

Expressing your gratitude never goes out of style

DEAR ABBY: With the holidays approaching, a reminder is in order. People: Don't forget those thank-you notes! I don't mean an email, but a REAL, honest-to-gosh thank-you note sent through the mail with postage.

My mother always told me that a gift is not truly yours until a proper thank-you has been sent. She said it "completed the transfer." I was not allowed to play with the item or use it until that note was written.

This is especially true for young people today, who seemingly were not taught this in school or by their parents. Very young children can draw a picture, and the parent can add a line to say it was drawn to express thanks. As the child matures, he/she can use his/her own words of gratitude.

I can't tell you how many parents comment on the absence of this display of etiquette. Good manners are never out of date. They are noticed and appreciated. From time to time I have seen you mention your booklet on "How to Write Letters." If it includes a section on thank-you notes, I'm sure it would be helpful to a lot of people in the next two months. — **ELINOR IN SURPRISE, ARIZ.**

DEAR ELINOR: The booklet does. Not a day goes by that I don't receive letters and emails from read-



DEAR ABBY

ers who are upset enough to write because they haven't received a thank-you note for a birthday, graduation, wedding or holiday gift they sent. Some of the writers say they are so hurt and offended that they will stop giving gifts because they were left hanging, wondering if their gift was ever received. The problem may be that many parents no longer insist their children practice this courtesy, so the kids never learn how to do it.

Chief among the reasons that thank-you notes aren't sent is that many people don't know what to say. They think the note has to be a long, flowery composition when, in fact, short and to the point is more effective.

Keeping a notepad handy when opening gifts and immediately taking a moment to jot down the first thought that comes to mind is helpful. (Example: Do you like the color? The style? Is it something you

had been looking for and couldn't find? Is it a special homemade treat? Mmmm.) **WRITE IT DOWN.**

While letter-writing or even emailing may seem like a chore, there are times when a handwritten note is the most appropriate means of communicating one's thoughts. My booklet contains sample letters for almost any occasion. It can be ordered by sending your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds), to Dear Abby -- Letters Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. Inside you will find many samples that can be used as patterns from which to write your own.

For anyone who has ever wondered where to begin when writing a note of thanks, offering warm congratulations, condolences, composing a love letter or the opposite -- announcing a broken engagement or a decision to divorce -- "How to Write Letters" is a handy guide for people who put off writing because they don't know what to say.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

	6		5		7		8	
3				8				4
		8	6		9	3		
	3	6				4	7	
			1		3			
	8	1				2	3	
		2	3		8	9		
7				5				2
	5		4		2		1	

Instructions for play: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

That's all there is to it. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

Solving time is typically from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on your skill and experience. The solution for today's puzzle will be published in Saturday's paper. Or you can go to www.sudoku.com to find the solution.

5	9	3	1	4	7	6	8	2
2	4	1	5	8	6	9	3	7
8	7	6	3	9	2	1	5	4
7	1	9	4	3	8	5	2	6
4	2	5	9	6	1	3	7	8
6	3	8	7	2	5	4	1	9
3	6	7	2	5	9	8	4	1
9	5	2	8	1	4	7	6	3
1	8	4	6	7	3	2	9	5

HELOISE'S KITCHENEERING BY HELOISE

Holiday Meals Start Early

Dear Heloise: Starting in early fall, I begin buying a few extra items each time I **GROCERY-SHOP**. I buy an extra bag of sugar or flour. I catch canned pie filling on sale, sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, boxed gelatin and spices such as sage or pumpkin-pie spice.

I buy anything that will keep until Thanksgiving or Christmas that I normally use to prepare holiday meals. By doing this gradually, my holiday grocery bill doesn't hit me all at one time.

— Evelyn T., Abilene, Texas
You are one smart cookie! Or should I say "cook." This is the good way to not bust the budget! — Heloise

TACO SEASONING

Dear Heloise: You once shared a recipe for taco seasoning. I loved that recipe, but somehow lost it. Could you please reprint it? -- K.S. in Nebraska

Sure I can! One nice bonus is this is VERY cheap to make, so why not mix up a big batch and save a bundle of money?

