



Envelope Etiquette Guide

*tips for how to address your envelopes
and the ins and outs of inner and outer envelopes*

As your guest list is compiled, it will be filled with many different people and families who come from many different backgrounds and living situations. The guide below was crafted to help aid you through various scenarios with examples of all kinds for both inner and outer envelopes.

For a complete guide to envelope etiquette I recommend:
Emily Post's wedding etiquette at www.emilypost.com
and for high ranking individuals www.formsofaddress.info

What are Inner & Outer Envelopes?

and why should I opt for both?

You will always receive an outer/ mailing envelope with your order. Including inner envelopes is optional. The double envelope system is the traditional, more formal approach that carried through from tradition, but they are beneficial and here's why: they provide protection for your investment.

If you choose to include envelope liners, the liners are adhered to the inside of your inner envelopes. Inner envelopes do not get glued shut because they go inside the outer envelope, which does get glued shut. So when your guest opens them, the liners stay fully intact for a pristine presentation.

If inner envelopes aren't included, and an envelope liner is used, the liner gets adhered straight into the outer mailing envelope risking damage when the envelope is opened.

Quick & Helpful Tips

for address formatting

1. Do not abbreviate except for courtesy titles: Mr. Mrs. Ms.
2. Titles such as 'Doctor' or 'Captain' should be spelled out.
3. 'Miss' should be used for young girls under 18 and younger (<30) never married women.
4. 'Ms.' should be used for older single women (>30), divorced women, or women whose marital status is unknown.
5. 'Master' is used for boys 12 and under and 'Mr.' is used for boys over 18.
6. Adult children 18 and older, still living at home, should receive their own invitation
7. Do not use symbols or initials
8. Spell out the word 'and'
9. Use figures only when writing house numbers, apartment numbers, and zip codes
10. House numbers and apartment numbers under 10 should be spelled out
11. Write out the words 'Street,' 'Boulevard,' 'Road,' etc.
12. City and state names should also be spelled out
13. Adults who are not romantically involved, but live together should each receive their own invitation, such as roommates.

How to Address Wedding Invitation Envelopes

Though proper etiquette is ever changing with the times, many of the more traditional rules applied to addressing envelopes have been followed for centuries—which can make them feel a bit antiquated, to some.

Remember, etiquette is meant to make your guests feel welcomed and respected. Do what will work best for you, your guests, and the tone of your wedding.

Tradition indicates the use of inner and outer envelopes which follow different etiquette rules. The outer envelope is formally addressed while the inner envelope is more informal.

We will explore various scenarios and living situations with both a traditional and more modern approach to etiquette for the inner and outer envelopes.

Single Males and Females *without* Guests

You should always use the person's preferred title. If you're not sure, you can forgo a title altogether. Single females under 30 should be addressed with the title 'Miss'. For single females over 30, divorced females, or if marital status is unknown use the title 'Ms'.

SINGLE FEMALE

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Miss Joy Johnson

modern: Joy Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Miss Johnson

modern: Joy

SINGLE MALE

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mr. John Johnson

modern: John Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mr. Johnson

modern: John

Single Males and Females *with* Guests

If you are allowing single individuals to bring a plus one or a casual date, the recommended approach is to find out the guest's name to include it on the envelope. If the guest's name is unknown, including 'and guest' on the envelope will work just fine.

SINGLE FEMALE AND GUEST

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Miss Joy Johnson and Guest

modern: Joy Johnson and Guest

with inner envelopes, 'and guest' is only listed on the inner envelopes

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Miss Joy Johnson

modern: Miss Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Miss Johnson and Guest

modern: Joy and Guest

SINGLE MALE AND GUEST

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mr. John Johnson and Guest

modern: John Johnson and Guest

with inner envelopes, 'and guest' is only listed on the inner envelopes

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mr. John Johnson

modern: Mr. Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mr. Johnson and Guest

modern: John and Guest

Unmarried Couple, *Living Together*

List the names of unmarried, heterosexual couples on separate lines. The word 'and' is not used as that would signify marriage. Established couples can be joined with the word 'and' and can also be listed on the same line, if space allows.

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Ms. Joy Smith (*and*)

Mr. John Johnson

modern: Joy Smith and John Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Ms. Smith (*and*)

Mr. Johnson

modern: Joy and John

Married Couple, *Same Last Name*

Traditionally, married couples with the same last name should be addressed by their individual titles and the husband's name. Recently, it has become more common to list both the man's and woman's first name. In this case, drop the titles and always list the woman first because a man's first name should not be separated from his last.

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson

modern: Joy and James Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. Johnson

modern: Joy and James

Married Couple, *Different Last Names*

If the married couple has different last names, both full names are listed with the word 'and' joining them together to indicate marriage. Traditionally, the woman's name precedes the man's, but nowadays, the order of the names does not matter.

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Ms. Joy Smith and Mr. James Johnson

modern: Joy Smith and James Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Ms. Smith and Mr. Johnson

modern: Joy and James

Married Couple, *Children Invited*

Adult kids, 18 and older, still living at home should receive their own invitation. Children under 18 will get added to the envelope with their parents. If you are listing children's names, they are listed in order of oldest to youngest.

if you are using inner envelopes, the mailing envelopes are only addressed to the head(s) of the home—children's names or 'and family' only gets listed on the inner envelope.

