

1.2 The letter is dead, long live the letter!

GOALS ■ Talk about written communication ■ Use present perfect tenses

Vocabulary & Speaking written communication

1 With a partner, divide the words in the box into groups 1-3.

confidential copy somebody in/cc somebody into
cross out delete emoticon handwriting handwritten
inbox instant in tray texting postage stamp
punctuation stationery

- 1 electronic communication 3 both
2 paper communication

2a Complete each question with a word or phrase from exercise 1.

- When did you last send or receive a _____ letter?
- Have you ever accidentally sent a _____ email or text to the wrong person?
- Do you know the cost of a _____?
- Which _____ (e.g. ☺) do you use most often?
- How neat is your _____?
- Which do you do more, _____ messaging or email? Why?

b Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

Grammar & Reading present perfect simple and continuous

3 Read the article and readers' comments and put phrases 1-5 in gaps a-e.

- send something by post every day
- with the speed and efficiency of digital media
- there is pressure to respond instantly
- life's too short
- written by older generations

4 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- What are the writer's three main arguments in defence of the handwritten letter?
- What evidence is given of a renewed interest in letter-writing?
- What advantages of electronic communication are mentioned in the readers' comments?

5 What are your views about letter-writing? Discuss with a partner.

The death of the handwritten letter?

¹ People have been communicating by letter for at least 2,000 years. Now, however, ^a _____, the handwritten letter is in serious decline. But have we given enough consideration to what we will lose if we abandon the letter completely?

When we handwrite a letter, we write more thoughtfully. When we receive an email, ^b _____ and we don't always think carefully about how to express our feelings, often choosing to use emoticons instead.

Writing letters may be hard work, but receiving one can be one of life's greatest pleasures. There is so much to appreciate: the feel of the paper, the style of the handwriting and simply knowing someone has taken the trouble to write to you.

Texts and emails allow instant communication but are quickly deleted, while letters stay around for longer, allowing us to keep a record of our past. Many of us keep special letters ^c _____. But what correspondence will we leave behind for future generations? Nothing. That for me would be the greatest loss to our culture if letters died out completely.

However, ² there are signs that people have been writing more letters recently. ³ Newspapers have reported a rise in stationery sales and ⁴ several internet campaigns have sprung up in an attempt to save the art of letter-writing, such as the annual *Month of Letters*, in which thousands of participants ^d _____ for a month.

So letter-writing may not be ready to die ... quite yet.

Your comments

CO Cristina Oliveira:
With digital media we write more than ever before. Surely ⁵ this has had a positive impact on our writing skills?

JB James Brook:
I'm sure ⁶ I've only written two or three letters in my life. I'd love to write more, but ^e _____!

Luke Francis:
LF ⁷ I've always had terrible handwriting. Without email, I'd never write to anybody.

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- 6 Read the Grammar focus box and match rules a–d to the phrases in blue in the article and *Your comments* column. Some phrases relate to more than one rule.

GRAMMAR FOCUS present perfect simple and continuous

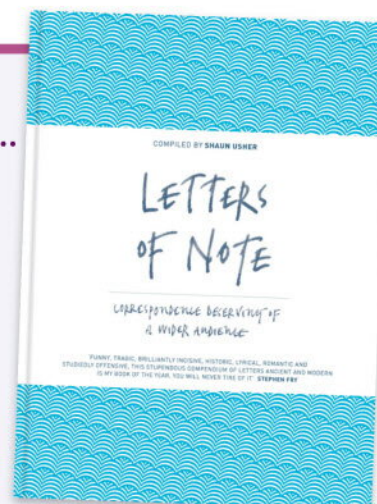
- We use the present perfect to talk about something that started in the past and is continuing now, or is repeated up to now, when how long is mentioned in the sentence, or when how long is clear from the situation.
 - We can often use **either the present perfect simple or the present perfect continuous** when we use *since* or *for* to talk about actions that are still going on.
He has worked/has been working at the post office since 1987.
 - We usually use **the present perfect continuous** for actions continuing or repeated for a short time up to the present, e.g. with phrases like *all day* and *recently*.
You've been working on that letter all morning – isn't it good enough now?
 - We usually use **the present perfect simple** to talk about states rather than actions, with verbs like *be*, *have* and *know*.
Writing has been much easier since spellcheckers were invented.
 - We use **the present perfect simple** to talk about something that happened once, or more than once, at an unspecified time in the past, when there is a link to the present.
Researchers have found that texting can improve children's spelling.

