

SPECIALIST BRIDAL HAIR AND MAKE-UP

INTRODUCTION

Every culture has a different perception of what a perfect wedding looks like but, no matter where in the world a wedding takes place, the bride will always want to look and feel her best on the big day. The preparation for a wedding begins long before the wedding day, however, and it can be deeply rooted in culture and history. A range of examples will be considered in this chapter.

It is important for a make-up artist to know the different bridal hair and make-up looks that are popular with a range of ethnicities and cultures, and to be able to carry out the skilled techniques required to create these specialised looks.

It is essential that the bride feels completely happy and confident with her hair and make-up. However, the make-up artist's job is not just about applying the make-up on the day, as they must also consider how the location will impact the application and how to adapt the hair and make-up to account for this. Wedding celebrations can last for several hours, so the hair and make-up needs longevity, and there is a wide variety of techniques that can be used to achieve this. You will need also need to understand how to adapt the make-up for various lighting environments throughout the day.

Finally, it is essential that everyone involved in the wedding preparations is professional and well presented.

In this chapter, you will learn:

- 1 how to prepare for specialist bridal hair and make-up
- 2 how to carry out specialist bridal hair and make-up.

1 HOW TO PREPARE FOR SPECIALIST BRIDAL HAIR AND MAKE-UP

Influences on bridal hair and make-up traditions

It is important to be aware of a wide variety of bridal hair and make-up looks, and how they may differ between different ethnicities, cultures and religious groups. These traditions can influence everything from the outfits the bride wears to her preferred hairstyles and make-up designs.

The following section offers a glimpse of just some of the traditions followed by people from a number of cultures and religious groups, and the hair and make-up designs that are typically favoured. However, it is important to remember that these examples are not exhaustive and that every bride is different. Do not make assumptions about a bride's preferred hair and make-up looks – you should always talk to the bride to find out what look they desire.

KEY TERMS

Lehenga choli: a three-piece outfit consisting of a floor-length skirt, cropped bodice and a scarf.

Salwar kameez: an outfit consisting of a tunic (*kameez*) and loose-fitting trousers (*salwar*), often paired with a scarf.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Henna should be tested on the skin at least 24 hours prior to application.



▲ Figure 16.1 A Sikh wedding



▲ Figure 16.2 An Indian bride dressed in traditional red Hindu wedding clothing

Indian weddings

While there are many regional variations, Indian brides – especially those who practise Hinduism – traditionally wear a red sari (a length of fabric draped around the body) or **lehenga choli**, which is usually embroidered or embellished with gold. For Hindus, red symbolises prosperity and fertility. Sikh brides may also wear a red *lehenga choli* or **salwar kameez**, with the colour symbolising prosperity and auspiciousness in married life. Gold is also a popular choice.

A traditional Hindu wedding – called a *vivaha* – can last up to three days, with guests often invited to share all three days of colourful celebration. Day one is a ceremony that is usually attended only by close family. Day two starts with a *mehndi* (henna) ceremony for the bride and her female friends and family, followed by an evening event involving both families, a meal and dancing. The final ceremony takes place on the third day. The bride may change her outfit several times a day, so the make-up will need to complement each outfit.

By comparison, Sikh weddings tend to be one-day events. The ceremony – *Anand Karaj* – takes place in the morning at a temple (*gurdwara*) in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh religious scripture. The ceremony is usually followed by a reception with eating, drinking and dancing.

Indian brides may have their hands and feet adorned with beautiful *mehndi* designs the day before the wedding (also discussed in Chapter 8, page 198). The patterns draw on traditional Indian heritage and can last for up to a week. The process is thought to help de-stress the bride and relieve tension, as well as being for aesthetic purposes.

Jewellery, particularly gold, is also central to a traditional Indian wedding look. This can include:

- *maang tikka* – a piece of jewellery that is attached to the hair and worn on the forehead
- *matha patti* – a more elaborate *maang tikka* with jewelled side strings
- *passa* – a hair ornament that is traditionally draped over the left temple (also known as a *jhumar*), often worn by Muslim brides
- *nath* – a nose ring, which is a traditional piece of bridal jewellery for Hindus
- heavy earrings, necklaces, bracelets and bangles.