Outer Mailing Envelope

WITHOUT inner envelopes

traditional: The Johnson Family

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson
and Family

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson
Johnny, Jimmy, and Miss Janie

modern: The Johnsons

modern: Joy and James Johnson
and Family

Outer Mailing Envelope

WITH inner envelopes

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson

modern: Joy and James Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mr. and Mrs. Johnson

Johnny, Jimmy, and Miss Janie

traditional: The Johnson Family

modern: Joy and James

Johnny, Jimmy, and Janie

Widowed

For widows, traditionally, she would keep the title ‘Mrs.’ and use her late husband’s full name. It is also okay to use the title ‘Mrs.’ with her first and married last name. Some widows may prefer the title ‘Ms.’ It’s always okay to ask your guests their preference.

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mrs. James Johnson

traditional: Mrs. Joy Johnson

traditional: Ms. Joy Johnson

modern: Joy Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mrs. Johnson

traditional: Ms. Johnson

modern: Joy

Divorced

After a divorce, a woman might keep her married name. If this is the case, you can use ‘Mrs.’ or ‘Ms.’ with her first name and her married name. If she is using her maiden name, then use ‘Ms.’ along with her first name and maiden name. As always, it’s best to learn your guest’s preference.

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mrs. Joy Johnson

traditional: Ms. Joy Johnson

traditional: Ms. Joy Smith (*maiden name*)

modern: Joy Johnson

modern: Joy Smith (*maiden name*)

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mrs. Johnson

traditional: Ms. Johnson

traditional: Ms. Smith (*maiden name*)

modern: Joy

Homosexual Couples

List names in alphabetical order in all scenarios

GAY COUPLE, SAME LAST NAME

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: The Messers James and John Smith

modern: James and John Smith

Inner Envelope

traditional: The Messers Smith

modern: James and John

GAY COUPLE, DIFFERENT LAST NAMES

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mr. James Johnson and Mr. John Smith

modern: James Johnson and John Smith

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith

modern: James and John

LESBIAN COUPLE, SAME LAST NAME

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: The Mesdames Jane and Joy Johnson

modern: Jane and Joy Johnson

Inner Envelope

traditional: The Mesdames Johnson

modern: Jane and Joy

LESBIAN COUPLE, DIFFERENT LAST NAMES

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Mrs. Jane Johnson and Mrs. Joy Smith

modern: Jane Johnson and Joy Smith

Inner Envelope

traditional: Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Smith

modern: Jane and Joy

Doctors

MARRIED, BOTH ARE DOCTORS

Wife took husband's last name

Outer Mailing Envelope

Doctors Joy and James Johnson

Inner Envelope

The Doctors Johnson

Wife kept her maiden name

Outer Mailing Envelope

Doctor Joy Brown and Doctor James Johnson

Inner Envelope

Doctor Brown and Doctor Johnson

MARRIED COUPLE, HUSBAND IS A DOCTOR

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Doctor and Mrs. Jon Kelly

modern: Doctor Jon Kelly and Joy Kelly

Inner Envelope

traditional: Doctor and Mrs. Kelly

modern: Doctor Jon and Joy

MARRIED COUPLE, WIFE IS A DOCTOR

Outer Mailing Envelope

traditional: Doctor Joy and Mr. Jon Kelly

modern: Doctor Joy Kelly and Jon Kelly

Inner Envelope

traditional: Doctor and Mr. Kelly

modern: Doctor Joy and Jon

Judges

MARRIED COUPLE, HUSBAND IS A JUDGE

Outer Mailing Envelope

The Honorable James Kelly and Mrs. Kelly

Inner Envelope

Judge and Mrs. Kelly

MARRIED COUPLE, WIFE IS A JUDGE

Outer Mailing Envelope

The honorable Joy Kelly and Mr. James Kelly

Inner Envelope

Judge and Mr. Kelly

Military & Armed Forces

The member of the armed services is always listed first. Social correspondence, such as wedding invitations, does not include the person's branch of service nor does it indicate whether or not the officer is retired.

MARRIED COUPLE, HUSBAND IS A MILITARY OFFICER

Outer Mailing Envelope

Colonel John Brown and Mrs. Brown

Inner Envelope

Colonel and Mrs. Brown

MARRIED COUPLE, WIFE IS A MILITARY OFFICER

Outer Mailing Envelope

Sergeant Joy Brown and Mr. James Brown

Inner Envelope

Sergeant and Mr. Brown

MARRIED COUPLE, BOTH ARE MILITARY

Outer Mailing Envelope

General John Brown and Major Joy Brown

Inner Envelope

General Brown and Major Brown

List of Army Ranks, In Order

Private	Sergeant Major	Captain
Private Second Class	Command Sergeant	Major
Private First Class	Sergeant Major of the Army	Lieutenant Colonel
Specialist	Warrant Officer 1	Colonel
Corporal	Chief Warrant Officer 2	Brigadier General
Sergeant	Chief Warrant Officer 3	Major General
Staff Sergeant	Chief Warrant Officer 4	Lieutenant General
Sergeant First Class	Chief Warrant Officer 5	General
Master Sergeant	Second Lieutenant	General of the Army
First Sergeant	First Lieutenant	