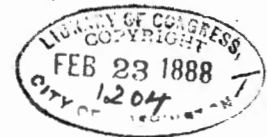


EVERYBODY'S  
LETTER WRITER

CONTAINING

ALL NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS IN THE ART OF  
LETTER WRITING, TOGETHER WITH NUM-  
EROUS MODELS OF ALL KINDS  
OF LETTERS.

*56*  
BY THE AUTHOR OF "GOOD MANNERS."



CHICAGO:  
T. S. DENISON, PUBLISHER.  
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*1888*

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**GOOD MANNERS,**

A GUIDE TO ETIQUETTE.

Cloth, 50 Cents. Paper, 30 Cents.

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PREFACE.

Letter writing has often been declared to be "a lost art," but it is one of the most graceful of accomplishments to be able to convey one's ideas in a terse, yet vivacious manner to another—to at once express one's self in pleasing and elegant language, without becoming stilted and formal. This power of expression is not as difficult to acquire as many suppose it to be.

One of the first requisites is to have something to say, and the next one is, to say it as gracefully as possible. We have seen letters written by friends, one to another, which were full of "airy nothings," and were yet so charming and delightful that one involuntarily wished such letters might never end. To such as can write thus, it is a gift; while to the majority of people it is a slow, labored and difficult undertaking.

For the latter class we have prepared our manual. In its pages there is a variety of forms of letters suited to every occasion that would demand correspondence. And in performing this task we have taken great pleasure, hoping our efforts will be productive of equal pleasure to our readers.

In presenting these models we do not offer them in the expectation that they will serve verbatim, but as forms susceptible of variation or addition under varying conditions and occasions. They are designed as aids to correspondence, and as such we launch our modest little volume upon the sea of literature, trusting that it will be accorded a hearty welcome from an appreciative public.

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## EVERYBODY'S LETTER WRITER.

### LETTER WRITING AN ART.

**Its Importance.**—All acknowledge the importance of being able to write well, either for business purposes or in the behest of friendship or courtesy. Nevertheless, the scarcity of good letter-writers makes it evident that the art must be exceedingly difficult to master, or else its cultivation is sadly neglected. It behooves all to attain to perfection if possible in this direction, as it is not only a great accomplishment, but also an imperative necessity, to be able to write rapidly and well. We feel the importance of it in every department of active life.

*We must write; the only question is, how we shall write?*

**Permanent Record.**—It is well worth an effort to prepare ourselves thoroughly if we do not wish to photograph ourselves in an unpleasant or grotesque manner upon the memory of all who read our attempts at letter-writing. We may in conversation utter thoughts unadvisedly, and hope our mistake may be forgotten or overlooked, but what we write becomes a permanent record of what we are.

**An Index of Character.**—A letter is a sure index

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of character to every one who can read between the lines, and all are more or less proficient in this. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to all who desire to obtain a place in society, or in public or private esteem, to acquire the secret of writing a good letter.

**A Recommendation.**—It is one of the best recommendations that can be given, for an incompetent person can never achieve it. The chirography may be regularly formed by mere mechanical skill, natural or acquired, but all the requirements of an excellent letter can only be fulfilled by attainments belonging to a person of fair education and intelligence.

**As History.**—Many biographies have been compiled chiefly from the letters collated from the correspondence of a lifetime. A truer history could not be given to the world, nor one which would render the inner life more vivid in its portrayal.

It is claimed by many who have given the subject earnest attention, that a man commits himself in no other way more unreservedly than by his pen.

**Individuality of Letters.**—It is a fact also worthy of attention, that there is as distinct an individuality in handwriting as in the features of the human face. We glance at the envelope of a letter, as at a face which confronts us on the street, and almost instinctively know at once whether we are greeted by a friend, a foe, or a stranger.

**Not Infallible.**—As character is so subtle an essence as to be able to elude us to some extent, no matter what means we may take to grasp it, we may of course be deceived if we rely implicitly upon any single method of gauging it.

