

# HOW TO TRIM THE GUEST LIST

## 1 Determine your budget.

Decide the maximum amount of guests you can afford to invite or who will fit at the wedding site.

## 2 Make lists.

The bride, groom, and respective parents each should make a list of people to invite.

## 3 Strike as many people as you can from your own list.

## 4 Remove unnecessary names from someone else's list.

Take turns striking one name at a time from the list of the person sitting to your right. If that person objects to the removal of the potential invitee, invoke the "two strikes" rule and find an ally to vote against the would-be guest. Remove contested names that have two votes against them. (There are variations on the rule that grant people paying for the entire wedding greater voting power: Their vote for removal counts as three votes, and the names on their list are untouchable.)

## 5 Compile a master list.

Combine the remaining names and organize them by category: wedding party, work contacts, relations, friends, parents' friends, college friends, others. Each person at the table should rank each person within a

category by importance, as determined by the answers to the following questions:

- How often have we seen this person in the last year?
- Did he really seem glad to see us?
- If I invite this person, will I be obligated to invite his spouse or friends?
- How much power does this person hold over me?
- How rich is he and will he use his wealth for good gifts?
- Will he seem impressive to my friends?
- Is he good looking? Will he improve my wedding photos or video?
- Can I handle the fallout if I do not invite him?

## 6 Agree in advance what the cut-off level will be.

Remove entire categories. Decide no kids, no work-related people, no relations beyond first cousins, no dates for singles, no redheads.

## 7 Remove people below a certain rank.

## 8 Create barriers to attendance.

Make it impossible for large numbers of people to attend.

- Hold the wedding in the middle of the week.
- Hold the wedding at a distant location (Antarctica, tiny Pacific island).
- Require formal attire or elaborate, expensive costumes.
- Hold the wedding at an inconvenient time (2 A.M.).

## 9 Recalculate the list.

Estimate how many people each barrier will knock out. If your list is still too large for your budget, continue to step 10.

### Alternate knocking people off the list.

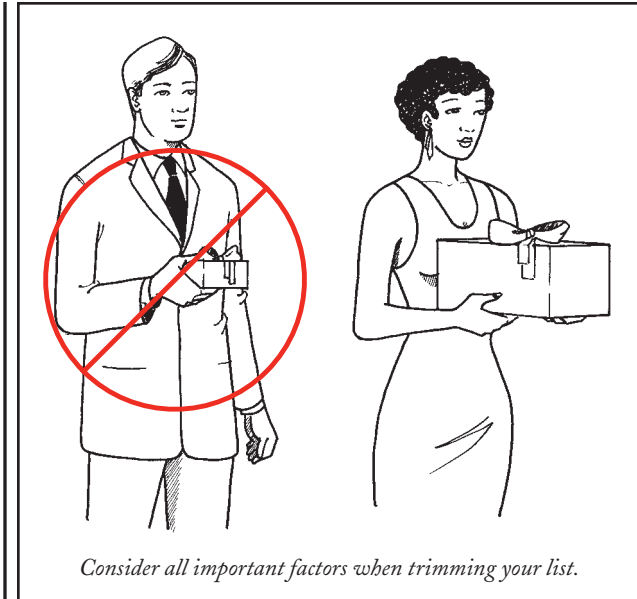
Only the bride and groom (advice from parents is acceptable) take turns removing individual names from the master list until they reach the desired number of guests. If this process becomes too heated, proceed to the next step.

### Play Rock, Paper, Scissors.

The winner of each round can eliminate a name or add someone back onto the list.

### Be Aware

- Send out the invitations six to eight weeks before the event. As you get negative responses, send out your “B list” invitations to people who didn’t make the cut. Stop sending invitations out a month before the wedding date; last-minute invitees will realize their status and be insulted.
- Manage expectations among potential guests. Let it be known that you plan on a small wedding so that no one is really expecting to be invited. If an invitation arrives, the invitee will be deeply flattered, but those who are not invited will not be hurt—at least that’s the theory.



- You are expected to include spouses, fiancés, or long-term live-in companions of your guests. If a guest is only casually dating, you are not obligated to extend an invitation to his date.
- If you forget to invite someone, the next time you see them act annoyed with them for not sending back the RSVP card.