

The A-Z of PHOTOGRAPHY

Everything you need to know about wedding photographers
Words and pictures by Sophie Elliott

A *is for albums*
A wedding album is sometimes seen as old-fashioned but it is a great way to ensure your photographs are printed and stored in a way that will last forever. And you won't need to worry as much about your hard drive or computer getting wiped.

B *is for budget*
Wedding photography can take up a large chunk of your wedding costs – make sure you budget accordingly. Most photographers offer different packages, so if you're on a tight budget you could ask for a quote for a half day instead of a full day.

C *is for confetti*
The confetti shot is one of the most fun photographs to capture. "This is a brilliant shot to have in your wedding collection," says Sadie Windscheffel-Clarke from Big Fish Photography (bigfishphotography.com). "So make sure you have confetti for your guests to throw."



D *is for documentary*
Photographers who describe themselves as documentary work in a particular style where they capture moments in a candid, natural way. Instead of asking you to pose, they will work around you and make sure they get unposed images.

E *is for engagement sessions*
"Engagement sessions give you the opportunity to meet your photographer before the big day and can be good fun too," says Katie Atkins from Katie Jade Photography (katiejade.co.uk). "Choose a location that has meaning to you or somewhere you would like to go for a day out. The session allows you to take a break from the madness of wedding planning and spend some time together and the photos will stand as a timeless reminder of your love for one another."

F *is for film*
Do you want your photographer to shoot using a digital camera, a medium format film camera, or 35mm film? Many photographers still work with film. The photographs will have a beautiful grainy look but you will need to ensure they have a lot of experience as working with film isn't easy.

G *is for good equipment*
Ask any amateur photographer and they will say that it is the photographer that takes the photo, not the camera. While this is true to an extent, good equipment really will make a big difference to the quality of a photographer's images. Make sure they have a professional kit with all the accessories required to take photographs for eight or more hours.

H *is for high key*
If a photographer says they produce high-key images, it means they take very bright, high-contrast photographs with lots of whites and very few shadows. It is a stylised way of taking photographs that you'll either love or loathe.





PHOTOGRAPHS: SOPHIE ELLIOTT PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO, SOPHIEPHOTOS.CO.UK

L is for low lighting

If you're marrying in a church or other venue that doesn't have much light, check your photographer has experience working in low lighting conditions. Cameras can't handle darkness, so you need a photographer who knows how to tackle the situation.

M is for meeting

Meeting up with your photographer before your wedding is important so you can see how your personalities click. They might seem great on paper but in real life you may not get along. You don't want to spend your wedding day being tailed by a person you don't particularly like.

N is for natural light

Natural light is a photographer's best friend. Some photographers, however, describe themselves specifically as natural light photographers. This means they won't use a flash or other form of light except the sun and the venue's tungsten/fluorescent lighting. Keep this in mind if your wedding is held late in the day or in winter.

O is for off-camera flash

An off-camera flash is like a studio light that can either be positioned on the camera's hotshoe or on a lighting stand. Photographers use these as fill light so there are no shadows, or as lighting when the sun goes down.

P is for packages

Most photographers offer a variety of packages and will create bespoke deals depending on your requirements. The most common packages are half day and full day, with many offering albums, prints and other photographic memorabilia.

T is for intimate moments

Take 30 minutes to an hour with your photographer, away from your wedding to capture some beautiful just married pictures. It's a great way to relax after the emotion of the ceremony and you'll get a rare chance to spend a little time together – just the two of you.

J is for JPEG

JPEG or JPG images are compressed photographs that can only be minimally edited. Your photographer will deliver your final images as JPEG as it is the standard format for print or use online. They should, however, take the photographs in RAW format on their camera. If they shoot in JPEG, they will have very little post-processing control over the image and there will be less detail within the photograph itself.

K is for knowledge

You don't want a photographer who doesn't know what they're doing. Cameras are complicated machines and there's a lot more to wedding photography than just holding a camera and clicking a button. Make sure they know what they're talking about and can perform the job to the standard you require.



Q is for questions

There is nothing wrong with asking lots of questions. Your photography is one of the most important elements of your wedding, capturing those memories you want to keep forever. Make sure you're on the same page as your photographer and that they know exactly what you want.

R is for reportage

Reportage is similar to documentary photography. The difference is that a reportage photographer will not interact at all with their subjects (you), simply photographing events as they unfold.

S is for shot list

A shot list is vital for a wedding photographer as it informs them of where they need to be and at what time during your wedding day. Meet up with your photographer before the wedding to go over the shot list and give them a printed version they can keep with them at all times. You should also keep one with you, in case theirs goes missing.

T is for timing

Make sure to accurately estimate your wedding day schedule. Photographers will generally need 30 minutes to an hour with your friends and family to get those all-important posed, formal photographs and many will also want to spend 30 minutes to an hour with the newlyweds. Ensure you leave at least 90 minutes between the ceremony and wedding breakfast so there is enough time for everything.

U is for USB stick

A USB stick is the most common way a wedding photographer will deliver their photographs to the client, so check yours has your address. Many photographers offer a customised, personalised USB stick with your name and wedding date engraved into it.



V is for venue

Most venues have a recommended supplier list that includes caterers, bars, wedding planners, florists and, most importantly, photographers they have worked with in the past. If a photographer is on a supplier list they will have covered weddings at that venue regularly and be familiar with the layout and all the best places for pictures.

W is for weather

If there's the possibility of bad weather, make sure to ask your photographer how they would handle it. The majority of photographers will be able to work in rain or snow but inexperienced photographers could struggle. Cameras aren't generally waterproof, so a professional photographer will have a system they can use to protect their kit.

X is for the X factor

Don't book a photographer who doesn't make you say wow. You should hire a photographer based on their talent and skill and, as such, their photographs should blow you away.

Y is for be yourself

It's natural to be nervous in front of a photographer especially if you're not used to having your picture taken. But they're there to photograph your wedding day, so just be yourself. Photographers prefer to get natural shots instead of forced awkward ones. Try to relax.

Z is for zoom

Wedding photographers will work in one of two ways: they will either have a single zoom lens on their camera at all times or they will have a set of prime lenses that they switch in and out. Each style produces a different type of photography: zoom lenses will have more of a documentary or reportage effect, while prime lenses create soft, out-of-focus backgrounds. ♥

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