**As Interpreters.**—Nevertheless, letters are among the best interpreters. Knowing this, we should wield the pen understandingly, and should remember that we are placing ourselves before those whom we address through this medium, even more actually than by a personal interview.

**Individuality.**—The innate individuality which impresses us in the immediate presence of a person and makes us aware of what he is, in spite of his words or even his actions, seems to assert itself in like mysterious manner in a letter.

**Pen Pictures.**—We have ever in mind a mental photograph of each friend or acquaintance as the result of personal intercourse with them, and into that picture enter all the details of form, feature, dress and manner, which make up the sum total of outward appearance.

The inner man we also possess an idea of, but hold it more tangibly and consciously, if that inner self has been outlined for us by frequent letters. Thus we can grasp quite securely many manifestations of morality, courtesy, business tact, sociability, amiability, etc., or the lack of these and other elements of character, because he unconsciously betrays himself through these silent visitors, whose testimony, being involuntary, furnishes most conclusive and valuable proof.

**Letters Should be Legible, Neat and to the Point.**—There should be a penalty attached to the crime of inflicting any one with a letter written so carelessly and wretchedly that it can only be deciphered by the utmost skill and patience, thus seriously encroaching upon the time of the recipient.

S.T.S. 1607

**Write Correctly.**—A person may well afford to write less for the sake of writing more elegantly. Never mail a letter until it has been revised carefully. See that it conveys exactly what we intended; if we leave too much to be taken for granted, a wrong meaning will be as liable to assert itself as the right. What seems very evident to the writer may be very difficult of comprehension by the recipient, who may not have all the facts in his possession. State everything clearly, in as few words as possible. Look at the letter, when completed, from the reader's standpoint, and be certain there is no chance for you to be misunderstood.

**Punctuate Carefully** according to the sense. Important questions have been decided by the use of a comma.

1. Use the comma to separate clauses, to mark parentheses, and to separate words when several are used in the same construction.

2. Use the comma in the address and the conclusion of a letter, and in the date, to separate the different items. Inverted commas are used before a quotation, giving the exact words of another, and the double apostrophe marks its close.

3. If clauses are subdivided by commas, the semi-colon may be used to separate the clauses from each other.

4. A colon is necessary to separate sentences in a discourse introduced by, As follows, etc., and consisting of a series of propositions or statements.

5. Every complete sentence not a question or exclamation, must close with a period.

6. Every heading or sub-heading requires a period.

7. A period must close the address of a letter, and its signature.

8. Use the dash to change or to suspend the construction, or to conclude in an unexpected manner.

9. An explanation, reference, or any extra words may be inclosed by parentheses.

10. Use the hyphen between parts of a compound word which usage has not yet declared a single word, and to divide a word at the end of a line.

• **Use of Capitals.**—Begin every independent sentence, every line of poetry, and every direct quotation with a capital letter.

The pronoun I, interjection O, and all names and titles of the Deity must be capitals.

Every word used to denote a special thing begins with a capital.

Proper names and adjectives derived from these, should begin with a capital.

Official and honorary titles, titles of books, and the heads of their chapters and divisions, should begin with a capital.

The days of the week, and the months of the year begin with capitals.

Names of religious denominations begin with capitals.

In preparing accounts begin each item with a capital.

**Spelling.**—Master the general rules for spelling.

1. Remember that the final consonant is doubled when you add a syllable to verbs of one syllable, ending with a single consonant and preceded by a single vowel, also to verbs of two or more syllables ending in like

manner, and having the accent on the last syllable; as, hit, hitting; forget, forgetting.

2. In using the word full as an affix drop one *l* from the plural of such compounds by adding *s* to the singular, as, spoonfull, spoonfuls.

3. Retain both consonants when prefixing one or more syllables to words ending in a double consonant, except in annul, distil, fulfil, instil, until and withal.

**Give Full Address.**—Be certain that your address is fully given, town, county and state.

Arrange the different topics in separate paragraphs.

Leave a blank margin on the left hand side of the page.

