

Personalize Your Letter Writing

Delight your letter readers instead of baffling them with collegiate terms admonishes Virginia Kirkpatrick

AFTER the first mad scramble to find baggage and to cite your bearings, you probably dashed off a note to let your family know that you did arrive all in one piece. The start of the year, however, is a convenient time to acquire the habit of personalized letter writing.

It's a temptation to leave letters until the last minute, then fling yourself wearily down to scribble a few lines which might go something like this: "Dear Dad—the state of the exchequer is pretty low; my books cost an awful lot. I wish I could get a reversible; everyone has one."

Stop and consider. Imagine how much you'd enjoy receiving letters like that yourself all the time. Maybe you don't always ask for money but other matters which you write about in haste may also baffle your family.

Creating letters that live can be fun. Such letters can bring friends close together in spite of distances. Try to imagine yourself face to face with your cor-



Spread out your correspondence in a thought-out plan so it won't pile up suddenly with little time for clever letters that can't be simply dashed off

respondent and then write as you would talk. If you can develop the knack of regarding letters as friendly, informal conversations, writing won't be such a disagreeable task.

You're probably saying, "What shall I write about?" Of course people want to know what you are doing, but an account of dates, firesides and exchanges that trails endlessly on can become tiresome.

Why not write of fewer incidents, letting your imagination and sense of humor elaborate on the details. Perhaps you were lost in the registration line, or came in late at the residence hall. You might make a commentary of some of the college customs which appeal to you.

One girl wrote cleverly on her reactions to the many time-honored institutions. A college alumnus friend enjoyed her repartee so much that she relayed it to other alumni.

Don't be afraid to state your opinions. They really convey more of your personality than any account of I went, we did. Incidentally, it's a good idea to explain the meaning of the familiar college terms. Although you know all about the campanile, the Ward system and light cuts, they may be foreign to friends at home. One bewildered father thought that passing five pounds was a sort of weight lifting contest.

You may imagine your ideas exhausted when your weekly masterpiece to your family has been sent off. Even so, it is satisfying to contact all your friends at home. A practical solution for a heavy correspondence is to keep a list and write a letter to some other person every time you write home.

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