

7 Essential Tips for Writing the Best Sympathy Letter

“A sympathy letter or condolence card can be as long or as short as it needs to be to say what you need to say. Some very effective sympathy letters have been written on the smallest flower message cards, and others have been pages long.”



You are reading this because you or someone you know has lost a loved one and you want to write

a meaningful sympathy card or letter to express your grief, but you may be too sad to think clearly right now.

Let me start by saying I am sorry for your loss. Let me also offer this step-by-step approach to writing a great sympathy letter that really takes the guesswork out of it. This guide will give you the tools to express your sincere condolences and will give you the strength to send the letter without delay. After going through these seven steps, you will have peace of mind knowing you have shared your condolences.

At the end of this E-book, you'll find links to sample condolence letters you can read and use as inspiration for your own condolence card. I've also included links to other helpful information online. Simply roll your mouse over the title of what you are interested in and click on it. Your computer will automatically open up the webpage.

So let's get started on that sympathy or condolence letter.

What is a sympathy letter?

It's important to understand exactly what the purpose of a sympathy letter is before you begin. Many people think about sending a sympathy card but don't actually do it because they don't know where to start or they think that a short card is not enough.

Words of condolence or sympathy cards are meant to acknowledge the passing of someone, show that their lives touched yours in some way and to offer comfort to the grieving. That's it. A sympathy letter filled with sincere words of condolences can be read and reread at different stages of the grieving period. Many times these letters offer comfort long after the funeral service and remind the grieving just how loved they are. What you say in your sympathy letter is not as important as just sending it.

A sympathy letter or condolence card can be as long or as short as it needs to be to say what you need to say. Some very effective sympathy letters have been written on the smallest flower message cards, and others have been pages long. Knowing what to write and how much to write really depends on your relationship with the deceased or the deceased's family and it depends

Look for examples and help writing your sympathy letter at these links below:

- Advice for Writing Sympathy Words
- Why Write Words of Comfort?
- How to Write a Genuine Letter?
- What to Say and What Not to Say
- Sympathy Words for Now and Later
- Examples of Condolences for Cards
- Condolence Message Sample
- Condolence Letter Example
- Sympathy Poems and Verses
- Sympathy Sayings Examples
- Compare Flower Delivery Services

on how much you need to say to truly express your condolences. There is no right length or appropriate number of words you have to write. Read on to find out just how long your sympathy letter should be.

Step One: Should I send a Long Letter or a Short Sympathy Card?

Think about your relationship with deceased and with the surviving family. If you were particularly close, a longer letter might be more appropriate. You could relate some of your memories of the deceased, or describe some of the things you and the deceased did together. If you worked with the person, or knew them from a social group, or perhaps knew them as a child, a handwritten condolence card might be more appropriate. A brief description of how you knew the deceased and where you met him or her and that you will miss him or her will be fine.

And finally, if your relationship was that of an acquaintance or a distant relative, a short note offering your condolences might be all that is needed. If you were not particularly close to the deceased but know the family well, offering your support or condolences to the family in a short condolence card is perfectly acceptable.

Email and texting have also become a good way to express your condolences quickly. But it's always good to follow up an email or text with a formal card

or letter and a sympathy gift.

Step Two: Should I send a Sympathy Gift or Sympathy Flowers with my Condolence Letter?

The answer to this is always yes. Sending sympathy flowers or a sympathy gift can do more than words to help the bereaved cope with their loss. Sympathy flowers or a potted plant sent with your condolences to the funeral or to the home of the grieving family will brighten the room for days. [Read these reviews of online flower delivery websites to get the best deal on sympathy flowers.](#)

A sympathy gift can be anything such as a batch of cookies, a flower arrangement or potted plant, a sampling of tea, a personalized engraved plaque dedicated to the deceased or even a planted tree in the deceased's honor. [A sympathy gift does not have to cost much or be elaborate but giving something at this sad time is always in good taste.](#)

The family of the deceased always appreciates receiving food because they'll be very busy making funeral arrangements and they will have many friends and family dropping in to visit. Grocery shopping, preparing and cooking food is the last thing they'll want to do, but everyone needs

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to keep up their strength, so sending some baking, chocolates, fruit or even a selection of meats or wine with your condolences not only shows your good taste, but shows you truly care about the family’s well-being at this sad time.

There are so many great ideas online and you can send your condolence message with the gift. Many online gift companies allow you to personalize your message so you can write your condolence letter and they will print it in a card and include it with your gift. You’ll find helpful reviews of places to order condolence gifts and flowers online at the end of this E-book.

If you are ordering a sympathy gift online to send with your condolences, rest assured that the cards they include are of good quality and will carry your condolence message with dignity.

Step Three: How do I start the Sympathy Letter?

Take out a scrap piece of paper and write out your thoughts before writing on the card or stationary you will use. It’s better to write out your mistakes on scrap than to have to send a card with mistakes and crossed out parts. Besides, so many people type these days that a little practice writing with a pen is necessary.