The particular jewellery worn will, of course, depend on the regional traditions, religious beliefs and preferences of the bride.

One pre-wedding tradition involves the application of turmeric (*haldi*) paste to the skin, which is thought to detoxify the skin and leave it glowing. The traditional make-up look includes a reddish lip, and the eyes emphasised with deep black liner. Hindu brides may also wear a *tilak* or *bindi*, a small, often red, mark or dot on their forehead between their eyebrows.

The hair may be ornamented with lavish jewellery, as described above, and may incorporate fresh flowers or be woven into long plaits with a *paranda*, a colourful hair accessory from the Punjab region of India.

Chinese weddings

There are many regional and ethnic variations in weddings across China, but the bride traditionally wears a long red dress known as a *qipao* or *cheongsam*. Red symbolises happiness, good luck and prosperity. Western-style white wedding dresses have grown in popularity in recent years, however, and in many Chinese weddings a bride may wear both.

Make-up preferences are for pale tones, red lips and soft pink blush, while the eyes are mainly made up using pinks and peaches. Long hair is traditionally styled into a hair-up style and may be decorated with fresh flowers, hair combs or jewelled hair pins.

A recent phenomenon for Chinese weddings is pre-wedding photo sessions, which can be in studios or outside, and often abroad. The photographers may work closely with hair and make-up artists on these photoshoots.

Japanese weddings

For a traditional Japanese wedding ceremony, the bride will wear a white **kimono**, although modern brides may opt for a coloured kimono or Western-style white wedding dress.

It was once traditional for the bride's face to be painted white, but nowadays brides tend to go for a more natural look with pale pinks, soft greys or browns across the eyelids, blending outwards. The hair is traditionally put up with floral accessories known as *kanzashi* or a headband.

ACTIVITY

White wedding dresses were popularised in the Victorian era. Research on the internet to find out when and why.

KEY TERM

Kimono: a traditional Japanese garment. It is T-shaped and has square sleeves, and is usually tied with a belt (*obi*).



▲ **Figure 16.3** A bride wearing a traditional Chinese red wedding dress



▲ **Figure 16.4** A Japanese bride in a traditional white wedding kimono



▲ **Figure 16.5** A Western-style white wedding dress



▲ **Figure 16.6** A Muslim bride in Egypt wearing a wedding dress and hijab

Arab weddings

The Arab world, which is typically defined as members of the Arab League group of nations, stretches across North Africa – from Mauritania to Sudan and Somalia – to the Arabian Peninsula and into western Asia. While wedding customs vary from country to country, they are united by some common cultural traditions.

The populations of countries across the Arab world are predominantly Muslim. Islamic wedding ceremonies are usually very short – as little as 20 minutes – but the celebrations may carry on late into the night and even into the following day, and are often loud, vibrant and joyous. There may be a traditional henna party the day before the wedding, where female members of both families apply henna to the hands of the bride.

For make-up, the eyes are usually dramatic with bold colours such as blues, greens and purples to match the bride's eye colour. The cheeks and the lips are more subtle. The hair may be styled with curls that tumble down the back or a hair-up style finished off with a jewelled accessory.

Many Muslim brides cover their hair with a hijab or headscarf, which is usually co-ordinated with their wedding dress.

Turkish weddings

A traditional Turkish wedding is a lavish occasion with many guests. For the bride, the preparation may begin five days prior to the wedding, when the house is filled with roses and the bride traditionally puts on a veil that will hide her face until the wedding day (although many modern-day brides choose not to do this). In the following days, the bride may visit a Turkish bathhouse to get her skin soft and bright for the special day. She may also have a 'henna night' with close female friends and relatives where henna is put in the palm of the bride's hand along with a gold coin, which is thought to bring prosperity.



▲ **Figure 16.7** White wedding dresses are popular at Turkish wedding ceremonies

Brides wear a traditional *bindalli* dress for the henna night, which is usually dark red and embellished with gold. Western-style white dresses are popular for the wedding ceremony.

