News Release

JPR

9 February 2018

NO GREEN INK, SCENTED PAPER OR FISH: ROYAL MAIL'S MODERN GUIDE TO LOVE LETTERS

- **New research from Royal Mail reveals that over half of the nation has never sent or received a love letter, for reasons ranging from concern over being laughed at, to not knowing where to start, to even being embarrassed about their handwriting or stationery!**
- **However, over a third are committed to send a love letter to the object of their affections in future. The company has partnered with author and written word expert Simon Garfield to create the 'Modern Guide To Love Letters': 25 short and informative tips to make the process of penning the perfect letter to your paramour a little bit less intimidating - and a little bit more fun.**
- **Aside from telling them in person, writing a love letter was voted by respondents as the best way to express how you feel about someone; and sending an emoji or a WhatsApp or Facebook message was overwhelmingly voted as being the least effective.**
- **The younger generation (18-24) expressed the biggest wish of all the age groups to send a love letter to the object of their affections in future.**
- **The residents of Coventry, Aberystwyth and Gloucester were the UK's keenest towns to send a love letter to their partner.**

Swathes of Britons want to follow in the footsteps of Keats and Shelley and pen the perfect love letter to their paramour this Valentine's Day; however, we are a nation held back by the grip of writer's block.

New research from Royal Mail reveals that over half (53%) of the UK has never sent or received a love letter, for reasons ranging from concern over being laughed at (43%), not knowing how to structure the letter (16%), to even being embarrassed about their handwriting or stationery (5%)!

However, the commitment to put pen to paper is certainly there; with over a third (36%) of people expressing a strong desire to write a letter for their loved one in future. In fact, aside from telling them in person, writing a love letter was voted by respondents as the best way to express how you feel about someone; and a further one in four said that if they received a letter from someone they were interested in, then they would be more likely to 'seal the deal' and make their burgeoning relationship official.

As part of a mission to make the process of love letter writing a little bit less intimidating and a little bit more fun, the company has partnered with much-loved author and expert on letters of the heart Simon Garfield to produce the 'Modern Guide To Love Letters': 25 pithy, fun and informative tips for would-be literary lovers:

The Modern Guide to Love Letters

1)	**Give yourself a little time:** This is not a tweet.
2)	**Be yourself:** Jane Austen once said that the best kind of letter is a 'talking' one: Write as if you were chatting intimately to your friend over tea.
3)	**Be intimate:** Katharine Mansfield said: 'This is not a letter, but my arms around you for a moment.
4)	**Write from the heart:** A letter gives you a chance to say things you're too tongue-tied to say in person.
5)	**Don't use scented notepaper:** So 70s, and not all postal staff will share your taste in citrus top notes.Unless, of course, your scent will instantly send the recipient into your arms…
6)	**Not all love letters need to be romantic:** A few appreciative words to a member of your family could make them ridiculously happy.
7)	**Be artistic:** Draw your own emoji.
8)	**Or draw your own cartoon:** Charles Schultz wrote special messages to his paramour in his Peanuts strips.
9)	**Buy a stamp and address your envelope first:** That way you won't be panicking just before the post goes.
10)	**Be empathetic:** When writing, think how you would feel if you received your own letter.
11)	**Don't be needy:** Never plead, and remember your sense of humour.
12)	**Be prepared:** A proper pen and high-quality paper will not turn you into Byron or Keats, but it might improve your prose by 10 per cent.
13)	**Get soppy:** Remember envelopes that were SWALK (sealed with a loving kiss)? Bring that acronym back!
14)	**Add the personal touches:** If you're sending a card rather than a letter, find an illustration or photograph that will mean something. Leave the hearts and flowers to the next person.
15)	**Be bold:** You won't be the first. 'I am dying so for the love of you...you have made me dazed and thunderstruck!' That was Marcus Aurelius, writing in about 140 AD.
16)	**Be on trend:** In Victorian times, an upside-down stamp on the upper left of an envelope meant 'I love you' to some, but 'I don't love you' to others. Confusion reigned. Break-ups followed.
17)	**Mind your handwriting:** You don't want the object of your affections to be distracted by it
18)	**Be mysterious:** If you're writing anonymously for Valentine's Day, think about whether you really want to leave your crush totally baffled. Leave a vague clue, perhaps…
19)	**Write sober:** You know not to drink and text, so don't write a drunken letter either.
20)	**Show passion:** Borrow some words from the similarly smitten. Beethoven, perhaps, writing to his Immortal Beloved: 'Never another one can own my heart, never - never!'

21)	**Don't be fishy:** Probably best to ignore the advice of a Chinese writing guide from 1938 which suggested that love letters should be accompanied by a basket of fish.
22)	**Be sincere:** No pressure, but write as if your words will be clutched to your recipient's heart for ever and a day.
23)	**No green ink**
24)	**Keep it romantic:** Don't make it too lascivious or sexual – this isn't a one-night stand!
25)	**Don't be silly:** Never refer to past lovers

****View and download the guide online at** https://www.royalmail.com/valentinesday

Some other fascinating facts unearthed by the research include:

- When asked about other methods of amorous communication for Valentine's Day, sending an emoji or a WhatsApp or Facebook message were strongly voted as the least effective ways of expressing how you feel about someone (62% of respondents).
- Interestingly, younger respondents (18-24) expressed the biggest wish of all the age groups to send a love letter to the object of their affections in future (45%), shunning more digital forms of communication.
- The residents of Coventry (68%), Aberystwyth (67%) and Gloucester (66%) expressed the biggest wish to send a love letter in future, followed by Worcester (65%), Leeds (45%), Oxford (40%), Plymouth (40%), Leicester (39%), London (38%) and Glasgow (37%).
- Women were on average less comfortable expressing their feelings about their partner in this way (approximately 5% less than men); and male respondents also showed more of an inclination to want to send a love letter in future than women (on average 10% more).

Simon Garfield commented: "The UK is a nation of frustrated romantics. Having written, studied and collected letters for years, for me there is no finer and more effective way to express your love for another than via a love letter. We created the Modern Guide to Love Letters in an attempt to restore the nation's confidence in putting pen to paper as a way to declare our collective feelings.'

'My favourite love letter of all time was written by Winston Churchill in his famous note to this wife Clemmie. Its beauty lies not so much its use of lofty, complex language; but because it is truly authentic. - both to him, and to the relationship that they enjoyed together. Let's hope the Modern Guide can bring this gift to all."

Mark Street, Head of Campaigns at Royal Mail commented: "Whilst social media is a fantastic way of keeping in touch on a day-to-day basis, clearly there is a call to go back to the act of sending (and getting to keep) a physical letter, which someone has lovingly taken the time to write. Put simply, sometimes a letter is better."

Lovelorn wordsmiths are reminded to post their letters and cards with enough time to spare for Valentine's Day. The last posting date for 1st class stamps is Tuesday 13 February 2018.

Ends

For further information contact:
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About Royal Mail plc

Royal Mail plc is the parent company of Royal Mail Group Limited, the leading provider of postal and delivery services in the UK and the UK's designated universal postal service provider. UK Parcels, International and Letters ("UKPIL") comprises the company's UK and international parcels and letters delivery businesses operating under the "Royal Mail" and "Parcelforce Worldwide" brands. Through the Royal Mail Core Network, the company delivers a one-price-goes-anywhere service on a range of parcels and letters products. Royal Mail has the capability to deliver to around 30 million addresses in the UK, six days a week (excluding UK public holidays). Parcelforce Worldwide operates a separate UK network which collects