



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council



ADEC ENGLISH TEACHING RESOURCE BANK

GRADE 12 | TRIMESTER 2

EMIRATI WEDDINGS





Before you read

Discuss in a group.

- 1) What do you know about traditional Emirati weddings?
- 2) Describe your idea of the perfect wedding. Share your thoughts with your group.
- 3) Have you attended a wedding recently? What was it like?

Traditional Emirati Weddings



1) A traditional Emirati wedding involves a number of elaborate rituals and ceremonies with appropriate etiquette and protocol to be observed throughout the process which includes a sequence of preparations.

The Engagement: Before the Wedding

2) If the man's family agrees to take the proposal forward, they offer a certain amount of money as dowry (*mahr*) as a sign of gratitude and commitment. As in the past, when an engagement proposal was accepted, tribesmen fire three shots from their guns, symbolizing an announcement to the tribe that a wedding will take place soon. Villagers rush out to greet the bride and groom's parents.

3) The dowry finances the wedding preparation. In addition to the dowry, the groom's family also present gifts (*zهبah*) from which an elaborate trousseau is created for the bride. *Zهبah* consists of fine pieces of jewelry, perfume and clothes. The bride's gold accessories include a headpiece, earrings, necklace, bracelets and rings, while the wardrobe items include *abayas* and *jalabiyas* (robes).

Preparation for the Ceremony: Laylat al Henna

4) Traditional Emirati wedding celebrations usually last for a week. The run-up to the wedding week can be both exciting and tiring for the bride. The bride is well looked after by her family and encouraged to eat the right foods to maintain her health.

5) For the bride, preparing herself for the wedding day is a very important step. There is a large party for ladies called a henna party (*Laylat al Henna*). Here, all the bride's female relatives and friends are invited to an evening of music, dancing and sumptuous food, and of course henna for the bride and her guests. This usually takes place a day or two before the actual wedding day and is normally held at the bride's parents' home. Most Emirati females who attend are very excited as it is a chance for them to dress up and show their friends their latest outfits. At the ladies' party, the bride enters after all the female guests have arrived. Her arrival is marked with loud instruments such as drums, shakers and tambourines beating in unison and girls ululating. During the bride's henna application, guests take pictures with the bride and start eating. This is followed with more dancing and loud music before ending the night.

6) The bride usually receives the *zهبah* from the groom's family on a Wednesday. This is then followed by a large feast at the bride's house to honor the guests, who have arrived to see the future husband's gifts, put on display by the women from the brides family.



7) The *Nikah*, which is the official religious ceremony, takes place first, attended only by the family. Emirati wedding receptions are almost always segregated for men and women. They can be held at one of the custom-built wedding halls or at an expensive hotel. The wedding halls are designed so that two halls of the same size can accommodate equal numbers of men and women.

8) The bride enters the hall to start the reception. The usual tradition is for the bride to enter with a member of her family and for her husband to enter later on. Some weddings, however, have changed the custom and brides enter with their husbands. This part of the ceremony will be video recorded therefore all the women wear *sheilas* (headscarves) but not the bride if she wishes. The husband will sit with his bride on the front stage, pose for photographs and then leave to go to his section of the wedding

hall. At this point, ladies from the bride's family greet the bride and music begins. The ladies all start dancing in their lavish, colorful attire. Female friends can also join in the dancing or dance around the tables. After some time, an announcement is made that the groom will be entering with his male family members. Female guests, who wish to cover themselves, do so at this point. A loud procession of males playing instruments such as customary drums enter. The groom is in the middle and beside him are his immediate family members carrying traditional sticks with which they dance. The sticks were historically used as a means of defense. The whole procession looks impressive and is well timed. At this point the bride is instructed to cover her hair and pictures are taken. After the photos, men leave quietly and the ladies' party resumes with music and dinner being served.



Reading Comprehension

Read the text and answer the questions. The first one is done as an example.

- 0) What is the purpose of this text? _____
- 1) Describe the main topic of the text. _____
- 2) According to the text, what is the dowry (*mahr*) a sign of? _____
To inform readers
- 3) When an engagement proposal is accepted, what do tribesmen do? _____
- 4) What types of gifts (*zehbah*) does the groom's family present to the bride? _____
- 5) According to the text, how long do traditional Emirati weddings last? _____
- 6) Describe what takes place at the ladies' henna party. _____
- 7) Which day is the *zehbah* usually delivered to the bride's house? _____
- 8) Who attends the *Nikah*? _____
- 9) Traditionally, who enters the reception hall first? _____



Vocabulary

A) Choose the best option. The first one is done as an example.

- 0) The word 'elaborate' in paragraph 1 could be replaced by _____
 A) difficult B) simple C) complicated D) fun
- 1) The word 'gratitude' in paragraph 2 could be replaced by _____
 A) unhappiness B) thanks C) misery D) understanding
- 2) The word 'finances' in paragraph 3 is similar in meaning to _____
 A) funds B) prepares C) undermines D) supports
- 3) The root of the word 'created' in paragraph 3 is _____
 A) creation B) creative C) create D) creating
- 4) What part of speech is the word 'necklace' in paragraph 4?
 A) verb B) adverb C) noun D) adjective
- 5) The word 'sumptuous' in paragraph 5 is similar in meaning to _____
 A) simple B) luxurious C) disgusting D) delicious
- 6) The word 'feast' in paragraph 6 is similar in meaning to _____
 A) lunch B) breakfast C) celebration D) banquet
- 7) The word 'always' in paragraph 7 is _____
 A) a noun B) an adjective C) an adverb D) a verb

B) Paraphrase these sentences in your own words.

- 1) The run-up to the wedding week can be both exciting and tiring for the bride.
- 2) The bride is well looked after.
- 3) Wedding receptions can be held at one of the custom-built wedding halls.



Grammar

Articles (a, an, the)

1) *a* and *an* are called the **indefinite article**. They are used when the speaker is not being specific about which noun he or she is talking about, e.g. *I want to find a table*. The table is not specific so could therefore be interpreted as any table.

In addition to this, *a* is placed before nouns with a consonant sound at the beginning, e.g. *a mouse, a horse*; whereas *an* is placed before nouns that have a vowel sound at the beginning, e.g. *an owl, an apple*.

2) *the* is called the definite article and is used to refer to a specific noun, e.g. *The car that I bought*.

Complete the paragraph with *a, an* or *the* and the correct form of the verbs in brackets. The first one is done as an example.

A traditional Emirati wedding involves 0) a number of ceremonies and rituals. First there is 1) _____ dowry (*mahr*) which 2) _____ (to represent) 3) _____ sign of commitment from 4) _____ groom's family. In addition to this the groom's family must present gifts for 5) _____ bride, known as *zehbah*. Traditional weddings usually last for 6) _____ week and take place in 7) _____ custom-built wedding hall. 8) _____ *Nikah* 9) _____ (to be) traditionally only attended by 10) _____ family.

Critical Thinking

Discuss the following questions.

- 1) How does this description compare or contrast with your experience of traditional weddings?
- 2) What is the role of the family elders in Emirati weddings?

Writing

Choose one of the following topics. Write a paragraph in your notebook.

- 1) What is your favorite part of the wedding ceremony? Why do you like it?
- 2) If you could design an extra special wedding for yourself with an unlimited budget, what would you do?

Extension

Think about a traditional or heritage event that you have attended in the U.A.E. Use some of the language and vocabulary you have studied in this lesson to describe this event. Write the account in your notebook.