** when they are older and be involved in **planning** the wedding, they also want to pay for it themselves.
- A wedding can be very **expensive / costly** and financial planners ask that people don't spend more than is right for their **income level**.
- Although an extravagant dinner may be too expensive for many, a barbecue at home with **family and friends** is possible for almost everybody.
- About 20 years ago, it was normal for the **father of the bride** to pay for the whole wedding. However, these days the **bride and groom** pay for it about a third of the time.
- The most expensive part of a wedding is the **reception**.
- According to reader surveys, the **engagement** period for many couples is now 5 months longer than it was 10 years ago so that couples can **save money** for the wedding.

D: Reading Carefully - Answers

- d, 2. c, 3. h, 4. b, 5. e, 6. g, 7. i

E: Language - Notes

If you want to put some pressure on students and give them a chance to practice working quickly and accurately, set a time limit which will allow most to finish, but only if they hurry.

E: Language - Answers

- When we go on honeymoon, we don't want to spend too much. We don't want to **break the bank**.
- Picking up the tab** for the bridesmaids' dresses is usually done by the bride. The dresses are a present.
- Travel insurance can be very handy when you go on your honeymoon because if something goes wrong, the **costs are covered**.
- We tried to **shave costs** on the reception by doing a lot of the cooking ourselves.
- We can't go on a cruise for our honeymoon as the high cost would put us in **financial overload**.
- Our **income level** is not very high so we had a small home wedding.
- A traditional wedding cake was so **costly** we got a chocolate one instead.
- We decided to **finance** our own wedding because we wanted to control which guests we invited.

Post-Reading Activities

A: Traditional Weddings - Answers

The pictures are in this order: **Japan, Sardinia (Italy), Scotland, Finland**

B: Find Someone Who - Notes

This is a scanning, listening and speaking activity. Cut the cards up and distribute all of them among the students. (If you have fewer than 8 students, try to give the extra cards to the stronger students.) In order to complete their forms, students need to ask questions and get answers from other members of the class. They then write the **name** of that person and their **country** down next to the question.

B: Find Someone Who - Cards to be Cut Up and Given to Students

You are from **Bermuda**. Islanders from this country place a sapling or young tree on their wedding cakes. The newly married couple then plant the tree in their garden at home, where they can watch it grow along with their marriage.

You are from **Russia**. At a Russian wedding the bride and groom give a present to each guest to show that they are grateful.

In **Thailand** flowers are put around the necks of the couple getting married. The most senior person in the family pours water from a conch shell on the hands of the bride and groom. All the guests then do the same thing. This ceremony is called "Rodnamsang."

You are from **Germany**. Before the wedding relatives and friends of the bride and groom bring old crockery-cups, bowls and plates- and throw them on the ground in front of the couple. The name of this custom is "Polterabend." The custom is said to help the bride and groom have a happy and fortunate life.

You are from **Greece**. In your country, couples wear crowns on their heads. These are usually white or gold, or made of long-lasting flowers such as orange blossom.

You are from **Korea**. In your country, ducks are included in the wedding procession (i.e. when the bride walks down the aisle) because ducks are symbols of fidelity; they only have one partner during their lifetime.

You are from the **Czech Republic**. In your country, green peas are thrown at a couple just after they have been married. In some other western countries, rice is thrown.

In **England**, a bride will wear something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue on her wedding day.

Find someone who represents a country where...

- people throw peas at a wedding _____
- the couple plant a tree after a wedding _____
- there is a procession with ducks at a wedding _____
- there is a ceremony called "Polterabend" _____
- the couple may wear crowns of flowers _____

Find someone who represents a country where...

- the couple wear something gold on their head _____
- people receive a gift for going to a wedding _____
- the couple wash their hands with water from a shell _____
- the bride wears something blue _____
- people throw something green at the wedding _____

Find someone who represents a country where...

- the couple may wear flowers from a fruit tree _____
- people put a plant on the wedding cake _____
- people throw plates in the days before a wedding _____
- the bride wears something someone has lent them _____
- a shell is used at the wedding _____

Find someone who represents a country where...

- people smash things in front of the bride and groom _____
- there is a ceremony called "Rodnamsang" _____
- guests receive a gift at the wedding _____
- a bird is included in the wedding celebrations _____
- the couple plant a tree after their wedding _____

B: Find Someone Who - Answers

Find someone who represents a country where...

- people throw peas at a wedding **Czech Republic**
- the couple plant a tree after a wedding **Bermuda**
- there is a procession with ducks at a wedding **Korea**
- there is a ceremony called "Polterabend" **Germany**
- the couple may wear crowns of flowers **Greece**

Find someone who represents a country where...

- the couple may wear flowers from a fruit tree **Greece**
- people put a plant on the wedding cake **Bermuda**
- people throw plates in the days before a wedding **Germany**
- the bride wears something someone has lent them **England**
- a shell is used at the wedding **Thailand**

Find someone who represents a country where...

- the couple wear something gold on their head **Greece**
- people receive a gift for going to a wedding **Russia**
- the couple wash their hands with water from a shell **Thailand**
- the bride wears something blue **England**
- people throw something green at the wedding **the Czech Republic**

Find someone who represents a country where...

- people smash things in front of the bride and groom **Germany**
- there is a ceremony called "Rodnamsang" **Thailand**
- guests receive a gift at the wedding **Russia**
- a bird is included in the wedding celebrations **Korea**
- the couple plant a tree after their wedding **Bermuda**

Please Note: Students may also find these other lessons on weddings interesting: **Butterflies, Coal Mine, Valentine Oranges.**