



[LOVE/SEX]

creating a will

It's not a fun topic, but every married person should draft a will. Read up on the process below and fill out the worksheet on the following page. Then bring it to your lawyer to draft it formally.



tip
make sure someone responsible and trustworthy knows where you've stored your important documents

wills 101

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

Your name, your spouse's name, the date of your marriage, and the names of your children, as well as a revocation of any previous wills. You'll also want to include how step- or foster children will be treated if you have them.

The will must bear your name and signature to be considered valid, plus witness signatures as specified by your state's laws.

Bequests That's who should get what. You can leave everything to one person, but you must formally state this. If that person is your spouse, designate new recipients of your personal items in the unlikely event that you die together. (We know, it's not something you want to think about right now, but you need to have a backup plan.)

Designated Executor Responsible for making sure your wishes are carried out this person can claim a portion of the estate for his or her work if you don't specify otherwise.

Appointed Guardians If you have kids, you should appoint legal guardians for them in your will. In most cases, guardianship automatically passes to the surviving spouse if something should happen to one of you. But if something should happen to both of you and you die intestate, the legal guardian of your children will be chosen by your state court. And the process is not exactly speedy: Even in simple cases, probate court can take three to six months.

how to draft your will

STEP 1 Talk it out in advance. Write down the location, type, amount, and extent of your individual assets.

STEP 2 Decide how you'd like those assets to be divided. Designate a successive executor if your first choice can't do it and who will serve as a legal guardian for your children.

STEP 3 Make an appointment with an estate planning lawyer who can work with you to create wills and other documents to suit your needs.

BUDGET-CONSCIOUS STEP 3 If your estate is uncomplicated (no stepchildren, no unusual bequests), try a computer software program designed to create basic legal documents (like [LegalZoom.com](https://www.legalzoom.com)). Do-it-yourself programs have their drawbacks though. If your will is drafted incorrectly or incompletely, it can create some problems for your surviving family members. Consider paying an attorney to take a look at the finished product at the very least.

how to store your will

Leave the original with your lawyer but make copies of it for yourself, making sure all your lawyer's contact info is on it. Keep your will in a safe and secure spot, like a safe deposit box or a safe place in your home.

wills worksheet

what is it?

what's it worth?

who gets it?

PROPERTY			

AUTOMOBILES			

JEWELRY			

ANTIQUES			

MISCELLANEOUS			

BANK ACCOUNTS			

INVESTMENTS			