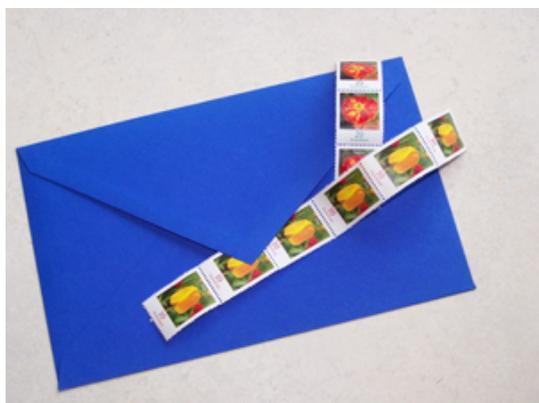


### Thank You!

We all have to write thank-you notes. Take comfort in the fact that you're not alone staring down your stack of cards and list of names. Before you start, remember that thanking people needs to be about just that: expressing thanks. So refocus, reorganize, and rethink the process. Get in touch with the sincerity of thanking people for thinking about you and sending you something—even if it's a hot pink polyester sweater. Here at the Emily Post Institute, we've assembled some simple answers to the most commonly asked questions about the post-holiday thank-you note blues.

### Who needs a note?



All gifts should be acknowledged with a note, unless the goodies were opened in front of the giver—then you have the chance to thank them in person. An important exception: many of an older generation expect a hand-written note. Providing them with one is an appropriate gesture of respect and consideration.

### Who should write the note?

The person who received the gift should write the note. Group notes are acceptable for Aunt Patty who sent the household a group present—just ask each recipient to sign. For couples, it's perfectly fine to split up the notes for gifts you received together. For the kids, check our section entitled [“Mom, Let's Write Thank-You Notes!”](#)

### When should thank-you notes be written?

Write your notes as soon as possible, and don't hesitate if you feel you're late: a late note is always better than no note at all.

### Can a thank-you note be creative?

Absolutely. Incorporating photos, children's drawings—anything at all that compliments the sentiment is appropriate. Just remember to include a short written thank-you as well.

### **What about e-mail?**

The reality of email thank-you's, much like email itself, is a degree of emotional distance: an email to your grandmother is simply not as personal as a note written in your own hand. So if you have a casual relationship with the gift giver and you correspond via email regularly, an email thank-you may be appropriate. For most other people, the written thank-you is your best bet for an expression of warm, heartfelt thanks. The last thing you want is for someone to be disappointed when her hand-knit scarf is acknowledged with a loud, animated e-card.

### **How do I make writing thank-you notes fun?**

We all love getting presents and are sincerely thankful, but some of us procrastinate terribly when it's time to write notes. One friend, bemoaning the fact that she had to write not only her notes to far-flung family and friends, but also notes for her three children and her husband, hit upon a brilliant idea.

She had a party. On a Sunday afternoon in January, she invited her husband and their kids to the kitchen table. Everything was ready: note paper, pens, pencils, crayons, envelopes, address book, stamps and lists. The smallest (ages 4 - 6) drew pictures of their gifts, and Mom and Dad added dictated captions and thank you's. The 7-8 year-olds wrote one or two sentences, practicing new writing skills. The 9-and-olders were able to work more or less independently. Meanwhile, Mom and Dad helped with spelling words and addressing, and, in the quiet moments, wrote a few notes themselves.

When everyone was finished, there was hot cider and banana bread. My friend was amazed at how successful the afternoon was. The kids were involved, the notes were done and the family had time to be together and talk about their holiday, friends and relatives. And a new family tradition was born.

If you're on your own, break up the list. Schedule a few different days to write your notes, and each time give yourself a little something to make it interesting: music, a glass of wine, your favorite radio show, a cup of tea—perhaps even some chocolate. Take the time to yourself for writing out thank-you notes: don't try and wedge it in between laundry, a TV show and extra work from the office. You'll be able to think more clearly and your focus will translate to the

page. Above all, try to enjoy yourself. Giving thanks shouldn't be a chore—and doesn't have to be if you make the effort to keep it interesting.