The hair is traditionally dressed with jewellery and a veil. Plum, gold and brown colours are used for the eyes, along with dark eyebrows, and eyes lined with thick liner. The lips are usually coloured either pink or red.

ACTIVITY

Create a look book with pictorial and written evidence of different specialist bridal hair and make-up looks.

Bridal hair and make-up themes

You will need to explore different bridal hair and make-up themes to understand how they may influence contemporary bridal hair and make-up looks. A number of wedding themes are explored in the following section.

Colour co-ordination

Many weddings have a specific colour theme used to tie the day together, with the colour being used to co-ordinate decorations, table plans, table toppers and flowers, and the clothing of all of the members of the bridal party (for example, the bride, groom, bridesmaids and groomsmen).

It is very important that the make-up you use ties in with this colour theme and complements the overall look. This may be done using just the colour of the lipstick or the pastel shades of an eyeshadow.

ACTIVITY

Visit a material shop to see if they have any swatches of colours and materials that can be used when preparing for wedding make-up.

Science fiction (sci-fi)

Some couples may choose a sci-fi-themed wedding, based on *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who* or *Star Trek*, for example. The bride may want hair like that of *Star Wars* character Princess Leia, or something even more futuristic and bold.

Fantasy

Fantasy wedding themes could include anything from Disney to *Alice in Wonderland* or *Captain Marvel*. The hair and make-up of the bride could match their favourite Disney princess, for example: in the case of Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*, this could be achieved using subtle make-up in peaches and browns, a peachy blush and a nude lipstick to match the bride's natural lip colour, with the hair tussled and styled half up/half down.



▲ **Figure 16.8** A fairy tale-themed wedding look

Fairy tale

Fairy tales are childhood stories of magic and folklore involving 'once upon a time', 'happily ever after' and plenty of princes and princesses. Make-up for a romantic, fairy tale theme could include subtle pinks, peaches and pastel colours, perhaps with a little glitter or shimmer. The bride's hair could be long with curls and a flower or metal crown.

Gothic

A gothic wedding theme is a bold choice that can give a beautiful end result. The bride may wear a black or dark red dress, or a dress with a dark pattern. The make-up and hair can be quite theatrical, with bigger hair that could be styled up or down, and striking make-up choices, which could include black eye make-up, red lips and prominent eyebrows.

Vintage

Vintage weddings are themed to look like an earlier time period, for example the 1920s or the 1930s. As different periods of history call for different styles, you will need to research the right look for the hair and make-up of that time. See Chapter 7 for more information on historical hair and make-up.

Winter

A winter wedding might incorporate a Christmas theme or a winter wonderland theme, with Christmas trees, fairy lights and fake snow. The hair and make-up for this type of wedding could be tailored to the specific winter theme. The lips are normally a reddish colour, and the hair could be dressed with a tiara or ribbon.



▲ **Figure 16.9** A gothic-themed wedding look

HANDY HINT

Not all weddings are traditional, so you should always try to have a selection of accessories to cater for different themes.



▲ **Figure 16.10** A 1920s-themed wedding look



▲ **Figure 16.11** A Christmas-themed wedding look

ACTIVITY

- 1 Practise creating bridal looks for different themes, being sure to take before and after photos for your look book.
- 2 Create a social platform profile to collect together and share all of the make-up looks you create.

