

Emily Post's Top Ten Tips for Prom

1. It's OK to couple up, go solo or make it a group affair.

Gone are the days when “no date” meant “no prom.” We like this world much better. There's no pressure to find a date and stress for weeks about asking someone to prom. If you want to go as a couple that's great, but don't let the lack of a date keep you home on prom night. Gather a group of your BFF's and plan the night of your life.

2. How you ask matters. Say “yes,” say “no,” but do it nicely.

Go ahead and ask. All that can happen is he'll say “no.” If you don't ask, you'll never know—and won't that drive you crazy? Ask the person in private. Say: “Ben, would you like to go to the prom with me?” Give him a chance to respond before you make any assumptions. Did you hear “yes”? Great! Hearing “Thanks, but no thank-you,” always hurts, but try to take it in stride. Say, “OK, thanks anyway,” and walk away. Resist any temptation to bad mouth the person or gossip about them. Instead focus on who else you might want to ask or think about going with a group of friends.

Once you accept an invitation to a prom, you are committed. It's not OK to wait for a better offer. It is OK to turn someone down (politely) and accept a later invitation. Throughout this process, treat people the way you would want to be treated if the roles were reversed.

3. This is going to get expensive, so plan ahead.

Proms are pricey, so it's great when couples or groups can share costs. After “yes,” the next important item to discuss is expenses and logistics. Want a limo? Book it now. Planning to have dinner pre- or post- prom? Make the reservation now. Who foots the bill? It's no longer expected that the guy, or the person who extended the invitation, will pick up the entire tab. Most couples and groups split costs equally, including tickets, restaurant meals and transportation. However you decide to handle it, talk about it well before prom night. You don't want to have to worry

about who's going to tip the limo driver when he pulls into your driveway at 1 a.m.

4. Dresses & Tuxedos: It's a formal event, dress accordingly.

Whether you are buying a dress or renting formal wear, finding the right outfit and getting all dressed up is a big part of the prom experience. In most cases, prom is formal. The setting and tone of the event will be elegant and sophisticated and a similar manner of attire is expected. For guys, formal means a black tuxedo, a white tuxedo shirt and a bow tie, and a formal evening dress—a gown, cocktail dress or dressy pants suit for the girls. If you are inviting a date from another school, let them know whether the event is semi-formal, formal or casual so they know what to wear.

5. Flowers: corsage, boutonniere, wristlet and more.

You don't want the corsage or boutonniere to clash with your clothes. If your date asks the color of your dress, try to be a bit more specific than

“a sort of turquoise silk.” White is classic and matches with nearly everything—roses, baby's breath, freesia, stephanotis, spicy carnations—all are pretty, and smell terrific. A florist can help you chose the right flowers and stay within your budget. Girls, watch the video to learn how to perfectly pin your date's boutonniere.

6. Pictures and mobile devices.

Once you're dressed and ready, let your parents take pictures. Twenty years later, you'll appreciate having these mementos. Try not to give your mother a hard time if she wants an extended photo shoot. When it's your turn to take pictures, think before you shoot or post. Don't take unflattering pictures of your friends and don't post them on Facebook or Instagram. Keep mobile activity to a minimum on prom night. Aren't you already surrounded with your most important buddies?

7. Dinner: Don't forget your table manners.

Before or after-prom restaurant stops are popular. When at a restaurant, make sure that your manners match your attire. Loud teenagers with poor table manners won't make friends with other patrons and restaurant staff and could even get you thrown out. Don't forget to tip appropriately and if you're part of a large group, check to see if the gratuity is automatically added to the bill. [Click here for a review of the most important table manners.](#)

8. Dancing

If you come with a date, dance with your date first. Then it's OK to tear up the dance floor with other people too, just don't leave your date wondering if you've forgotten that he or she exists. If someone asks you to dance and you'd rather not, just say: "No thank you."

9. After Party rules.

The prom celebration usually continues on well after the prom is over. Make sure that you follow your customary safety precautions. Don't throw caution to the wind just because it's prom. Respect curfews, don't drink and drive and don't allow yourself to be coerced into participating in any other activity that you wouldn't normally would avoid. If you're not comfortable with what's happening at the party, or if you just want to have an early evening, it's always OK to call mom or dad for a ride home.

10. Say Thank you

Say thank you to your date as well as the prom organizers. If the prom-after party takes place at someone's home, be sure to thank your hosts—usually the parents. Thank your vendors including the driver, wait staff and your parents if they helped cover your prom expenses.