

From Anna Green Winslow, age 12
November 30, 1771

I hope aunt wont let me
wear the black hatt with the red Dominie — for the
people will ask me what I have got to sell as I
go along street if I do. or, how the folk at New gu
nie do? Dear mamma, you dont know the fation
here — I beg to look like other folk. You dont kno
what a stir would be made in sudbury street
were I to make my appearance there in my red Domi
nie & black Hatt. But the old cloak & bonnett together
will make me a decent Bonnet for common ocation
(I like that) aunt says, its a pitty some of the ribbin
you sent wont do for the Bonnet — I must now
close up this Journal. With Duty, Love, & Compli
ments as due, particularly to my Dear little brother,
(I long to see him) & M.^{rs} Law, I will write to her soon

I am Hon^d Papa & mama,

Y^r ever Dutiful Daughter

N. B. my aunt Deming,
dont approve of my English.

Anna Green Winslow.

It has not the fear that you will think her concernd in the
Diction

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Letter writing was important in the 1700s. Instructional books of the time sometimes included sample letters so that students could learn how to write different kinds of letters to family, friends, and even for business.

From *The Young Secretary's Guide*, 1764:

LETTER of Thanks for a Kindness received.

Most Bountiful Sir,

HOW can I without Blushes make you so poor a Return as Thanks, for the many and weighty Obligations you have laid upon me! Yet tho' I be wanting in making no Acknowledgment of your Kindness, not only you, but all Mankind, might justly tax me with Ingratitude; from the Imputation of which, above all other Crimes, I desire to be most free. I must intreat you therefore, to suffer this my slender Offering to approach you, and in some Measure insinuate into your good Opinion, till such Time as my Abilities may speak louder, what my Desires with Willingness are framing: And so, Sir, with all imaginable Respect, begging to be excused for my no better Performance, I must till a more seasonable Opportunity of Requitall offers itself, lie under the Weight of your Favours, and subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful and obliged Servant, J. F.

From *The American Instructor*, 1758:

A Letter from a Niece to her Aunt.

London, 7th Dec: 1750.

Madam,

THE Trouble I have already given you, puts me to the Blush; when I think of intruding again on your Goodness; but Necessity, that frequently puts us upon what we have not always a Mind to, and forces us against our Inclinations, is now the Motive that induces me to be thus troublesome. Pray dear Madam, excuse me, if I once more beg your Assistance in this Time of my unlucky Misfortune, and I shall ever have a grateful Remembrance of your Goodness to me; and I hope I shall be one Time or other in a Capacity of making some Returns of the many Obligations your Goodness hath conferred upon me, your most respectful Niece,

And humble Servant,

Penelope Pinch.

A Letter of proffer'd Assistance to a Friend.

Dear Friend.

I Should be false to true Friendship, if I should neglect or cast off my Friend in Adversity; I hearing that you are under some Misfortune, and, at present somewhat pinch'd with Want, I send you these Lines for your Consolation, desiring you to bear up against your ill Luck with as much Presence of Mind as you can; for assure yourself, I shall suddenly follow this Epistle in Person, and come, I hope, opportunely enough to your Assistance; till which Time, take Courage, and be assured that you shall not be disappointed of timely Help, from, dear Friend,

Yours, in Reality,

Timothy Timely.