



Readings Suitable for Civil Ceremonies

Please note this booklet contains a selection of readings suitable for Civil Marriages, Civil Partnerships and Renewal of Vows Ceremonies.

This is only a selection of suggested readings, your Registrar will be happy to discuss any readings you may wish to have at your ceremony.

Please note there can be no religious content in readings used in Civil Ceremonies.

Reading 1

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms
I clasp my countless treasure
I seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share
Than sic a moment's pleasure

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near
I ever mair defy them
Young kings upon their hansel throne
Are no sae blest as I am

And by thy e'en, sae bonnie blue
I swear I'm thine for ever
And on thy lips I seal my vow
And break it shall I never.

Reading 2

O my luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June
O my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair thou art my bonnie lass
So deep in luve am I
And I will luve thee still, my dear
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear
And the rocks melt wi the sun
And I will luve thee still my dear
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Reading 3

Were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen!

Reading 4

She asked why wedding rings are made of gold;
I ventured this to instruct her;
Why, madam, love and lightning are the same,
On earth they glance, from Heaven they came,
Love is the soul's electric flame,
And gold its best conductor.

Reading 5

Now there is no rain, for each of you will be the
shelter for the other.
Now there is no cold, for each of you will be warmth
for the other.
Now there is no loneliness, for each will be
companion for the other.
Now you are two people with one path before you
Go now on your journey and enter into your life
together,
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

Reading 6

True love is a flame that burns eternally
And none can dim its special glow or change its
destiny.
True love speaks in gentle tones and hears with a
gentle ear.
True love gives with open heart and true love
conquers fear.
True love makes no harsh demands, it neither rules
nor binds
And true love holds with gentle hands the heart that it
entwines.

Reading 7

The hand which you each offer
To the other
Is an extension of yourselves:
Just as is the warmth and love
Which you express to each other.
Cherish the touch,
For you are touching another life.
Sensitive to its pulse,
And try to understand and respect its flow and
rhythm,
Just as you do your own.

Reading 8

Today is the day you will always remember,
The greatest in anyone's life.
You'll start off the day just two people in love,
And end it as husband and wife.
It's a brand new beginning, the start of a journey,
With moments to cherish and treasure.
And although there'll be times when you both
disagree,
These will surely be outweighed by pleasure.
You'll have heard many words of advice in the past,
When secrets of marriage were spoken.
But you know that the answers lie hidden inside,
Where the bond of true love lies unbroken.
So live happily forever as lovers and friends,
'Tis the dawn of a new life for you.
As you stand there together with love in your eyes,
From the moment you whisper "I do".

And with luck, all your hopes and dreams can be real,
May success find its way to your hearts.
Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys,
But today is the day it all starts.

Reading 9

If you have found a smile
That is the sweetest one you've known,
If you have heard, within a voice,
The echoes of your own,
If you have felt a touch
That stirs the longings of your heart,
And still can feel that closeness
In the moments you're apart,
If you are filled with wonder
At the way two lives can blend
To weave a perfect pattern
That is seamless, end to end,
If you believe some things in life
Are simply meant to be,
Then you have found your soulmate
Your heart's own destiny.

Reading 10

These are the hands of your best friend,
Young and strong and full of love for you,
That are holding yours on your wedding day
As you promise to love each other today, tomorrow,
and forever.
These are the hands that will work alongside
Yours as together you build your future.
These are the hands that will passionately love
And cherish you through the years,
And with the slightest touch will comfort you like no
other.
These are the hands that will hold you
When fear or grief wracks your mind.
These are the hands that will countless times
Wipe the tears from your eyes.
Tears of sorrow and tears of joy.
These are the hands that will tenderly hold your
children.
These are the hands that will help you
To hold your family as one.
These are the hands that will give you strength when
you need it.
And lastly, these are the hands
That even when wrinkled and aged
Will still be reaching for yours,
Still giving you the same
Unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

Reading 11

They say it takes a lifetime to feel love
And finally find that special one
So when we meet our soulmate
We know our search is done

But we have many kinds of soulmates
Which enter different phases of our life
Each offering something new to us
Which will help us bond as husband and wife.
Love had taught us tolerance and patience
And to always appreciate each other
So may you never take love for granted
For it will wrap you in each others arms forever
On this your wedding day
As you take your vows together
Remember you were friends yesterday,
Lovers today and now soulmates forever.

Reading 12

This day I married my best friend
The one I laugh with as we share life's wondrous
zest.
As we find new enjoyments and experience all that's
best.
The one I live for because the world seems brighter.
As our happy times are better and our burdens feel
much lighter.
The one I love with every fibre of my soul.
We used to feel vaguely incomplete, now together we
are whole.

