WedShed

A WedShed Guide

How to write your own wedding vows

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How to vow.

If the thought of sitting down to write your own vows makes you feel unpleasant things deep down inside your stomach region, you're not alone. It did for us. And we don't even mind writing.

It can feel like there's immense pressure when it comes writing your own vows and saying something 'worthy' enough for the occasion. As people who bring words together for a living, this seemed magnified. We wanted our vows to be the perfect balance of funny, deep, moving – maybe even tear-jerking - and, ultimately, 'us'.

So when we first sat down to craft these magnificent pieces of prose, it was unsurprising that we blocked up. Stop us on the street and ask us what makes our husbands good guys and you'll regret it. We will batter your eardrums with the most upstanding character references and proclamations of love. But tell us to condense this into one minute, and then stand in front of all the most important people in your life, and say them straight to the face of this special person and, well, no. It's not quite as easy.

So, with this in mind, we thought we'd make a **little guide to writing your own awesome vows**. Because don't you dare even think about not doing this. We mean it.

While it might seem daunting, there is something so unbelievably powerful about saying words that you've personally written. We've said in the past that this might have even been our favourite moment from our own weddings.

We promise by the end of this, you'll be feeling more comfortable. Who knows, you might even put pen to paper.

Let's get into it.

Vows: same-same or different?

There are typically a few ways to do your vows:

1) Share the same vows

Write them together and repeat them to each other during the ceremony.

Pro: Writing them together might make the job easier and you get to make promises that you agree are important to you both.

Con: The vows may feel slightly generic as there won't be much individual person-specific stuff (since you'll both be saying the same thing).

2) Have different vows but work on them together

Write individual vows for each other but then share them with each other in advance so you both know that they are similar in length and tone.

Pro: Your vows will feel super personal as you now get to add in person-specific references. You can include things you love (or even hate – in a joking way) about your partner, and character traits and memories that will make your vows fun for your guests to hear.

Con: While it will undoubtedly be an emotional moment when you read your vows to each other on the big day, there'll be an element of familiarity as you've already read them ahead of the wedding.

3) Have different vows and keep them a surprise for the day

Write individual vows and don't share them until you're standing in front of one another reading them for the first time.

Pro: We're not going to hide it – this is our fave. You get to make the vows relevant and personal and you get the wonderful experience of hearing your other half's amazing vows for the first time on the day, which will absolutely punch you in the heart (in a great way).

Con: Because they're a complete surprise, there's a chance that one person's vows might be a lot longer, or they may be different in feel/tone. The way to easily avoid this is to follow the same format so that there's consistency. And yes, we cover formatting in the coming pages, so read on.

Getting started.

What causes vow-writers block:

- You feel like nothing you say is 'big' or important enough to sum up your feelings
- Fear of writing something silly
- Fear of writing in general

What will get you out of it

- Recognising that anything you say is important.
- Tackling your vows little chunks at a time.
- Making a list of something of your fave things about that person to spark good feels.
- Keeping in mind that there are no rules to vow-writing. If you'd prefer express your vows in rap or as a song, you can. To each their own.
- Knowing that these are just words, and accepting that words can never fully sum up your love for your partner. Your partner knows this, as do your wedding guests, so cut yourself a break.
- Sharing your vows with a close friend (it helps if they're a bit of a wordsmith) to get their opinion if you're really worried.
- Taking comfort in the fact that really, you can do no wrong. You're getting married and everyone is just so stoked for you that you could literally stand there, mumble inaudibly and your wedding party will still congratulate you later.

The format

Deciding how to structure your vows will give you a good jumping-off point. You don't both have to have your vows in the same format but it does help in keeping them consistent so that one person isn't reciting a Shakespearean saga while the other is done and dusted in two sentences.

For example, agree to each write the same amount of promises to each other and the same amount of other vow-starters (we've listed some vow-starter examples further below). Here's what it might look like:

[Vow-starter]	The first time I saw you, I…
[Promise]	I promise to be…
[Promise]	I promise we'll…
[Promise]	I promise to love you…
[Vow-starter]	You give me…
[Vow-starter]	Together, we'll spend our lives…

Consider giving yourself a word count, say 200 words max. That way, you know you'll both have vows similar in length.

Whatever the format, if you both do something similar, you'll be fine.

The actual vow writing.

This is where we get into the nuts and bolts. Before you get started on the vows, answer the questions below. Write these answers down. You'll find yourself coming up with some pretty good stuff that you can include or reference in the vows.