→ Grammar Reference page 137

- 7a Complete the article with the present perfect simple or continuous form of the verbs in brackets. Sometimes both forms may be possible.

Letters of Note

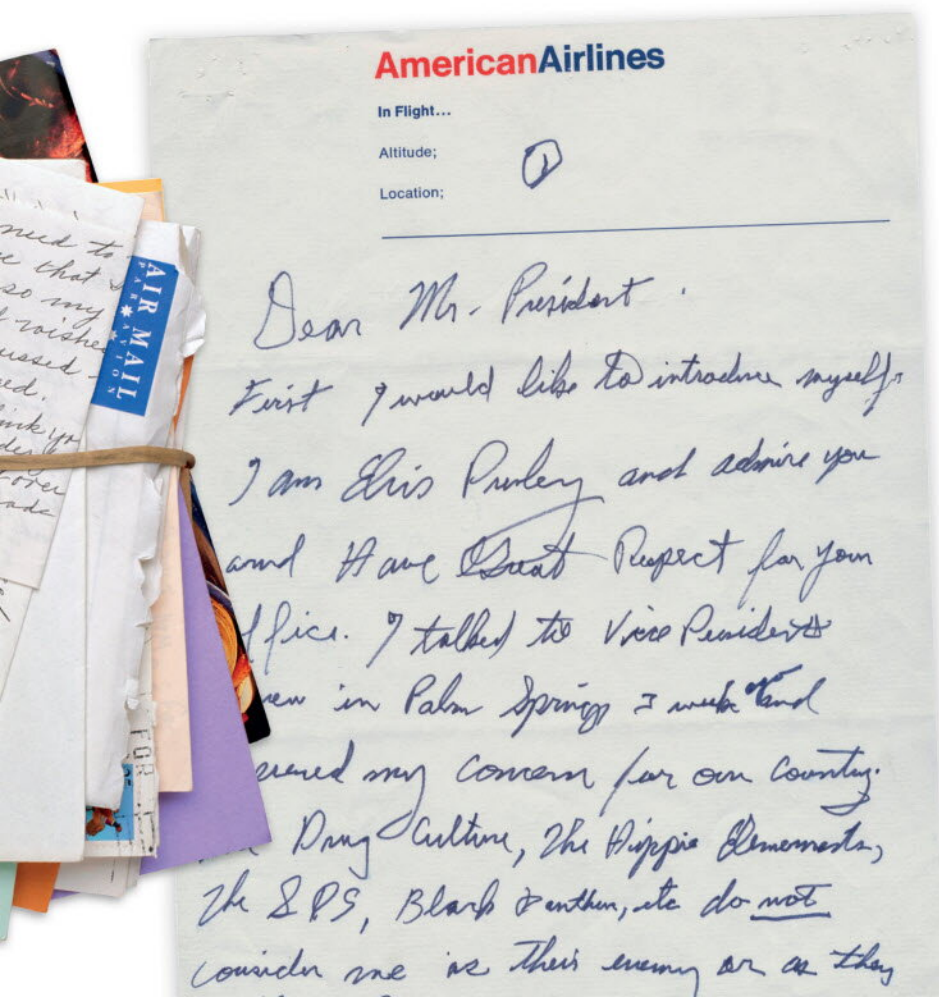
Shaun Usher is a blogger who, since 2009, 1 _____ (collect) letters written by famous people, from the 14th century to the present day. He 2 _____ (post) them on his website, which 3 _____ (become) extremely popular around the world. He 4 _____ (get) together a total of 900 letters, including letters by Leonardo da Vinci, Frida Kahlo and Alfred Nobel. He 5 _____ just _____ (release) the letters in a book, called *Letters of Note*. Usher 6 _____ recently _____ (start) a new project: he 7 _____ (gather) lists written by famous people and so far he 8 _____ (obtain) 125 lists, including lists by Marilyn Monroe and Mahatma Gandhi. These will soon be published as a book, *Lists of Note*.



- b With a partner, match answers 1–8 in exercise 7a to rules a–d in the Grammar focus box.

PRONUNCIATION auxiliary verbs *have* and *been*

- 8a 1.2))) Listen to the sentences and questions. How do we pronounce *have* and *been*?
I've been working very hard lately.
Have you been waiting long?
How long have you been here?
- b 1.3))) Listen and write the questions you hear.
- c Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in exercise 8b.
- 9 **TASK** You are a famous person and you are going to write a letter. Turn to page 126 for more information.



Letter from Elvis Presley to the president