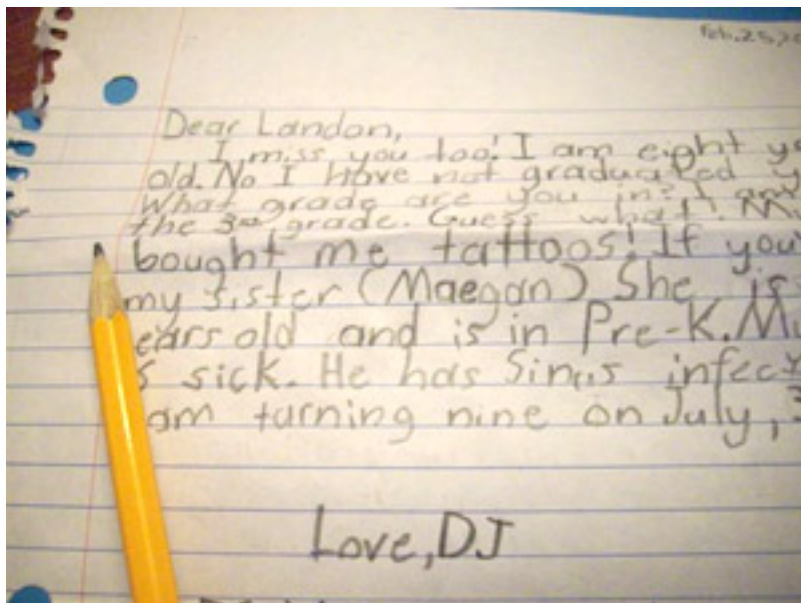


## Writing letters: Restoring a lost art

Written by Marcia Humphrey • Style on a Dime  
Friday, 26 March 2010 14:32

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A couple weeks ago, my son, Landon, brought home a letter from his teacher, requesting an envelope, stamp, and the address of someone to whom the child could write. The letter explained that the children were learning how to write and send letters. “What a great idea!” I thought.

I suggested that Landon pick his eight-year-old cousin DJ (Derrick Jr.) from Mississippi, since they get along very well. Although Landon thought he was a good pick, the problem was that Landon had gotten DJ confused with his nineteen-year-old cousin, VJ (Venyah Jr.). Long story short, I later found out that Landon wrote to his eight-year-old cousin asking him if he had graduated high school and if he was driving yet! Apparently, these odd questions didn't bother DJ, because about a week later, he sent Landon a letter.

Landon was excited as he read his letter aloud to me and his sisters. DJ had patiently answered all of Landon's questions- he was still in elementary school and was not yet driving. At the end of the letter he asked if Landon wanted to be his pen pal. The grin on Landon's face answered it all!

I was pleasantly surprised that my first grader was learning to write a letter because I feel it is a lost art. As a society it sometimes seems that the more our technology advances, the less humane we become. To save time, we have adopted this text lingo and email abbreviations, and to be honest, it can be quite confusing. While I am not suggesting that we completely do away with our BlackBerries, iPhones, and emails, I would like to challenge you-at least every now and then- to consider using the old school way of communication. Now go grab your paper and pen and use these tips to inspire you to write.

**Buy Pretty Note Cards.** The Dollar Store sells a wide variety of small cards (blank on the inside) with envelopes. A small card means that you don't have to write much. Also, get in the habit of sending hand-written thank you notes, and teach your children to do the same. Grandma would love a note from little Keisha saying that she appreciated the birthday gift that

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she got from Granny. Don't worry so much about making it perfect-it is really the thought that counts most. (Plus, Grandmas like it when young grandbabies misspell words.)

**Choose to Write Someone Needing Encouragement.** Who doesn't like to receive mail? You could write someone who is sick, a recent widow, or someone who is just going through a rough spot. My children just wrote someone who is in prison in hopes that it would lift his spirits.

**Find A Pen Pal.** Take cues from my son and his cousin. Writing letters can be a fun way to connect; it will help you to become a better writer, and that is always a useful job skill.

I was recently online looking up some information and I was shocked to read the harsh comments that several women made to a mom because they disapproved of how she handled a sticky situation. My question to these rude women, "Would you have said these things to her face??" Please don't use technology as an excuse to be rude, inhumane, or inconsiderate. At least occasionally, remember the simple joy that the paper and pen can bring. *Enjoy!*

*Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.*