

## The Ultimate Guide to Creating a Formal Wedding Shot List

[By Robert London Wedding Photography](#)

I tell all my Brides and Grooms that no action from them is necessary for me to capture great wedding images; **however**, a list of formal wedding photos would go a long way in helping to make the experience go faster and smoother, with the side effect of achieving better images.

This may seem to be as easy as just writing down whom you want in the formal group portraits, but that alone does not really help much. Although a wedding is a festive affair it is also an event so there are significant time constraints, you do not want to miss your cocktail hour because you spent two hours doing your formals. Efficiency in the photo process also means wedding guests are not standing around becoming bored and boredom is not the expression we are after in the final images! The final list needs to be written in the logical order that is optimum for efficiency of guests time and takes into consideration the handicap, elderly and children, all this will conspire to achieve the best images. First item of thought - are there any elderly or frail individuals, put all the pictures with them in the beginning so they can finish early and do not have to get in and out of different variations of groups and proceed to the cocktail hour early and get comfortable. Next, place the largest groups and work down from there in a logical sequence so people do not have to get up and down numerous times and when their finished can leave to enjoy the wedding. This will take some time to figure everything out if you have a large family, and a divorce or two, can complicate things tremendously. I will help by providing some typical scenarios. Use this as a guide to help determine which pictures you desire, remember there is no “norm” it is whatever you want, but be realistic (it is not only about you). Family and friends make a huge effort to attend, and often they would like to have certain pictures also. I have photographed more than one wedding where the parents have ordered a larger album than the couple. And remember you do not want your relatives bringing up that “missed” portrait at your wedding for the rest of your life.

Bride’s extended family with Bride and Groom

Now decide if you want to break the extended family down to smaller parts, say all the cousins

Bride’s immediate family with Bride and Groom

Bride with siblings, group/individual

Bride with Grandparents

Bride with Parents, group/individual, (the Groom perhaps in the group portion)

Repeat this procedure with the Groom’s side, then after the Groom’s Parents bring in the Bride’s Parents and you can have a portrait of both sets of Parents. So now most family and guests should be back at the cocktail hour, and it is time to motivate the Bridal party. Get some creative and fun shots with them, both groups and individuals and then everyone is back at your cocktail hour having a great time and talking about your talented Photographer. Now that you are alone with your new Spouse you can relax, regroup a little and then take some formal and fun shots together. I like to move to a different location when possible so that your wedding portraits look different from the family portraits.

Back at the cocktail hour if you have any other important people in your life, Godparents, college or high school friends, go to them directly, greet other people only briefly along the way, you want all the formal pictures behind you before going to the reception. You should make a separate list for these shots. If you do not do these group shots right away they sometimes tend to never get done; people leave or you just never get a chance. Also, later on it is time to let loose, celebrate and enjoy the party - setting up a group shot can sometimes interrupt from the flow of good party.

I know this appears to be a huge effort but it really is not that hard and the formal images should not take more than 30 minutes total if it is well organized and these images will be with the family for a lifetime!