



Forum: Common English Questions

Topic: wedding dress/wedding gown/bridal dress/ bridal gown

Subject: Re: wedding dress/wedding gown/bridal dress/ bridal gown

Posted by: futari

Posted on: 2011/5/25 1:07:41

Quote:

Elinor wrote:

1. Are wedding dresses, wedding gowns, bridal dresses and bridal gowns all the same?

All wedding gowns are wedding dresses, but not all wedding dresses are gowns. (Just like all poodles are dogs, but not all dogs are poodles.) Gowns are long and tend to be formal. Dresses can be long, short, formal, or informal. My wedding dress was a short cocktail-type dress, but not a gown.

<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20081122023727AA1FQKL>

Useful info:-

The difference between a dress and a gown is largely one of semantics and personal preference. Gown tends to refer to more formal dresses, like those worn for weddings, proms or balls. A dress can be any one-piece garment with a skirt of any length, and can be either formal or informal. While many gowns are referred to as dresses, like wedding dress and prom dress, you seldom hear less formal dresses referred to as gowns. For example a sundress is never a sungown.

This helps illustrate the difference between dress and gown. All gowns are dresses, but not all dresses are gowns. In earlier English examples from the 16th century onward, dress referred to both men and women's clothing ensembles. It might be modified by terms like evening, traveling, riding. You can still see examples of this on invitations to certain events. An invitation might state that a function requires semi-formal dress or semi-formal attire. When an invitation states that the occasion is formal, women are expected to wear an evening gown.

When the term is used strictly, a gown is fancy and frivolous wear, with a tight fitting bodice and a full floor-length skirt. Certain styles of close-fitting gowns, like the form fitting types worn by actresses to award ceremonies, are still more gown than dress. Attending the Oscars, for example, tends to require formal eveningwear for both men and women, though notable exceptions have been fashion disasters of the past.

Another related term to gown is frock. A frock may also be a less formal dress, but may also be an evening or formal gown. The word "frock" is more popular in the UK than in the US for referring to any one-piece garment with a skirt.

An exception in the use of the term gown is a graduation gown, which is worn over clothing. A woman might wear a dress under such a gown if she is planning to attend graduation celebrations after the ceremony. Usually the graduation gown, which is flowing and oversized is worn over other clothes, though a few graduates have tried to get away with wearing only the gown as part of a prank

or bet. This may be cause for amusement but is considered inappropriate for the event of graduation from high school or college.