Location and conditions for the wedding

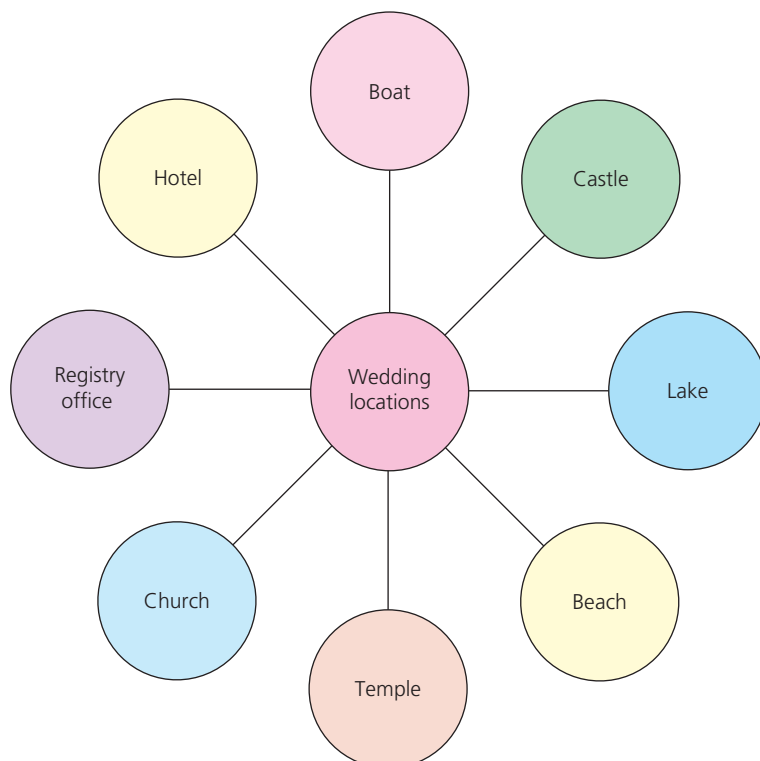
Location

The 1994 Marriage Act meant that weddings in the UK no longer had to be held in either a place of worship or at a registry office, opening up a vast range of indoor and outdoor venues for couples, and by 2017 only a quarter of weddings were part of a religious ceremony. Destination weddings abroad have also grown in popularity as they allow people to take advantage of locations with warmer climates, such as Mauritius and Saint Lucia.

As a hair and make-up artist, you will need to consider the location of the wedding and reception when planning the desired look with the bride, so that the look can be applied effectively on the day.

If the wedding is taking place in a hot country, you will need to anticipate the effects of the heat. For example, the bride may sweat more, which could cause the skin to look oily and shiny. If the wedding is on a beach and it is likely to be windy, the hair will need a firmer fix so it keeps its style and does not blow around.

Some examples of different locations for weddings are given in Figure 16.12.



▲ **Figure 16.12** Some examples of wedding locations

HANDY HINT

Be sure to have extra bobby pins in your make-up bag in case the conditions are very windy.

ACTIVITY

Explain how different locations could affect a look and how you may need to adapt the look on the day.

HANDY HINT

Use soft tones when applying make-up for a morning wedding because morning light is soft, so make-up will photograph darker than it appears to the naked eye.

HANDY HINT

Filament lighting is a common type of artificial lighting and it contains the colours red and yellow, which creates a very warm look. You can use almost every colour under this lighting apart from browns, which will appear a lot darker.