**Fold Neatly.**—A letter which has been "crammed" into the envelope presents a very unsightly appearance.

**Word Carefully.**—Business letters demand great care as to the exact wording used, since a little carelessness might result in serious loss to the writer.

Social letters require especial attention to all the nice details of material, elegance of expression, beauty of penmanship, etc.

**Look out for Counterfeit Letters.**—Along the path of the greatest good ever lurk the most powerful allurements to evil. Good money is always counterfeited, and though we must have it in current use, and depend upon it as a medium of exchange, constant vigilance is imperative if we would not be deceived.

Dr. Samuel Johnson has warned us that, "there is no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse."

Letters may be false guides, as may personal inter-

views and every other means we are wont to employ, in our search after the true character of those with whom we have to do.

But by leaving ample margin on this account, for all needed corrections, and by being alert and attentive we may become quite expert in discovering the genuine beneath the false, or in distinguishing that which is real from that which is assumed.

**Materials.**—Among the indispensables for the mechanical execution of an elegant letter, are, thick white or cream note paper, with envelope to match, good black ink, blotting paper, a chamois pen wiper, and a good steel pen. An easy and correct position of the hand is most important. To write on old scraps or in a sprawling, careless way, is inexcusable, and is really an insult to your correspondent, for it looks as though you did not have respect enough for your correspondent to do your work properly.

**Legibility.**—Write legibly and simply without flourishes, quotations or abbreviations. Never resort to underlining except to emphasize a word of marked importance.

Only urgent and exceptional cases justify writing a letter with a lead pencil.

Do not fail to use a capital to begin every sentence, and all names of persons or places. Dot your i's and cross your t's. Decide beforehand as to the substance of what you wish to write, and then strive to express it as you would converse, with ease, clearness and directness, avoiding repetition and references to self. Postscripts are not in good taste. Make your letter as cheerful and entertaining as possible.

**Introductory Address.**—Address strangers as “Sir,” or “Madam,” ending *when formal* with: “Your obedient servant,” or “Very obediently yours,” “Most respectfully yours,” etc. Acquaintances should be addressed as “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam,” signing yourself “Cordially yours,” “Respectfully yours,” “Truly yours,” etc.

A clergyman is addressed as “Reverend and Dear Sir,” the President or Governor as “Your Excellency,” the Vice-President and members of the Cabinet as “The Honorable——” (Honorable may be abbreviated on the envelope, but not in the letter.) Always sign your name and address.

**Be Prompt.**—Answer promptly every letter received, no matter from whom, or what its purport.

**The Address** on the envelope cannot be too carefully written. Avoid all flourishing. Write as plainly as possible. Postal clerks are always overworked and have no time while flying along twenty to forty miles an hour, to decipher bad writing. Nor have they time to *look up counties* for obscure villages. Always put the county on. Be careful to give street and number, to letters intended for residents in towns.

Never use uncommon abbreviations such as “Col. Co.” for Columbia county. It may mean Colorado, Columbus or Collins. It is perfectly plain to you that you live in Columbia county, but other people do not know that.

**Files** of important letters should be kept with date of answer, and you should always keep copies of all important letters.

**Be Discreet** in all your correspondence. A letter is a lasting record, and an indiscreet one may cause you much mortification, or possibly trouble. Never write a letter *when angry*. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” lest you may afterward repent bitterly. Do not decide important matters by letter upon the spur of the moment.

**When in Doubt** about the advisability of sending a letter, take the Napoleonic advice—“Do nothing.” In delicate matters a personal interview is as a rule, infinitely more satisfactory. This is particularly true where important favors are to be asked.

**Preserve Letters.**—They are valuable as history, and may prove of great importance for reference. Consequently never write a letter you would dislike to have others keep.

**Legally** a letter belongs to the writer, in so far as he retains such an interest as will prevent unauthorized publication.


**Stamps** sufficient should always be placed on a letter.


Thousands of letters are never sent from the home office because no stamps are affixed. If your letter is unusually heavy, ask your postmaster to weigh it. It may require double rates. The postoffice authorities often forward a letter which is not sufficiently stamped and collect the unpaid postage of the party receiving it; a proceeding which no delicate-minded person would wish to subject another to.