All you need is:
2 teaspoons chili powder
Salt, pepper and onion powder to taste (starting with just a sprinkle)

A dash of crushed, dried oregano

Mix together all the ingredients and start using this seasoning on all your favorite foods. I like it best with my Heloise Taco Casserole made with taco shells/corn chips, salsa and ground turkey or shredded chicken cooked in the seasoning for flavor.

Use nonstick spray or grease a casserole dish (you pick the size depending on ingredients you have). Put some salsa on the bottom, then a layer of broken-up taco shells/chips, followed by the cooked, flavored meat. Next, layer with your favorite toppings: beans, cheese, onions, etc.

Bake until heated through and cover with sour cream, olives, lettuce, tomatoes, etc., before serving. For this recipe and more, order my pamphlet Heloise's All-Time Favorite Recipes by sending \$5 and a long, self-addressed, stamped (66 cents) envelope to: Heloise/Recipes, P.O. Box 795001, San Antonio, TX 78279-5001. When mixing your own seasonings, make sure to store in an airtight, sealed container (away from heat and light) to maintain freshness. Save your old spice jars, wash and dry well, and use them. Just add a label. — Heloise

BAG BOWL

Dear Heloise: Many people who have watched me do this think it's a great hint. When eating chips directly out of the bag (like potato, tortilla, pita, etc.), I open the bag and roll the top under the bottom to form a "bowl" out of the bag. As I eat the chips, I continue to roll the bag under from the bottom. — Matt G., via email

SERVING DISHES

Dear Heloise: We love our dishes for individual ears of corn on the cob, but I've found them useful in many other ways. They are perfect to use as a serving dish for asparagus, hot dogs, brats or even broccoli spears. At parties, they can be used to serve pretzel rods, licorice strips or candy sticks. — Tina C., via email

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Scatter

6 Summon

10 Stash of

valuable

11 Studio

output

12 Sized up

13 Sun-dried

brick

14 Spirit

15 Shish

kebab

need

16 Stop

fasting

17 Here, to

Henri

18 Cunning

19 Not too

quick

22 Opera

highlight

23 Disco

26 Spurring

on

29 Golf goal

32 Tokyo,

formerly

33 Antique

auto

34 Relaxed

36 Bird bath

spot

37 Hooded

snake

38 Like some

checking

accounts

39 Rival

40 Deduce

41 Depend

42 Furtive

looks

DOWN

1 "The Iron

Lady" star

2 Refrain

bit

3 Shoulder

muscle

4 Tied up

5 Tie the

knot

6 Program-

ming

output

7 Attests

8 Defame,

in a way

9 Suspi-

cious

11 Coping

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A	N	T	I	C		E	R	I	C
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P	O	I		S	O	A	R	I	N
S	O	R	B	E	T		O	A	T
						A	D	D	E
A	S	H	E		O	N	S	I	T
S	P	A	R	I	N	G		D	E
T	A	N		S	E	A	R	I	N
E	D	S	E	L		G	O	O	S
R	E	E	V	E		E	N	T	E
S	L	A	T		S	A	S	S	

Previous Puzzle

15 Bio. or

chem.

17 "It seems

to me ..."

20 Brief drop

21 Mercury

or Mars

24 Tall grazer

25 Common

pay period

27 Exalted

poem

28 Dead

ducks

29 Harness

race horse

30 Make

amends

31 Defy

authority

35 Base

group

36 Solitary

38 Wee bite

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9
10						11			
12							13		
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36									
38									
40									
42									

11-13

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Concern-

ing

6 "Twilight"

character

11 Audacity

12 Steer

clear of

13 Online

message

14 Recorded

15 Makes law

17 Course

number

19 Arthur's

foster

brother

20 Crash into

23 Relish tray

items

25 Opera set

in Egypt

26 Super-

vises

closely

28 Leg bend

29 Hospital

worker

30 Word of

accord

31 According

to

32 Squid's

home

33 Major

banking

center

35 "Gigi" star

38 Rather

41 Deal

maker

42 Pushy

person

43 Goes a

bout

44 Old

anesthetic

DOWN

1 Colony

member

2 Put in

stitches

3 Fare-

beaters

get them

4 Kitchen

sight

5 Photo-

graphs

again

6 Pier

7 Weary

word

8 Recipe

amount

9 Keats

creation

10 Flower

spot

16 Store

employee

17 Animated

pig

18