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 thank 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 when sick.

Thank-you notes should be written as soon as the patient feels well enough—or a friend or relative can write the notes. It’s okay to call close friends rather than write.

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.