

How to write “Letters of Condolence” with Example

Letters of condolence are the most difficult to write and most of the people do not perform this duty with dignity. A good letter of condolence is highly prized and deeply appreciated. It can create courage in those who have been treated by death or destiny. It should be brief, bright and beautiful. It should be like a handclasp, warm and affectionate, or like a heart-to-heart embrace. Feel friend's feelings and share in the tragic impact. Do not say anything that might stir up the members of a dying sorrow in the heart of the bereaved.

Write before the shock of the bad news has worn off. Let your message have a ring of sincerity. Do not strive for eloquence and effect. Three essential qualities of an excellent letter of condolence are tact, sincerity and brevity. “Often in a note of condolence,” says Waston, “it’s not so much what you say as what you don’t say that counts.” a long, wordy letter, stirring up sad emotions, is the unkindest cut of all. Do not probe into the details of a tragedy. Such a letter condoling death can be more depressing than death itself.

A Classic Example

When Shrimati Kamala Nehru, the wife of Shri Jawaharal Nehru, died in Europe on February 28, 1936, and he returned to India with her ashes, Gandhiji sent to him the following letter from Delhi:

“So, you have returned, leaving Kamala forever in Europe, and yet her spirit was never out of India and will always be your precious treasure, as it will be for most of us. I shall never forget the final talk that melted our four eyes.”