

## The Wedding Party

**Level:** intermediate

**Aim:** a mingle activity with emphasis on oral fluency; students practise making small talk at a wedding and share secrets and do some gossiping.

**Language point:** expressions to use for telling a secret or registering surprise, family vocabulary; rhythm and stress when giving important information.

**Materials:** Cut up the role cards and have one for each student. If you have more than ten students in the class, you could run this as two separate wedding party role plays at the same time or invent some other role play cards.

### Warmer

Write on the board: Who's who at a wedding? Elicit the names of different people and roles at the wedding (bride, groom, best man, maid of honour, bridesmaid, father and mother of the bride/groom etc.). Have any of the students been one these people at a wedding? Ask students to tell each other what weddings they have been to and what roles they have played. They should do this in groups.

Note: Another way to do this would be to bring in a wedding photo of your family (if you have one)! Show them the people and explain the roles.

### Stage One

Tell the class that they have all been invited to a wedding party (make copies of the invitation on the next page or project it onto the board using an overhead projector). Each person will have a different role. Explain that the bride and groom are not in the role-play, the students must imagine that these two characters are sitting at another table. There is a reason for this... everybody will be gossiping about the married couple and their family! The objective of the role-play is to tell people the gossip you know and find out other gossip.

Make sure you explain GOSSIP (uncountable noun) and TO GOSSIP (intransitive verb).

### Stage Two

Before students begin the role-play, tell them that you want them to follow these guidelines each time they talk to someone new.

- 1) Introduce yourself and greet the other person.
- 2) Ask some questions to make small talk (see appendix A below)
- 3) Tell your gossip, using the sentence stems to start with (appendix B below)
- 4) Listen to the other person's gossip and react (appendix C below)

The phrases on the next page should be available to the students during the role-play. Make a copy for the students or put them on the board. When students are ready, give out the role cards, tell them to stand up and begin mingling.

### Stage Three

While students are doing the role-play, have some background music playing (some baroque classical music or "cocktail party" music is good for this). Circulate and take notes of language errors good use of the target language, but don't correct at this point.

### Stage Four

Ask students to sit down again. What did they find out? Elicit things from the groups. Do a quick feedback on the errors or language you took notes on.

### Stage Five

Explain that in English, people usually slow down when they are giving some important information or a surprise. That's because the important information (verbs or nouns) often will come at the end of the sentence. Ask them to turn to a partner and tell their gossip again, using one of the sentence stems below, but this time to slow down, or even pause, just before they give the information. When they have done this, write the following sentence stem on the board:

*Now listen to me carefully, because I am only going to say this once...*

Tell the students that you want them to try to say something surprising to their partner, but beginning with these words and pausing. Give them an example (think of something surprising!). Then have them do it in pairs, working on rhythm. Were they surprised?

Pamela Ann Jones  
and  
Thomas Troy Smith  
invite you to their wedding  
on Saturday the fifteenth of February  
at three o'clock  
Saint Paul's Church  
Chicago Illinois

Copy the following expressions onto the board or project them onto an OHP so that students can refer to them while doing the activity.

**Appendix A: Questions to make small talk at a wedding**

Are you a friend of the bride or the groom?  
What do you do then? (informal, asking about work)  
Have you known the bride/groom long?  
It's a lovely wedding isn't it?  
I don't think we've met, my name is...  
Isn't it a beautiful day for a wedding?  
Doesn't the bride look wonderful?

**Appendix B: Sentence stems for a surprising aspect or a secret**

I shouldn't really say this but...  
I know this isn't the time to talk about it, but...  
Did you know that...  
You may not believe this but...  
Well, I heard that...  
Please don't tell anyone I told you...  
Somebody told me that...

**Appendix C: Reacting to surprising news**

Really!  
No way!  
I can't believe it!  
You're kidding!  
That's terrible!

## ROLE CARDS

You are Charlie Richards, the best man. You work at a bank in the city.

You know that the groom had problems with the law and has been arrested at least once!

You are Jennifer Andrews, the maid of honor. You have known the bride for fifteen years. You work as a model. You know that the bride was secretly engaged to your brother for many years but they broke up.

You are John/Jane Fletcher, a friend of the groom's family. You are a retired doctor. You know that the groom's father has been having serious financial difficulties. It is a good thing that the bride's family is rich!

You are Debbie Harris, a friend of the bride's father (you are actually his secret girlfriend, but don't tell anyone!) You are a dance instructor. You know that the bride went to university only because her father paid a lot of money!

You are Mrs. Emily Watson. You are the groom's godmother. You are retired. You love your godson (the groom) very much, but you are worried he has a drinking problem!

You are Sam/Samantha Williams. You are a friend of the bride's. You are a hairdresser. You know that the bride worked as a dancer in a famous nightclub.

You are Paul/Paula Jones. You are a friend of the groom's. You are a medical student.

You know that the groom's parents have been divorced for two years.

You are Peter/Petra Donovsky. You are a business associate of the bride's father (*you decide what the business is*). You don't trust the groom or anybody in his family. In your opinion, they are all dishonest.

You are Kylie/Keith Griffith. You are a friend of the groom's. You are the owner of a well-know nightclub. You know that the groom has had LOTS of girlfriends and he likes to go to nightclubs. He met his bride at one!

You are AnnMarie Meller. You are a friend of the bride's mother. You are a widow (your husband died two years ago). You have heard that the bride's father has a secret girlfriend, a young woman from the city.