

## Reunion | Party Definitions

**Black tie....formal....dressy casual....what does it all mean?**

### **Black Tie**

A **Black Tie** invitation calls for formal attire. Men wear tuxedos, women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates. A little black dress is completely appropriate for black tie functions.

**Formal** usually means the same as **Black Tie**. Women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates.

A **White Tie** or **Ultra-formal** invitation requires men wear full dress, with white tie, vest, shirt. Women wear long gowns.

### **Black Tie Optional**

A **Black Tie Optional** or **Black Tie Invited** gives you the option of wearing a tuxedo or formal dress, but it should clue you into the formality of the event, meaning a dark suit and tie would be your other option. Women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates.

### **Creative Black Tie**

**Creative Black Tie** leaves room for trendy interpretations of formal wear. He can go more modern with a tux -- maybe a black shirt, no tie. She wears long or short dresses or evening separates.

Sometimes, themed parties call for dress codes like **Texas Black Tie**, or other variations of **Creative Black Tie**. In that situation, you can have more fun with it, choosing a dressy look with a theme (for him, it could be a tux with boots and for her it could be a long dress paired with Southwestern style silver belt and jewelry).

**Resort formal** is a designation for warm weather locales (like a beach reunion) where the women can wear something bright and lightweight (floral sundress for example.)

## **Semi-Formal**

**Semi-Formal** or **After Five** means that tuxes are not required, nor are long dresses. An evening reunion (after 6 PM) would still dictate dark suits for him, and a cocktail dress for her. Daytime semi-formal events mean a suit for him and an appropriate short dress or dressy suit for her.

**Business Formal** is the same as **Semi-Formal** for him, but for women it suggests that women opt for more tailored dressy suits and dresses. The idea is to still be business appropriate -- which means nothing too sexy or slinky -- but still dressed up.

## **Cocktail Attire**

**Cocktail Attire** means short, elegant dresses for her and dark suits for him. The little black dress is the ultimate cocktail dress and appropriate for most special occasions.

## **Informal**

**Informal** is often interpreted as the same as **Casual** but it actually calls for the same dress as **Semi-Formal** -- dark suits for him, short dresses for her -- especially when associated with a special event.

## **Festive Attire**

**Festive Attire** is usually seen around the holidays, with the mood of the party being **Informal** or **Semi-Formal**. For her, it means to choose looks with a bit of sparkle or holiday bent (i.e. a beaded sweater with black pants, a red silk blouse with a black skirt).

## **Casual**

**Dressy Casual** calls for dressed-up versions of casual looks. For him, it could be trousers and a sport coat, for her a dressy pants look. Jeans, shorts, T-shirts and other casual looks are not appropriate for **Dressy Casual**.

**Casual** generally means anything goes (including jeans, sneakers, etc.) If the host or hostess wants a more dressed-up approach, it would be dictated on the invite.

Lastly, when in doubt about what to wear, remember you can always ask the Office of Alumni Relations (828.328.7171) what they expect guests to wear.

*Source: <http://fashion.about.com/cs/glossary/a/partydefinition.htm>*