

It's never wrong to send a written thank you. . . and people always appreciate getting "thanks" in writing.



Why? Handwritten notes are warmer and more special than other forms of thank yous. The rule of thumb is that you should send a written note any time you receive a gift (even a 'thank you' gift) and the giver wasn't there to be thanked in person. But notes are not always necessary. If, for example, the gift is from a close friend or relative (and it's not a wedding gift) you can email or call instead if you prefer. Below are some other note-writing guidelines:

Shower gifts

Even though the gift giver attended the shower in your honor and you had a chance to say thanks for her gift, you should still send a written note.

Wedding gifts

Each wedding gift should be acknowledged with a written note within three months of receipt of the gift. It's best to write the notes as soon as possible after gifts arrive, however. Write a note even if you have thanked the giver in person.

Congratulatory gifts or cards

Anyone who sends a present, or a card with a personally written message, should receive a note in return.

Gifts received during an illness

Thank-you notes should be written as soon as the patient feels well enough—or a friend or relative can write the notes to acknowledge the gifts. It's also okay to call or email close friends rather than write. The important point is to be sure the gift is acknowledged in a timely fashion, not to create a burden for the person who is ill or recovering.

Condolence notes or gifts

Everyone who has sent a personal note, flowers, or a donation should get a written thank-you. A close friend or relative can write the notes on the recipient's behalf.