Thought-starting questions

- What did you think when you first saw them? Was it love at first sight?
- At what moment did you know this person was the one you wanted to marry? Why?
- When did you realise you were in love?
- What are the little things they do for you that you appreciate?
- What are the little things you do for them that they appreciate?
- What do you want to work on in your relationship to make it even stronger? Tip: this can be serious - or not. Not leaving wet towels on the bathroom floor would actually help our relationships.
- What do you have now that you didn't before you met? Tip: think head and heart, not material things. For example, 'an appreciation for homemade pasta' or 'a newfound open-mindedness and acceptance of people from all walks of life, thanks to our time exploring the world'.
- What have they taught you? Tip: be serious and lighthearted too. For example, 'You've taught me to stand up for the things I believe in. And you've taught me the many virtues of watching cricket. Actually, no, we're still working on that'.
- Have you gone through adversity together? What did it mean to you to have them by your side?
- What inspires you about them?
- What do you respect most about them?
- What does marriage mean to you?
- What are you most looking forward to for your shared future?
- What goals and values do you both share? Tip: again, feel free to get playful. For example, you might share a mutual appreciation for a crisp craft beer to kick off a Saturday, or a Wednesday night Netflix-and-chill – but with actual Netflix.
- What do you miss most about them when they're away?
- What's your fave thing about them?
- What's the most annoying thing that they do?
- Where was your first date? How did it go?
- What's the most embarrassing moment you've had together?
- How about the most romantic moment?
- What special quirk do you love about them that no one else would know about?
- Have you travelled together? What did that teach you about them?
- Did you guys have a rocky start? Why, and what made you guys overcome it?
- What's your fave body part of theirs?
- Do they have a sporting team, band, clothing item or event they're obsessed with?
- What have you experienced together that you never would have on your own?

That's seriously the hard part done. Now that you've fleshed out some of your relationship history, **highlight the answers that stand out to you** as the most poignant, insightful, heartfelt and fun. You don't need to do this immediately – return to it in a few days' time if you like and then review. Your favourite answers will stand out. These are the answers you want to take elements from to weave into your vows.

Next step: **agree on a format** (refer back to 'The format' section on page 5). Then, pick some promise starters and vow starters from below, or make up your own. Use your highlighted answers from the questions above and start playing around with words. And… you're doing it, Peter! You are now officially writing your vows.

Example promise starters:

- I promise to give you…
- I promise to treat you…
- I promise to tell you…
- I promise to love you…
- I promise to respect you…
- I promise to laugh at…
- I promise to be…
- I promise to always encourage…
- I promise that we'll…

Example vow starters:

- I vow to…
- I'll always…
- Together, we'll…
- When you're up, I'll…
- When you're down, I'll…
- Our future will bring us…
- I will never let…
- You make me…
- You give me…
- Because of you, I see the world…
- Life is better infinitely better with you in it because…
- I'm proud of…
- Your smile makes me…
- I admire…
- You've taught me…
- I look forward to…
- I'm crazy about…
- I value your…
- I can't believe that…
- The first time I saw you, I…
- I realised I loved you when…
- We share…

Download bonus

As an extra helping hand, we've pulled together some things you can vow to each other. The options are truly endless, so read on with an open mind and try and see if these trigger some special promises of your own.

I vow to…

- Fall more deeply in love with you as each day passes
- Stay curious with you
- Communicate fully and fearlessly
- Plan adventures always
- Explore new places
- Laugh often… and often at ourselves
- Never stop learning
- Grow together
- Encourage you to follow your passions
- Get really, really old together
- Be your best friend/confidante/partner in life
- Actually listen to you
- Be thankful for every day that we have together
- Encourage you
- Show you unwavering loyalty
- Nurture you
- Give you my hand and my heart
- Be there for you – when you need me and even when you don't
- Share your struggles
- Celebrate your wins as if they were my own
- Recognise that there may be ups and downs but ride it out together
- Roll our eyes together, not at each other
- Cheer at your triumphs and love you all the more for your failures
- Never take you for granted
- Hold hands
- Always be honest
- Honour you for the individual you are
- Care and share with you
- Hold and cherish you
- Live in truth together
- Road trip
- Crack open the good wines together
- Know you better than anyone else on this earth
- See these vows not as promises, but as privileges
- Kiss every day
- Never forget the way I feel at this very moment
- Join my life to yours in every possible way
- Be a fun, fair and loving partner in parenthood
- Feign interest in the outcome of your sporting team
- Pinch myself when I wake up next to you
- Laugh at (most of) your jokes
- Come running whenever you need me
- Find comfort in your arms
- Know that it won't always be a bed of roses but never stop working on the garden

OK, that's it from us - it's over to you. Remember, your vows are your own to craft. Take what you like from this guide and discard the rest. Just so long as you say some words that come from the heart, you're doing it right.

Happy vowing (and congrats in advance - we know you'll smash them),

WedShed x