From Me to You

- Student Activity: Places in the News
- Student Activity: Thank you, Grandma
- Student Activity: Write a Letter of Appreciation
- Post Reprint: “Ageless love letters”
After learning our ABCs, we move on to identifying and reading words, making meaning from sentences and forming paragraphs. With these tools we communicate.

Parents teach their children to say thank you. Although handwritten notes are considered a dying art, many children are asked to write notes of appreciation for gifts and special experiences. For some this becomes a lifelong habit.

This guide focuses on the places from which news is reported — by the letters. Activities and illustrations urge writing the first thank you notes and other letters of appreciation. “Ageless love letters” give an example of how media can use letters on special dates and holidays. This article and the Dodson letter can also be used to discuss how historians and social scientists can use letters to understand the social mores, illnesses and associations of time periods.

Camille Ramasastry, our NIE Colleague, assisted with the Letter of Appreciation activity.
**Places in the News**

Through the pages of the daily newspaper you are taken to many places within the United States and around the globe. These destinations may be small towns or large cities. They are urban, suburban and rural locations. Some of the places are found in the dateline. Others are found in the photo caption or the article.

**DATELINE** The dateline is found at the beginning of an article. It indicates the place — where the reporter was. When there is no dateline, readers know the article was written at the offices of the newspaper. Dateline usually is written in ALL CAPS.

1. Read today’s newspaper to find where news is taking place. List the places below.
   
   A
   B
   C
   D
   E
   F
   G
   H
   I
   J
   K
   L
   M
   N
   O
   P
   Q
   R
   S
   T
   U
   V
   W
   X
   Y
   Z

2. Locate on a map five places where news is happening outside the D.C. Metropolitan area.
   
   A. On what continents are they located?
   
   B. Which place is closest to where you live?
Thank you, Grandma

Can you remember when you first said “thank you” to someone? Some children are told at the time a polite word of gratefulness is expected: “Tell Grandma thank you.” Others of you may have had an etiquette lesson as you sat around the dinner table: “When your mother cooks a nice dinner for us, we should tell her thank you.” Perhaps, you recall sitting at the table the day or week after your birthday with paper and pen, having been told to write a thank you note to everyone who gave you a gift.

THANK YOU NOTES

1. The salutation line begins “Dear.” You show respect in a salutation. You are also clearly indicating whom you want to read the message. Write salutations to three different people.
   A.
   B.
   C.

2. Business letters always include a date. Why is it important to indicate the date a letter is written?

3. The writers of the thank you notes did not include the date. Why would it be a good idea to include the date in a personal note?
4. Thank you notes should state the reason you are grateful. You may include additional information to be more conversational.

A. For what are the four writers thankful?

B. Their grandmothers and aunts would appreciate both notes. Which writer do you think wrote the best note? Why?

5. The closing should reflect the personal relation between the writer and the note’s recipient. Thank you notes often close with “Love,” “Your loving granddaughter,” or “Sincerely.” If the two have a special phrase that they share, it may be used. Write a personal thank you note. Be sure to include date, salutation and closing.
LETTER OF APPRECIATION

S. F. Dodson
of Darlington Heights,
Prince Edward Co., Va.,
January 7, 1903

Stanhope Dodson graduated from Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia, in 1888. The school maintained a correspondence with its students and expected an annual letter from each in which reports of personal and professional life were shared.

His letters told of his early teaching and farming work as well as his dedication to his church, Temperance Society and family. Letters like his are sources of family, regional and U.S. history.

SOURCE: Hampton University Library
1. Letters were written to Miss Thornton and Mrs. Hein; both were school personnel.
   A. How many years apart were the letters written?
   B. Why should personal, as well as business, letters provide the date the letter was written?

2. Select three examples of diction that reflects the time period in which the letters were written.
   Explain your selections.
   A.
   B.
   C.

3. Notes of appreciation should have the appropriate tone. Compare and contrast the tones used by Stanhope Dodson and Camille in their letters to school personnel.
LETTER OF APPRECIATION

March 3, 2017

Dear Mr. Lee,

Thank you for your generous contribution to Habitat for Humanity’s 2016-2017 fundraiser. This year, our student club collected over $5,000 for our annual service trip. We will be sending 15 students and five teachers to West Virginia beginning July 10 to build a house for the Jones family.

