



In Minneapolis  
Toll Free  
E-mail:  
Website:

(952) 933-8365  
(800) 742-6800  
[hillary@hillarysgifts.com](mailto:hillary@hillarysgifts.com)  
[www.hillarysgifts.com](http://www.hillarysgifts.com)

## **The Etiquette of a Personal "Thank-You"**

In our high tech world, it is still our personal relationships with others that adds special meaning to our lives. As a part of these relationships gifts are often exchanged. Whether the gift is a tangible item or an intangible such as time, saying thank you is an important part of everyday etiquette not to be forgotten. Knowing when and how to say thank you is an important way to express appreciation for the thoughtfulness of others.

### **ThankYou Etiquette – The Basics**

- Always acknowledge a gift, especially when the sender has no other way of knowing you received it. Strangely enough, this might involve sending a thank-you note for a thank-you gift, but it does let the sender know you received it.
- Being gracious when you receive a gift even if you don't like it.
- If a gift is from a group, one written thank-you note is acceptable: be sure to thank each one of in the group verbally, too.
- Handwritten notes and letters are a rarity. Be generous with how often you choose a written note as the appropriate form of thank you.

### **Expressing thanks**

When expressing thanks, make sure your expression of "thank you" balances why and what you are saying "thank-you" for. There are many creative ways to express thanks to another.

- A drawing. For a child too young to write, encourage him/her to draw a picture. This is a creative way for young people to say thank you.
- Verbally. Expressing a sincere thank-you to family and friends for small favors will let them know that you appreciate all that they do for you.
- A handwritten note. Sending a note when someone sends a gift or makes a contribution is a thoughtful and memorable gesture.
- A food specialty. If you are "known for" your apple pie, chocolate chip cookies, homemade preserves, etc. be sure to send that along as a special thank you.
- A contribution. An excellent way to say thank you is through contributions to a cause that is meaningful to the recipient are an excellent way to say a thank you.
- A gift. A tangible symbol of thanks. When a gift is tailored to the recipient it will be memorable and appreciated long after it is received.



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### **Thank You Notes – A Very Special Communication**

- Send a handwritten note as a personal expression of gratitude. Handwritten notes are less common and convey special appreciation.
- When a written note is appropriate, write and send it as soon as possible. Timely thank-you notes seem more sincere and are easier to write.
- Use good penmanship. The time and energy you spend handwriting it is of little value if the receiver cannot read your writing. Resist the temptation of using your word processor a handwritten note is much more personal.
- Use expressions most natural to you. It is important to sound natural, sincere and unscripted. Saying your thank you message out loud, then writing it down may help you to say something that is uniquely “you”.
- Use paper or stationery that expresses your personality. The first thing the recipient will notice is not what you wrote but what the note is written on.
- Emphasize the generosity or thoughtfulness of the giver. Make specific reference to the gift or contribution that you received.
- Thank-you notes for a gift of money should indicate the exact amount given and how the money will be used.
- Favorite ways to close a personal thank-you note include: most sincerely, affectionately, warm regards, fondly, love, thinking of you, and much love.
- Avoid sending thank-you expressions by e-mail. The point of a thank-you note is that it is personal. E-mail has many virtues, but graciousness and formality are not among them.

### **Occasions when “thank-you” is appropriate.** A thank you note should be sent when:

- A gift is received. Any time.
- Someone does a favor. Any time someone does a huge favor for you such as, house sitting, mowing you lawn when you are not able, picking up your mail while you are on vacation, etc.
- After being a houseguest in someone’s home for one or more nights.
- For dinner parties or special outings where you have been entertained.