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## Test your savvy as a valued guest

So, along with the usual assortment of bills, advertisements and magazines, the day's mail brought you an invitation to a wedding.

You may be a terrific friend to the couple embarking on married life, but how do you rate as a guest? Here's a pop quiz to check if you were paying attention when your mother told you how to behave at a wedding.

True or false:

- 1. Verbal acceptance of a wedding invitation is fine.
- 2. You don't have to send a gift if you don't attend the wedding.
- 3. You should bring the wedding present to the reception.
- 4. If you're dating someone, it's all right to bring him or her to the wedding.
- 5. A woman invited to the wedding shouldn't wear all black or white.
- 6. The last person to be seated in the church is the mother of the bride.
- 7. On the receiving line guests offer congratulations to the bridegroom and best wishes to the bride.
- 8. You shouldn't leave the reception before the newlyweds.

Ready to check your answers? (Remember, it's impolite to cheat on tests.)

- 1. False. Unless it's a very informal invitation, you are required to answer with a brief handwritten note on a double sheet of fine white note paper. If a response card is enclosed in the invitation, use that.
- 2. True. If you're close to the couple,

you'll probably want to send a gift, but it isn't required.

• 3. False. Unless the gift is a check, send the present to the home of the bride as soon as possible after you receive the wedding invitation. Checks, properly tucked into correct little envelopes, can be handed to the couple at the reception.

• 4. False. An invitation is only for those specifically mentioned. Unless it reads "and guest" or "and family," assume it's only for you.

• 5. True. Although the rules are bent on this, especially since black is so fashionable now. In general, judge what you should wear by the formality of the invitation. Men can't go wrong with a classic suit and tie. Women can always play it safe in a street length dressy party or cocktail dress.

• 6. True. This is the signal that the ceremony is about to begin. If you arrive later, stand unobtrusively at the back unless the ushers direct otherwise. It's best to try to arrive at least 10-15 minutes early.

• 7. True. You could offend if you reverse them. Other tips for negotiating a receiving line: Introduce yourself to anyone who isn't certain to know you.

• 8. True. Although this was more common in the days when the bride and groom left the reception early in a shower of rice to go to their honeymoon. These days, some newlyweds stay right until the end of the party. An alternate rule might be, don't leave until the cake has been cut and served.

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