In writing the address on an envelope begin a little to the left of the center. Write the name in first line, the *town* in the next line below, and a little to the

right; the name of the State still further to the right. The name of the county is often written at the left of the envelope, by itself.

We give some models for addressing envelopes:

	<p><i>Ms. James E. Brown,</i> <i>259 Oak Street,</i> <i>Chicago,</i> <i>Ill.</i></p>
--	--

	<p><i>Dr. Will J. Smith,</i> <i>Care Thos. Browne, Esq.,</i> <i>St. Louis, Mo.</i></p> <p><i>P. O. Box 126.</i></p>
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	<p><i>Ms. Thos. H. Finch,</i> <i>Belvidere, Ill.</i> <i>Boone Co.</i></p>
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We have sought to give a large variety of letters intended to cover the ground.

An impertinent letter, which may, for aught you know, be well meant, can be answered as follows:

CHICAGO, ILL., Dec. 10, '86.

*Mr. George Noble, Grant Park, Ill.*

SIR:—I write to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 10.

Obediently yours,

DAVID MONROE.

Such a reply will convey in a courteous manner the needed rebuke.

given, if rented; how many rooms the house contains; and in what state of repair?

Please inform me also when I can examine the premises, and oblige,  
A. L. HARRIS.

#### Form of Excuse for a Pupil's Absence.

TUESDAY, Dec. 12, 1888.

MR. JAMES:—Will you please excuse Eddie for not attending school yesterday, as I was compelled to keep him at home to attend to some business for me, and oblige,

MRS. JOHN JOHNSON.

#### Inquiry about Progress of Pupil.

MORRISON, ILL., Dec. 2, 1888.

*Pres. Blackwell.*

DEAR SIR:—My son George, who is attending Jerome College, and is under your care, does not write me as fully concerning his school work and progress as I desire he should. If you will kindly inform me of these matters, suggesting any change in his work or conduct you may deem proper, you will greatly oblige me.

Very truly yours,

LEROY H. KNOWLES.

#### A Request for a Friend to Make Some Purchases.

18 PARK AVE., JERSEY CITY, N. J., April 20, 1887.

MY DEAR MRS. EMMOND:—It is impossible for me to go to the city for several weeks. May I ask as a very great favor that you will do a little shopping for me?

I wish to match some cloth, a sample of which I inclose. I need five yards more of it.

Also ten yards of ordinary sheeting, and a pair of black silk gloves, will complete my list. I wear  $6\frac{1}{4}$  gloves, and wish them to have long wrists.

Will be ever so grateful if you allow me thus to trouble you.

Very sincerely yours,

EMILY WOOD.

#### Request for a Loan of Money.

PHILADELPHIA, June 5, 1886.

DEAR HAMMOND:—I must raise a certain sum of money next week, and am not able to procure the whole amount.

Can you, without inconvenience, lend me \$75.00 for a month? I will give you my note for that amount and pay it promptly at maturity.

Let me hear from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

TOM ELLIS.

#### A Favorable Reply.

PHILADELPHIA, June 6, 1886.

DEAR TOM:—Yours of to-day at hand. I inclose my cheque for \$75.00, and am glad to be able to accommodate you.

You can send me your note at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE HAMMOND.

rejoiced to hear it, for of course you will not pass by an old friend's.

During our visit at uncle's I've enjoyed rare sport with my short time friend, Holden Prescott, and hence I hold him to an old promise to visit me if ever he had a chance.

Inclosed see invitation to a grand party for the 29th, in honor of "ye host," Jr. Mamma will be most happy if Mrs. Prescott will also visit us.

Yours in memory's thrall,  
BERT REED.

#### From a Pupil to Her Teacher.

KNOXVILLE, ILL., Dec. 12, 18—.

DEAR MISS TOWNE:—I promised to write and tell you about our school and our teacher. We have about the same pupils as when you were here.