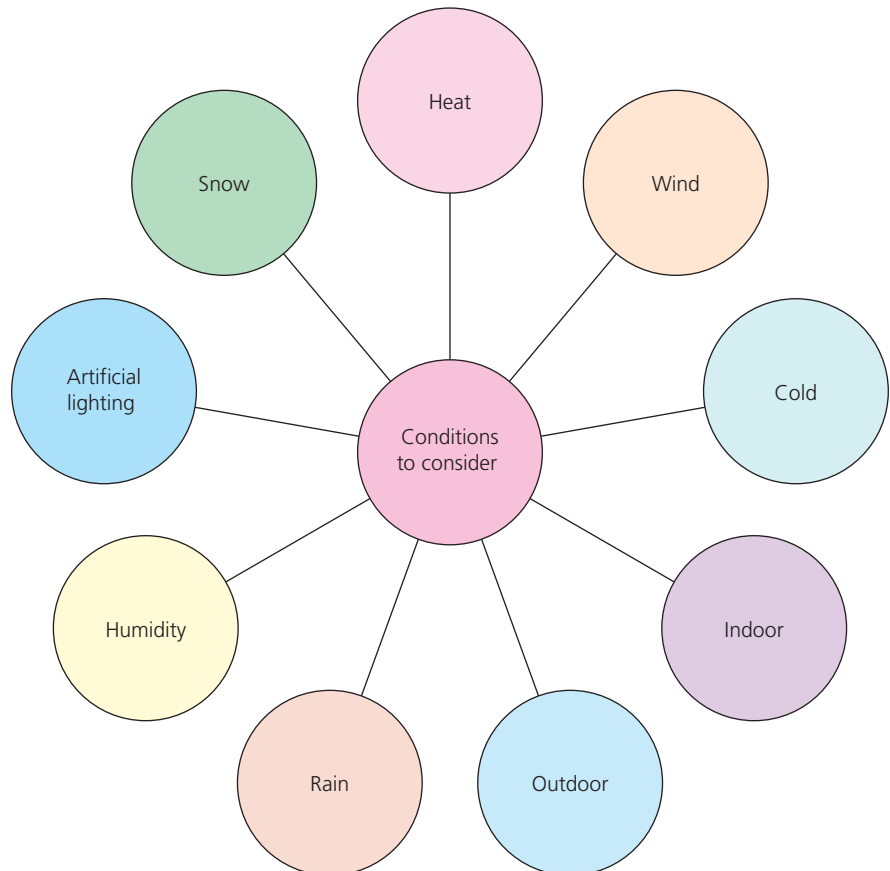
Conditions

There are many conditions that you must take into consideration when planning the hair and make-up for a bride.

- What time of day is the wedding taking place?
- What time of year is it?
- Is the event going to be held inside or outside?
- What weather is expected? Is it likely to be hot, humid, windy, rainy or snowy?
- What is the lighting going to be like?
- Is the bride going to be photographed under artificial lighting?

All these factors and others may affect your choice of colours and the amount of make-up to be applied. For more information on environmental conditions and artificial lighting, see Chapter 4, pages 106–107, and Chapter 6, pages 160–164.

Different environmental and lighting conditions to consider when planning hair and make-up for a wedding are outlined in Figure 16.13.



▲ **Figure 16.13** Conditions that affect choice of hair and make-up

2 CARRY OUT SPECIALIST BRIDAL HAIR AND MAKE-UP

Working in bridal hair and make-up allows you to put into practice many of the skills you have learnt throughout this course, from hair artistry and the art of applying make-up, to researching and creating historical hair and make-up looks. You also need to be able to provide thoughtful suggestions, observe all health and safety protocols, and work in a calm, professional manner on what can be an emotional day for the people involved in the wedding.

Some specific points to consider when working in bridal hair and make-up include the following.

- Try to use non-technical terms while you are working to ensure the bride understands what you are suggesting or doing.
- Make sure the terms of your contract are clear: are you just applying make-up before the event or have you been contracted to stay to fix hair and retouch make-up before the photos are taken and the reception starts?
- Pack your make-up case the night before the wedding and make sure you have everything you need for the bride's special day.
- Get to the venue with plenty of time to spare so you can set up your area and reassure the bride by talking through the designs.
- If you have been contracted to work with the whole bridal party on the day of the wedding, make sure you allocate plenty of time for the bride.
- The bride may be a little teary on the day. Stay around until she leaves for the wedding so you can do any touch-ups that may be required.

Further information about bridal hair and make-up can be found in Chapters 4–6.

HANDY HINT

Be sure to have all the make-up you require to cater for different lighting and weather conditions.

Test your knowledge

- 1 What is a *lehenga choli*?
- 2 What is a *cheongsam*?
- 3 Describe three different conditions that could affect the hair and make-up chosen for a wedding.
- 4 Describe three different locations where a wedding could take place.
- 5 Name three different themes that a couple could choose for their wedding.
- 6 Describe how hair and make-up could be adapted for different types of wedding conditions.
- 7 Describe the make-up and hair techniques that may be used by a Turkish bride.
- 8 Describe some of the differences between a Hindu wedding and a Sikh wedding.
- 9 What is henna and how is it used in the preparation for some weddings?
- 10 Describe the make-up and hair techniques that may be used by a Japanese bride.

Practical assignment

Scenario

You have been asked to design hair and make-up looks for a bridal catwalk showcasing a variety of different ethnic and cultural traditions.

Task

- Prepare a plan and design the show from start to finish.
- Design three different looks by creating a look book.
- Create one of the looks on a model and photograph the completed look.

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