Reading 13

The key to love is understanding...
The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,
But those unspoken gestures,
The little things that say so much themselves.
The key to love is forgiveness...
To accept each other's faults and pardon mistakes,
Without forgetting, but with remembering what you
learn from them.
The key to love is sharing...
Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad,
together;
Both conquering problems, forever searching for
ways to intensify your happiness.
The key to love is giving...
Without thought of return,
But with the hope of just a simple smile, and by
giving in but never giving up.
The key to love is respect...
Realising that you are two separate people, with
different ideas; that you don't belong to each other,
That you belong with each other, and share a mutual
bond.
The key to love is inside us all...
It takes time and patience to unlock all the
ingredients that will take you to its threshold;
It is the continual learning process that demands a lot
of work...but the rewards are more than worth the
effort...
And that is the key to love.

Reading 14

The sweetest story that's ever been told
Lies in the slim little circle of gold
Joining two people as husband and wife
To share in the joys and the sorrows of life.
For richer or poorer – in sickness and health
Your marriage can yield up a wonderful wealth
Of memories to treasure and hopes to renew
All part of the promises made by you two.
With faith in each other and love as your guide
As long as forever, you'll walk side by side
And the shining reminder of how much you care
Will lie in the little gold band that you wear.

Reading 15

..... And as you say 'I do'
And promise to love your whole life through
Remember that today is just a start:
Just a beginning, a pledge from the heart.
A marriage isn't dresses or aisles or rings
Or wedding cakes and invites and all those things.
It's giving and taking in equal share
It's promising that you will always be there
When things depress you and get you down
When you're feeling sad and he's acting the clown
Remember this day, and why you chose to be here
Then be glad you've got each other, year after year.

Reading 16

Marriage is about giving and taking
And forging and forsaking
Kissing and loving and pushing and shoving
Caring and sharing and screaming and swearing
About being together whatever the weather
And being driven to the end of your tether
About sweetness and kindness
And wisdom and blindness.
It's about being strong when you're feeling quite weak
It's about saying nothing when you're dying to speak
It's about being wrong when you know you are right
It's about giving in, before there's a fight
It's about you two living as cheaply as one
(you can give us a call if you know how that's done!)
Never heeding advice that was always well meant
Never counting the cost until it's all spent
And for you two today it's about to begin
And for all that the two of you had to put in
Some days filled with joy, and some days with sadness
Too late you'll discover that marriage is madness.

Reading 17

Treat yourselves and each other with respect,
And remind yourselves often of what brought you together.
Give the highest priority to the tenderness,
Gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves.
When frustration, difficulties and fear assail your relationship,
As they threaten all relationships at one time or another,
Remember to focus on what is right between you,
Not only the part which seems wrong.
In this way, you can ride out the storms
When clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives –
Remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment,
The sun is still there.
And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together,
It will be marked by abundance and delight.

Reading 18

If you can always be as close and happy as today
Yet be secure enough to grow and change along the way
If you can keep for you alone, you love as man and wife
Yet find the time to share your joy with others in your life
If you can be as one, and walk through marriage hand in hand
Yet still support the goals and dreams that each of you have planned.
If you can dare to always go your separate ways together
Then all the wonder of today will stay with you forever.

Reading 19

Love is giving, not taking
Mending, not breaking
Trusting, believing
Never deceiving
Patiently bearing
And faithfully sharing
Each day, every sorrow
Today and tomorrow.
Love is kind, understanding
But never demanding
Love is constant, prevailing
It's strength never failing
A promise once spoken
For all time unbroken
Love's time is forever.

Reading 20

Love is a temporary madness.
It erupts like a volcano and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion... that is just being in love which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Your roots will grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from your branches you will find that you are one tree and not two.

Reading 21

I love you.
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am when I am with you.
Not only for what you have made of yourself,
But for what you are making of me.
I love you for the part of me that you bring out.
I love you for putting your hand into my overflowing heart
And passing over all the foolish, weak things that can't help,
Dimly seeing there, and for drawing out into the light all the beautiful belongings that no one else had looked quite far enough to find.
I love you because you are helping me to make of the dreams of my life
Not a thought but a reality,
Out of the works of my every day not a reproach but a song...
Yes, a Love song.

Reading 22

Have you ever met a person
Who made your head turn?
Have you ever met a person
Who made your heart burn?
Have you ever met a person
That let you be you?
Have you ever met a person
That made you feel love true?
Have you ever met a person
Who touched you so deep?
Have you ever met a person
Without whom you could not sleep?
Have you ever met a person
Whose eyes promise you'll never feel blue?
I know that I have
And that person is you.

Reading 23

Together we have journeyed
Out of the darkness
Into the sun
Together we are one.
For years our love has been quiet
Between us our love has been silent for too long
Now we can shout from the highest tops
Of how we feel and for no-one will we stop.
And though there may be times when our hearts are heavy.
And though there may be times when we will cry
We know our love is strong and we are ready
To face the world and let them know our love is tied.
So together we have emerged as one
Together we can now face the sun
For darkness no longer clouds our love
Together we are one.

Reading 24

A good marriage must be created.
In marriage the little things are the big things...
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
It is standing together and facing the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is not only marrying the right person, it is being the right partner.

Reading 25

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.
A good marriage must be created.
In marriage the little things are the big things.
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
It is standing together facing the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is not looking for perfection in each other.
It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humour.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.
It is not only marrying the right person.
It is being the right partner.

