



10 VOW WRITING TIPS

Thinking about writing your own wedding vows? Don't get started until you read these 10 tips.

1. Read lots of vow examples for inspiration.

Start by reading traditional, by-the-book [vows from your own religion](#) if you practice a certain faith, and others as well, to see what strikes a chord with you. Incorporate these samples into the original words you write or simply use them as a jumping-off point.

Once you've found a few you love, consider what it is about the style that draws you to those vows in particular. Here is a modern vow example couples love:

“_____ I love you. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and respect you. To laugh with you and comfort you, in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you. To always hold you in the highest regard. These things I give to you today. And this day forward.”



2. Agree on format and tone with your partner.

Decide how you want your vows to come across.

Do you envision them as humorous?

Poetic and romantic?

Go over the logistics too.

Will you write them separately or together?

Will they be completely different, or will you make the same promises to each other as you would with traditional vows?

Some couples do a little of each.

Finally, will you share them with each other or keep them a secret until the wedding day?



3. Jot down notes about your relationship

Take some time to reflect on your partner. Think about how you felt when you first met, what made you fall in love and when you knew you wanted to spend the rest of your lives together. Write it all out to get your creative gears turning.

Ask yourself certain questions and think about things like why you decided to get married: *what is the meaning of marriage, what core values do you share, what hard times you've gone through together, what you've supported each other through, what challenges you envision for your future, what you want to accomplish together, what makes your relationship tick, what you thought when you first saw your partner, when you realized you were in love, what you respect most about your partner, how your life has gotten better since meeting your partner, what inspires you about your partner, what you miss most about them when you're apart—and so on.*



4. Come up with one or two, or many, promises.

They're called vows for a reason, so the promises are the most important part. Include promises that are broad in scope (like, "I promise I'll always be there to support you," for instance), as well as ones that are very specific to the two of you (like, "I promise I'll always let you watch *Game of Thrones* on Sundays.").

Avoid promises you can't actually keep like "I vow to make your happy every single day of our marriage."



5. Write it all out.

Now that you have notes, you're ready to establish a structure and write your first draft. It's helpful to break it into a four-part outline:

- Affirm your love
- Praise your partner
- Offer promises and
- Close with a final vow.

Another way to organize it is to start with a short story and then circle back to it at the end.



6. Avoid clichés.

Now that you have your first draft, it's time to make edits. Borrow from non-religious poetry books, and even from romantic movies, but don't let someone else's words overpower your own.

You want your vows to sound like you and relate to your relationship, and that won't happen if every word is borrowed from other sources. And if you find yourself relying on cliché phrases (you know, those sayings that have been used over and over so many times they no longer sound genuine) to get your point across, try coming up with a specific example from your relationship that has a similar message.

For example, instead of saying, "Love is blind," you might say, "You'll always be the most beautiful person to me, whether you're in sweatpants or dressed to the nines."



7. Take out anything too cryptic or embarrassing.

You've invited your family and friends to witness your vows in order to make your bond public, so be sure everyone feels included in the moment.

That means putting a limit on inside jokes, deeply personal anecdotes and obscure nicknames or code words.

You'll want to think about how your vows will sound 10 years from now. If you're okay with sharing your vows beforehand, you can have a friend or family member read it over ahead of time for feedback.



8. Shorten your vows to one to two minutes, max.

Your vows are important, but that doesn't mean they should drag on.

When you say something meaningful, you shouldn't have to say it over and over—so pick the most important points and make them. If yours are running longer than two minutes, make some edits.

Put some of the more personal thoughts in a letter or gift to your partner on the morning of your wedding and save any guest-related topics for your toasts.



9. Practice out loud (seriously).

It might sound a little awkward, but this really is the best way to prep. Remember to practice, listen to yourself and improve from there.

Your vows should be easy to say and sound conversational. As you recite them, listen for any tongue twisters and super-long sentences, then cut them.

This is also the time to practice the delivery.

And remember: When you're at the altar, stand straight, look at your spouse and use your hands expressively (but only in small gestures).



10. Make a clean copy for yourself.

The paper you read from should be legible, so even if you're working on it right up until a few moments before your ceremony, use a fresh piece of paper free of cross-outs, arrows and notes.

And give some thought to the presentation too because it'll likely end up in the photos.

You can handwrite it in a sweet journal or vow book, or cut and paste the computer print to fit within that. And it also makes a nice keepsake to hang in your home later on.

Also, have a backup plan. If you find yourself too emotional to speak (it happens!), you can have your [official](#) either prompt you by quietly saying the vows first or read the vows on your behalf.



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