Additionally, Habitat for Humanity is welcoming donors to a send-off luncheon on Saturday, May 27. We invite you and your family to spend an afternoon meeting our student volunteers and faculty advisors before they embark on the week-long service trip. The luncheon will take place on the south football field from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Please email habitat@hchs.edu to RSVP.

We hope to see you there!

Best,

Camille Ramasastry
President of Habitat for Humanity, HCHS

1. Writing thank you notes to patrons is a simple way to show appreciation. Why is it important to say thank you to a patron?

2. How does this letter help HCHS Habitat for Humanity and Mr. Lee?

3. Patron letters, much like notes of appreciation, should have the appropriate tone. Describe the tone of this letter. How would the tone vary if Camille were writing to a family member instead?

4. Business letters have a formal structure: Date, inside address, salutation, body, closing. Rewrite the letter to a patron in the business letter format. OR You may select a different recipient if a club, sports team or other group to which you belong should receive a letter of appreciation.
Widower Woodrow Wilson wrote secretly to Edith Bolling Galt, who would be his second wife, during his first term in the White House.

The collection at the Library of Congress contains missives of devotion that have passed into history

Ageless love letters

“My Own Dear Amelia: How can I express the pleasure it affords me to receive a letter written by hand of her I love. . . .

“Men and women talk of love, can anyone describe it? Can any one give the reason why one person loves another to the exclusion of every one else. . . . I know many ladies, who are amiable kind, talented and refined, all that a man can wish, and yet I cannot love them or do not love them as I love you, and they may be like you, but to me they are different. . . . So I say reason or no reason, some undefinable force attracts me to you, and I have no means of resisting it and would not if I had.

“Affectionately LEW.”

“LEW” was Lewis Douglass, the eldest son of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and he was writing to his beloved H. Amelia Loguen on June 16, 1862, from Rochester, N.Y.

Try finding this kind of heartfelt affection on a Match.com profile.

But once upon a time, before the age of tweets and Tinder, lovers took ink to paper to express their devotion to one another. So for this Valentine’s Day, The Washington Post asked
Adrienne Cannon, African American history and culture specialist for the library’s manuscript division, focused on letters written by Lewis Douglass to Helen Amelia Loguen.

“The letters present a beautiful black love story, preserved for posterity,” Cannon said. “Lewis Douglass’s singular love and devotion for Amelia Loguen inspired him to poetry, helped sustain him through war, and culminated in an enduring marriage.”

They would marry after Douglass was honorably discharged from the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry following the Civil War. (His was the regiment depicted in the movie *Glory.*

Curator Sahr Conway-Lanz, a manuscript historian, chose letters written by President Woodrow Wilson to the widow Edith Bolling Galt. Wilson had fallen in love with Galt a year after the death of his wife, Ellen Axon Wilson, in 1914. Conway-Lanz said the two kept their romance a secret until they were ready to make their engagement public.

“This was clearly tough on both of them,” he said. That longing is clear in a July 18, 1915, letter.

“My precious sweetheart: There are so many things I want to say first — but I can’t decide where to begin — but as a preliminary I will ease my heart by saying that which is dearest in all the world — and it is — I love you — love you — love you.”

One of Wilson’s advisers, Conway-Lanz said, wrote: “It seems the president is wholly absorbed in this love affair and is neglecting practically everything else.” The couple married Dec. 18, 1915.

Curator Julie Miller, an early American history specialist, picked a now-famous letter by Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, written Oct. 12, 1786, while Jefferson was U.S. ambassador to France. Jefferson was a widower; Cosway was married. But that did not halt the future president.

“He clearly fell in love with her,” Miller said.

The 12-page letter is structured as a dialogue between his head and his heart. It is the ambivalence in the correspondence that intrigued Miller.

“Seated by my fire side, solitary and sad, the following dialogue took place between my Head and my Heart.

“Head. Well, friend, you seem to be in a pretty trim.

“Heart. I am indeed the most wretched of all earthly beings. Overwhelmed with grief, every fibre of my frame distended beyond its natural powers to bear, I would willingly meet whatever catastrophe should leave me no more to feel or to fear.”