Reading 26

When things are confused
I discuss them with you
Until they make sense.
When something good happens
You are the first person I tell
So I can share my happiness.
When I don't know what to do in a situation
I ask your opinion
And weigh it heavily with mine.
When I am lonely
I call you
Because I never feel alone with you...
When I have a problem
I ask for your help
Because your wisdom helps me to solve it.
When I want to talk to someone
I always talk to you
Because you understand me
When I want the truth about something
I call you
Because you are so honest.
It is essential
To have you in my life
Thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for being my love.

Reading 27

You mean so much to me –
And I just wanted
You to know
How very much I care.
You mean so much to me –
You've helped me to find
A special outlook on life
That was hiding
Deep inside me,
Waiting just for someone like you
To open the door
And set it free.
You mean so much to me –

For you've been there,
Through the good times and the bad,
Drying the tears and
Holding back the loneliness -
Giving me a friendly shoulder
To lean on
And enough smiles to last a lifetime.
You mean so much to me –
And I can't help but feel
As though I owe you so much more
Than I can ever repay...
But if there's a way, any way...
To hold and to help
To provide and encourage,
To give even a part of what
You have given me
I will be there for you.
And wherever time will take us...
Wherever we may be,
I always want you
To remember
How much you mean to me.

Reading 28

I promise to give you the best of myself
And ask of you no more than you can give.
I promise to respect you as your own person and to realise that your interests, desires and needs are no less important than my own.
I promise to share with you my time and attention.
And to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.
I promise to keep myself open to you,
To let you see through the windows of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.
I promise to grow old along with you,
To be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.
I promise to love you in good times and bad,
With all I have to give and all that I feel inside in the only way I know how.
Completely and forever.

Reading 29

Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
And here's the reason why.
So I can push you out of bed
When the baby starts to cry.
And if we hear a knocking,
And it's creepy and it's late.
I hand you the torch you see,
And you investigate.
Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
You may not comprehend it.
But when the tumble drier goes,
It's you that has to mend it.
You have to face the neighbour,
Should the Labrador attack him.
And if a drunkard fondles me,
It's you that has to whack him.
Yes, I'll marry you,
You're virile and you're lean.
My house is like a pigsty,
You can help to keep it clean.
That sexy little dinner,
Which you served by candlelight.
As I do chipolatas,
You can cook it every night!
It's you who has to work the drill
And put up curtain track
And when I've got PMT it's you
Who gets the flack.
I do see great advantages,
But none of them for you.
And so before you see the light,
I do, I do, I do!

Reading 30

On this day
I pledge my love and devotion
To you, and only you.
On this day
Our journey begins
On a path to everlasting love.
On this day
We make only promises we can keep
Promises that will keep our love strong.
On this day
We begin to sacrifice for one another
Giving anything for the other's happiness.
On this day
We announce to the world
Our love and respect for one another.
On this day
We vow to love and protect
No matter the cost.
On this day
We will promise to be honest
For the rest of our days together.
On this day
I swear to never take you for granted
Always expressing my love for you.



Ideas for Writing Your Own Vows/ Declarations

Jot down words and phrases from books, films or poetry that touch your heart and express your thoughts. Discuss the special moments in your relationships, whether happy, sad or humorous, to inspire personal meaning in the words you choose.

Promises

- ◆ To share the good and the bad parts of life together
- ◆ To love, honour, respect and cherish each other
- ◆ To respect each other's individuality
- ◆ To be kind, trusting, tolerant and understanding
- ◆ To stay together for life
- ◆ To bring happiness and laughter into the marriage
- ◆ To be a good friend
- ◆ To create a loving and stable relationship
- ◆ To be honest and faithful

Phrases

- ◆ A measure of my love
- ◆ A relationship built on love and honesty
- ◆ A symbol of love
- ◆ All the days of my life
- ◆ Bonds of love
- ◆ Cherish, love and comfort
- ◆ Companion in joy and comfort in adversity
- ◆ Dearer than life itself
- ◆ For an eternity of tomorrows
- ◆ Friend, love and protector
- ◆ From the depths of my heart
- ◆ Give myself to you
- ◆ I do not expect you to fulfil my dreams, only to share them and allow me to share yours.
- ◆ In sickness and in health
- ◆ Give you room to grow
- ◆ Heart of my heart
- ◆ In sunshine and in shadow

Examples of vows:

I (A) promise to love, honour and cherish you forever.

I promise to stand by your side through all the good and bad times.

I promise to be faithful and loving.

I promise to be the most compassionate husband/ wife, through sickness and health, joy and sorrow.

I promise to be your best friend and love you with all my heart and soul forever.

Please accept this ring as a symbol of our love and friendship.

I love you (B).

Today I will marry (A), to love and to cherish for the rest of my life.

I will be truthful and honest and make each other's dreams and aspirations come true.

I am marrying my best friend. The one I want to spend the rest of my life with.

We were meant to be together, it was our destiny.

You are my friend, my love, my life's companion.

Please accept this ring as a symbol of our love and friendship.

I love you (A).