Little Tommy Moore is very ill, and cannot come. Mrs. Jackson is dead and we are so sorry for poor Jenny.

Miss White, the new teacher, is very good to us but we all miss you very much. I am studying arithmetic, grammar, geography and reading.

Bessie Clarke is my seatmate. I love her dearly.  
Please write to

Your affectionate pupil,  
HONORA FARRELL.

#### From a Teacher to a Pupil.

77 CENTRE ST., LOWER FALLS, MASS., Jan. 17, 1888.

MY DEAR PUPIL:—Your kind letter gave me much

pleasure; I was very sorry indeed to hear of the death of Mrs. Jackson and the illness of Tommy Moore. My own health is so much improved that I hope to return to Knoxville very soon.

Give my love to all the friends and keep a large share for Honora. Affectionately yours,

ALMA TOWNE.

#### An Offer to Take Charge of a Lady in Traveling.

138 ELM AVE., BOSTON, MASS., Oct. 1, 18—.

Mrs. Geo. Dream,

25 Beacon Street.

DEAR FRIEND:—By chance I learned that Elsie was going to her uncle's in Indiana and wished company. We are about to visit friends still farther West, and it will afford us pleasure to have Elsie travel with us, if you will intrust her to our care.

We can go a little later just as well, and will write our friends to that effect, if you give us an affirmative answer.

Very sincerely yours,  
LYDIA A. PRESCOTT.

#### Acknowledging the Favor.

BOSTON, MASS., Oct. 2, 18—.

Mrs. Lydia A. Prescott,

138 Elm Ave.

DEAR MRS. PRESCOTT:—We are very grateful indeed for your kindness. We could not ask a better and

Please advise me at once if you can do so. Hoping for a favorable reply,

I am yours respectfully,  
LAWRENCE TOWN,  
*Committee.*

### An Unfavorable Reply.

*Mr. L. Town.*

DEAR SIR:—I received your polite invitation to sing at the entertainment given at your church, and regret having to decline, as I am engaged on the evening in question.

I trust your efforts in behalf of the Sabbath school may prove successful—as they certainly deserve to.

Believe me yours respectfully,  
GRACE FORD

### Letter Inquiring about a School.

NO. 138 EVERETT AVE., BOSTON, MASS., Aug. 6, 18—.  
*Miss May H. Preston, Mt. Holyrood, Mass.*

DEAR FRIEND:—Perhaps you remember me as Miss Thorne, a teacher here when you was a very small child.

It is my wish to send my little girl to a good school in some quiet, healthy locality where she will be looked after as to health, morals and intellectual attainments.

I am assured that Mt. Holyrood Seminary is a superior one, and I have about decided to send Ethel to you, if terms are reasonable.

Will you please send me a catalogue and let me hear if I may, of yourself, whether you are well, etc.

Your brother and wife are among my dearest friends. They write me occasionally, and I take great pleasure in their happiness.

Sincerely your friend,  
MRS. E. F. BEAUMONT.

### Answer.

MT. HOLYROOD SEM., MASS., Aug. 9, 18—.

MY DEAR MRS. BEAUMONT:—Your letter afforded me great pleasure. Indeed, I do remember my brother's former teacher, so well beloved by all her pupils.

I shall feel most honored if you intrust your daughter to my care, and I will strive to do for her what you would wish, that she may be as advanced as possible in the direction you have indicated.

My brother and his wife have promised to visit me in a few days. I spend most of my vacations with them.

Their little Alma, your namesake, has been ill, but is now quite strong again.

Very respectfully yours,  
MAY PRESTON.

### A Request for a Singer.

MISS MAE ELLIS:—The Lodge of which I am a member (Hannibal No. 3), propose to give a musical entertainment, and have placed me upon the Committee of Entertainment.

I should be pleased to have you favor us with two songs, and write to know what your terms are for the same.

MRS. MORTON AMES requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Whitman's company to luncheon on Thursday (Nov. 20), at 2 o'clock.