Curator Michelle A. Krowl, a specialist in the Civil War and Reconstruction, selected a letter written by Ulysses S. Grant to
Julia Dent. Grant met Dent when he traveled with his former West Point roommate Frederick Dent to St. Louis. “He was quickly besotted” with Dent’s sister Julia, and they became engaged on May 22, 1844, Krowl said. “But Grant’s military career and her father’s condition that they wait to marry until Grant’s professional life was more stable postponed their marriage.”

In a letter dated Jan. 2, 1846, from Corpus Christi, Tex., Grant, who was growing impatient with their delayed wedding, begs Dent to speak with her father.

“You know Julia what I think we would be justifiable in doing if his consent is still withheld and I hope you think nearly with me. … You alone Julia have it in your power to decide whether despite ev[e]rything we carry our engagement into effect. You have only to decide for me to act. If you will set a tim[e] when I must be in Missouri I will be there no matter if my Reg.t is still in Texas. The matter is one of importance enough to procure a leave of absence, and besides for the love I bear my dear Julia I would not value my commission to[o] highly to resign it. My happiness would be complete if a return mail should bring me a letter setting the time not — far distant — when I might ‘clasp that little hand and call it mine.’

“Your Devoted Lover, Ulysses”

Krowl said Grant’s letters clearly reveal “the depth of his love for Julia and how central she had become to his life.”

Love letters written by famed Hollywood director Rouben Mamoulian to his wife, Azadia, were written from the perspective of their pet cats. “Rouben and Azadia never had children,” said senior archive specialist Laura J. Kells. “Their cats were their children. … When he died there were 40 cats in his Beverly Hills home. He died flea-ridden.”

“We are all independent and free, With each other we never agree, But for once, on this day, all as one we can say: “Will you pet us and feed us? Always love us and need us? Or, in short rain or shine, Be our sweet Valentine?!”

During the Civil War, Walt Whitman moved to Washington, where he met Peter Doyle, a former Confederate soldier. Whitman’s letters, including those to Doyle, were recently put online by the Library of Congress.

“They met one stormy night in 1865 when Whitman was the last passenger on Doyle’s car,” according to the Library Congress exhibit. “To Pete, the poet looked ‘like an old sea-captain.’ We were familiar at once. I put my hand on his knee — we understood from that time on we were the biggest sort of friends.”

“They said it was love at first sight,” said Barbara Bair, literature and cultural specialist.

They took long walks. Whitman read Shakespeare to him. Doyle read limericks. In love letters, Whitman referred to Doyle as comrade, son and darling.

Their relationship changed, Bair said, when Whitman suffered a nearly fatal stroke while working late in the Treasury building. He moved to Camden, N.J., to live with his brother and recuperate.

In a letter dated June 20, 1877, Whitman wrote:

“Dear, dear boy Pete I’m stopping here now for a week or two in the house I believe I have mentioned to you before, and where I wanted you to come and see me and still want you if you have a chance. But I spend most of my time down at an old farm down in New Jersey where I have a fine secluded wood and Creek and springs, where I pass my time alone, and yet not lonesome at all (often think of you Pete and put my arm around you and hug you up close, and give you a good buss often.)

‘Your Old Walt.’

The profound portrayal of “longing” caused by the distance between the two lovers makes the letter compelling, Bair said.

Janice E. Ruth, assistant chief in the manuscript division, chose love letters between abolitionist and women’s rights advocate Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell.

Stone initially had no intention of marrying Blackwell, Ruth said, but Blackwell was persistent.

“They decided to use their wedding ceremony as a vehicle for focusing on laws discriminatory to women. Stone kept her maiden name, and they eliminated the marriage vow ‘to obey,’ and circulated a written protest against the 19th century marriage laws which denied women all legal standing,” Ruth said.

In a letter dated Feb. 19, 1855, Stone wrote:

“I received your two letters dearest Harry — the one from Ann Arbor and the other from Battle Creek, on my return from Shalamazoo (where I wrote you last.) A fervent ‘thank God,’ escaped my lips as I read your deliverance from the railroad disaster. Never until then had I known how dear or how necessary you are to me. But when I reflected how barren life would be to me if you had been killed, how much of its sunshine, and its power of use, would have gone more than ever before, I felt how much I need you.”