

Learning English for Life: A White Wedding

I'm going back to my hometown in America this week to visit the **weddings** of two of my sisters. That's right: two of my sisters are getting **married** one week apart from each other. (My third sister, the oldest, is already married. My family is getting old.)

So, this seems like a good time for me, personally, to start talking about the vocabulary we use to discuss weddings. . . as well as some idioms that mean to get married. (There are quite a few in English.)

You might think you'll never use wedding vocabulary, but that's not true: when you need your English to describe your day-to-day life, you'll find weddings happening. My little brother is going to weddings every weekend this summer! Imagine if he didn't have the vocabulary to talk about them. So, forget for a week about English for your job, and we'll talk about English for your family life: getting married.

Tomorrow, we'll start with some of the most basic vocabulary that we use for weddings. Then, on Wednesday, I'll talk about something everyone who learns English needs to know: the difference between 'to celebrate' and 'to party.' (And who's not interested in celebrations? Or in parties?) And, because we're talking about celebrations, I'll talk about the date that most men forget: the anniversary. (Don't worry if you don't know what an anniversary is, you'll know on Wednesday.) On Thursday, I'll talk about some idioms that we use to refer to getting married.

As you know, Friday is the hardest of the listening exercises. And this Friday, I'll talk to you about what I consider to be a 'typical' American wedding (every American has his own idea of what's typical) and you'll learn some vocabulary associated with American weddings. And, after the listening, there will be the listening quiz.

It's a full week of wedding vocabulary and English for the romantic. But, to get you started, here are three words you'll want to understand as we go into this week:

Vocabulary

Married: My wife and I have the same last name. Of course, we didn't *always* have the same last name (she's not my sister or anything like that!) but she took my last name when we got *married*. 'Married' is a legal status in which we said to each other that we'd stay together until 'death do us part.' In the U.S., when you're married, you wear matching rings as a symbol of the connection between you.

Wedding: Being married is important to me. And it's important to my wife. And so, when we got married, there was a big ceremony with our families and close friends and a lot of food. The

word for this specific ceremony is, in English, a *wedding*. Weddings are typically expensive and stressful, and most of the women I know cry at weddings. Most of the men I know go to weddings for the food.

Engaged: Because the wedding was a big ceremony, my wife and I spent a long time planning it. That means that, a lot of time passed between when I asked my wife to marry me and when we got married. During that time in between, we were *engaged*. Think of 'engaged' as meaning the same thing as almost-married. It (normally) means you're working on getting married.