Your wedding invitation does a great deal more than inform people of the date, time, and place of your wedding.

It's the first thing guests will see, and it sets the tone for the event.

The wording and design, from typeface to the color, weight, and even texture of the paper, all subtly shape how your wedding will be perceived. If you're planning a casual beach wedding, for example, then that should be conveyed from the start in the design of the invitation. On the other hand, if you picture your wedding in tuxedos and floor-length gowns, then the invitation should be equally formal in tone and style.

There are no hard-and-fast rules about design - above all, it's important to create something that you like and that reflects your wedding plans. However, some guidelines will help you sort through all the options.

- For a formal wedding, traditional, classic fonts like **Georgia**, **Times New Roman**, and **Bo ok Antiqua**
are timeless choices that set a dignified, restrained tone that never goes out of style. A soft cream, ivory, or white paper will enhance the effect.

- For a more informal event choose a typeface like **Comic Sans**, **Courier New,** or **Symbol** for a contemporary look, and pair it with non-traditional paper colors.

- Check legibility, especially if you have a lot of information on the invitation. Decorative fonts can become less legible at small sizes.

- Two complementary fonts on an invitation may add impact. Try using a script for the bride and groom's names and a regular serif or even a sans serif for the text, for example.

- If your wedding has a signature color or theme, keep an eye out for invitations that use those colors or elements. This palette or theme can continue throughout all the related printed materials, from programs to place cards.