*Nov. 7, 1887, 8 Franklin Place,  
Rochester, N. Y.*

ELMHURST, ILL., June 5, 1887.

MRS. FREDERICK requests the pleasure of Mr Ernest Kennedy's company on Wednesday (June 9), at 5 o'clock, to a strawberry and cream party in her garden.

#### FAMILY LETTERS.

Letters from one member of a family to another, should be written exactly as one would speak. The myriad little bits of harmless gossip, the pleasant incidents that daily transpire in the home circle, should be told in the chattiest, most natural manner possible.

A letter from a husband to an absent wife is as follows:

DEAR WIFE:—The old adage, "Out of sight, out of mind," is not true in my case. The days seem most unconscionably long when you are away. Even Dick pines in his cage.

How is baby? I hope you wont stay away so long he'll forget, papa.

Haven't any news—no one of course comes near me. How is your health? I hope you are growing strong and well, and that I shall once more see my

dear Nellie's rosy cheeks and gleeful smile as of yore.  
Write often, and believe me,

Ever your devoted

CHARLIE.

#### Letter to an Absent Papa.

CHICAGO, ILL., Jan. 19, 18—.

DEAR PAPA:—We are all very lonely without you. Mamma says I may write and tell you to come home.

Wont you, papa? We need you all the time. I can't fix my skates, the straps are broken.

Old John is lame again, and we have to drive Charley when we go down town.

Jimmy got on the table to-day and Mary Jane whipped her. I don't like to have my kitty whipped.

Good-bye.

Your loving daughter,

CLARA.

#### Letter from a Mother.

Nov. 18, 18—.

MY DEAR MARY.—My heart is with you to-night, my darling child. It is the first time you have been so far away from me, and I long to know that all is as I should wish.

Dear Mary, the world has been a small one for you thus far, and you have known little of its perplexities. Try to be unselfish and kind toward all about you, and thoughtful for their comfort, but do not form any intimate acquaintance during your visit. Always consult

your mother before adding to the list of those whom you trust. Be careful and do not confide to any one aught of your own private affairs. No young lady of sixteen is capable of judging accurately of a new friend. Treat each one you meet as if he or she were worthy of your highest regard, but be so wise in all your actions that should your friend ever become an enemy, or prove an unworthy acquaintance, you would have nothing to regret as regards misplaced confidence.

You will, I know, bear yourself modestly in the company of gentlemen, yet without foolish timidity or prudery.

Be careful of your health. Write often to your lonely and anxious

MOTHER.

#### Reply from the Daughter.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Nov. 31, 18—.

MY OWN DEAR MOTHER:—Your loving letter was just what I needed, and did me a great deal of good.

Already I had become very confidential with a young girl who seemed very sweet indeed, but of whom even Aunt and Harry knew very little, as she only chanced to be their guest at this time. I will try to be very careful, dear mother, with regard to everything you have mentioned.

Harvey is the only young gentleman with whom I talk much, except, of course, cousin Harry.

When we ride or walk in couples I am sometimes with Harry and sometimes with Harvey. They seem to

like best to have Bessie with them, and the one who cannot take her has to be content with me.

I do not mean that they neglect me at all, however. Every one is as good to me as possible.

Uncle and aunt send love to you, and your little girl sends a whole heart full. Please don't forget to write very often to

Your loving daughter,

MARY.

#### Letter from a Child to Her Mamma.

25 BEACON ST., BOSTON, MASS., Aug. 29, 1887.

DEAR MAMMA:—We wish to see you very much. Why do you stay away so long?

Aunt Mary boxed my ears yesterday when I wasn't naughty, either. I wish you would come home. Johnnie has a bad finger, and he is so cross.

It is school time now. Please come home.

With much love from

Your own little girl,

MAMIE.

#### SITUATIONS.

##### Letter Asking for Situation.

144 WORTH ST., NEW YORK, DEC. 1, 18—.

*Messrs. James & Leonard,*

*65 Ogden Ave.*

GENTLEMEN:—It is my wish to find employment as bookkeeper in some good establishment, and I would be