If you need inspiration, there are hundreds of sample letters of sympathy and condolence for many different situations on www.obituarieshelp.org. See the end of this E-book for a list of links to condolence examples that will help you get started.

How you start your card or letter is just like any other letter. First, decide whom you are addressing in your letter, is this a letter to the entire family or just one person in particular? If it is to the entire family, addressing it with the surname of the family is appropriate. Your first sentence should acknowledge the passing of their loved one and say something about how his loss makes you feel.

Step Four: What Should I say in the Sympathy Letter?

The next part of the letter should say qualities you admired about him or her, tell a story you remember about him or her or explain how you knew the deceased. You might have to do a little brainstorming for this part. You’ll want to keep your stories tasteful and show the deceased in the best possible light.

This is not the time to bring up mistakes or a lack of judgment on the part of the deceased. This letter

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is supposed to comfort his or her family, not make them sad or angry that the deceased behaved badly. If you can’t think of something positive to say here, it’s best to just cut the letter short or copy a comforting poem. There are links to good poems you can include in your letter at the end of this E-book.

Step Five: How do I end the Sympathy Letter?

The last part of the letter should offer your help or prayers or words of strength to help the family cope with the death. One possibility is to offer to do something for the family that would help them such as taking care of their yard, or offering to take their dogs for a walk, or other such task that you know they can’t or won’t want to do while grieving. Close the letter with a condolence phrase, and then sign your name.

Step Six: Putting it all Together

Once you’ve thought out what you’d like to say in your letter and written out some ideas on your scrap paper, it’s time to write out your final draft. No, don’t grab that sympathy card yet, write it out from start to finish on scrap paper. You don’t want to make mistakes, if you do, it’s no big deal, but practicing makes it look like you put a lot of thought into it. Read it over for mistakes and make sure it says everything you want it to. Here is an example of a condolence letter that follows all of the these steps:

Dear Smith Family,

I’m sorry to hear of John’s passing. He was a great man and I will miss him very much.

Over the years working at T&B Lumber, I had come to know John very well and I valued his friendship. He always had a funny story or a new joke to tell and we’d have a good laugh. He made the days fly by.

Please know that I am thinking of you at this time of loss and if there is anything you need help with, please call. In the meantime, I can clear out his locker at work and bring everything to you next week. I’ll call before I come over.

With deepest sympathy,

Ralph Winters

Step Seven: What should I write my condolence message on?

You want to send your condolences on a nice card or nice paper and envelop. It’s worth it to make a special trip to a stationary supply store or order a card online. The family of the deceased will read this letter over and over for years to come. Whenever they think of their deceased loved one or when they need to see some words of strength, they will pull out your letter and reread it. Nice paper or a special card is important.

More examples of sympathy letters and cards to help you write your own letter:

Examples for Specific People
Sympathy Verses Examples
Sympathy Quotes
Condolence Phrases
Sympathy Sayings
Messages for Sympathy Cards
Words of Condolences
Sample Letters of Sympathy
Condolence Letters
Sympathy for Military Death

Links to Examples and Other Important Sympathy Help:

Sympathy Flowers Reviews

Flower Delivery Services

Compare and Save On Flowers

Example Condolence Cards

Condolences Cards Examples

I am so very sorry. You gave ...

Condolence Cards Phrases

I hope you find comfort and I...

Condolence Cards Examples

You and I haven't spent much

Condolences Examples

I am sorry to hear about your...

Condolence for flower cards

I hope these flowers bring...

Examples for Death of Dad

Sample Letter for a Father

I would like to express my...

Condolence Letter for Dad

I'm so very sorry to hear of ...

Sympathy Letter about Dad

Words alone cannot express ...

Condolence Letter for Father

I am truly saddened to hear...

Words of Condolence for Dad

Both Bill and I want to extend...

Death of Someone's Husband

Husband Condolence Letter

Henry and I would like to...

Sympathy Words for Husband

Please know that you have my...

Condolence Sample Husband

I was deeply saddened by...

Condolence Letter Husband

I was deeply saddened by the...

Death of Grandfather

Sympathy for Grandfather

Your Grandfather was such a...

Condolences for Grandfather

How very sorry I was to learn...

Letter for an Older Man

I join with so many others ...

Letter for an Old Friend

I am writing to express how...

Examples for Death of Mom

Sympathy Words About Mom

Your mom was a beautiful person...

Messages of Sympathy Mom

I am so sorry to hear of your...

Condolences for a Mother

My thoughts are with you ...

Condolence Letter Mother

I am so very sorry to hear...

Death of Someone's Wife

Condolence Letter for Wife

I want to offer my sincere...

Sympathy Words About A Wife

My deepest sympathy for your...

Examples for Death of a Child

Sympathy for a Child

We are both so deeply ...

Condolence Letter for a Son

While the loss of a loved one...

Death of a Daughter

No one knows why bad things...

Condolences for a Son

The death of your son...

Condolence for Young Friend

Yesterday I learned of the ...

Death of a Brother

Your brother will be ...