

When someone has given you a gift or done something special to make your life a little easier, the thank-you note is an easy way to acknowledge the time and effort he has expended on your behalf.

Remember To...

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Write a thank-you note when you get a present and the giver is not there to receive your thanks in person (someone sends you a gift in the mail or asks someone else to bring it to you). Your thank-you note tells the person the gift arrived and how much you appreciate it.

- Write a thank-you note when you have been a houseguest at someone's home.

Exception: Sometimes you just go for an overnight to your best friend's house. You don't need to write a thank-you for that, but if you stay more than one night or travel to a friend's house out of town for a special event, you should write a thank-you note to your hosts.

- Send a thank-you as quickly as possible, within a day or two of receiving the gift or returning home from the visit. If that's impossible, write it as soon as you can.

Why Handwrite When I Can Email?

Question: My aunt sent me a great shirt for my birthday. Can I e-mail her a thank-you note?

Answer: Even though e-mail is easier, the nicest way to thank your aunt is with an old-fashioned handwritten thank-you note. If you know that your aunt checks her e-mail regularly, send her a quick e-mail letting her know that the gift arrived and you're enjoying it. Then take the time to write her a thank-you note with pen and paper. After all, she took the time to pick out the shirt, wrap it, and mail it. The e-mail will let her know her present arrived; the thank-you note will show your appreciation and respect.

Not Required But Nice

- Write a thank-you note even if you've thanked the giver in person - especially if it was given at a big party and your personal thanks might have been lost in the excitement.
- Write a thank-you note when someone has done something special for you, say when your uncle spent the afternoon explaining the advanced math you've been having so much trouble with.

Don't Even Think About...

- *Not* writing a thank-you note because it's late. So what if it's been two weeks? It will still show your appreciation.
- Using preprinted thank-you notes where you just have to fill in the blanks. The impersonal look of those cards takes away from the thought you might have put into the thank-you.