

Having Your Say—The Written Side

Until 1907, it was illegal to write anything except the address on the back of a postcard. A picture was printed on the front of the card, and only a very small space was left there for someone to write a very brief message. “A huge puddle, By Jove,” a tourist wrote on the front of a postcard when he visited Niagara Falls in 1906. (And that’s the complete message!)

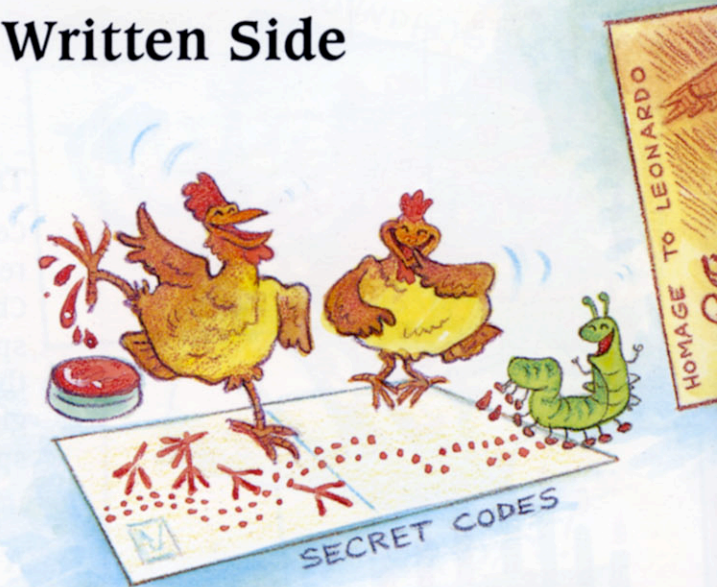
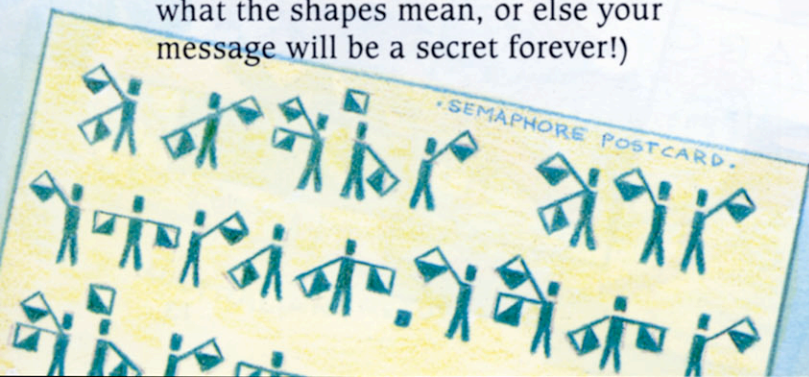
Modern postcards give us a much larger space to write in, but your message still needs to be brief. How will you communicate a message on your postcards?

Hidden Messages

People have always worried about strangers reading their postcard messages since there isn’t an envelope to cover them. Creative card writers have found ways to communicate—and keep their messages private. You might try one of the following.

Secret Codes

Create a code that only you and your friends or family will understand. Use shapes or numbers, for instance. (Just be sure you and your receiver both know what the shapes mean, or else your message will be a secret forever!)



Backwards Writing

With a bit of practice, you can print your letters and words backwards. When the postcard arrives, your friend will have to hold the card up to a mirror. Then the message can be clearly read.



In the 1400s, the great inventor and artist Leonardo da Vinci filled his scientific notebooks with backwards writing so that enemies could not understand his work.

Circular Writing

Start in the middle of a blank postcard. Write "Dear John," and turn the card in a circular motion as you continue to write the message. When your friend turns the card while reading it, everything will make sense. But anyone just glancing at the message won't be able to understand it.

You can practise circular writing on a piece of paper and later work in smaller print on a postcard.

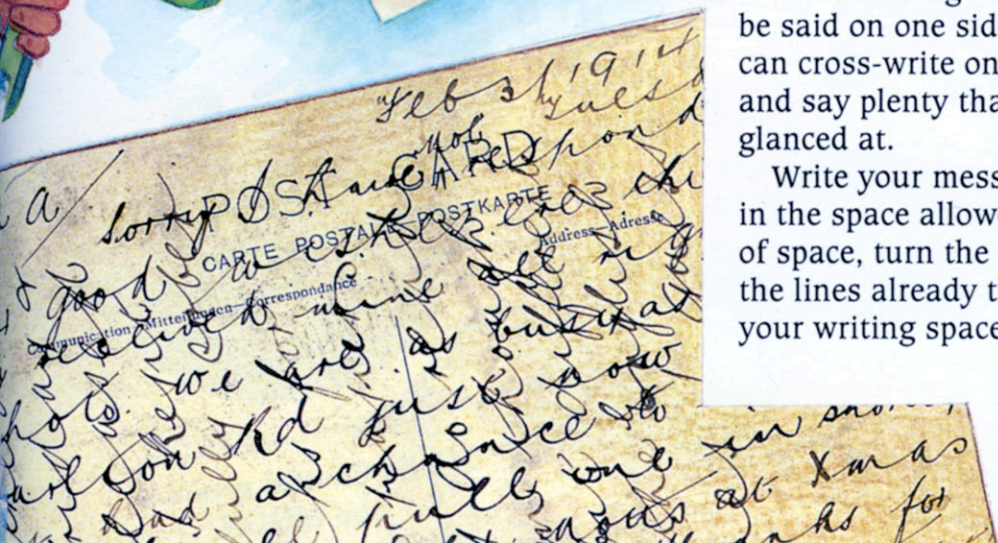


Cross-Writing

In the 1700s, paper was too expensive to waste on envelopes that would be thrown away, so people used every area of a sheet of writing paper, but they wrote only on one side. When the paper was folded, the blank side became an envelope.

Cross-writing meant that more could be said on one side of the paper. You can cross-write on a postcard space, too, and say plenty that can't be read when glanced at.

Write your message the way you want in the space allowed. When you run out of space, turn the card and write across the lines already there. You've doubled your writing space!



Writing Imaginatively

Can't think of anything to write on your postcard? Why not make up a story to go with the picture you've drawn? Try making a folding postcard (see pages 22/23), with a "chapter" on each card.

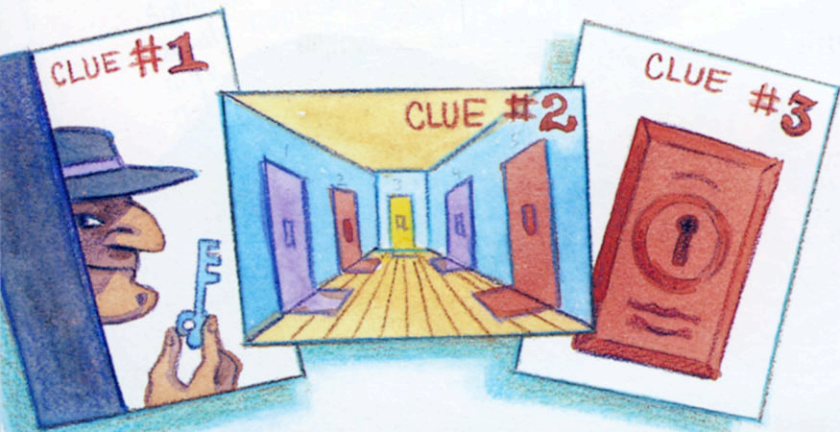
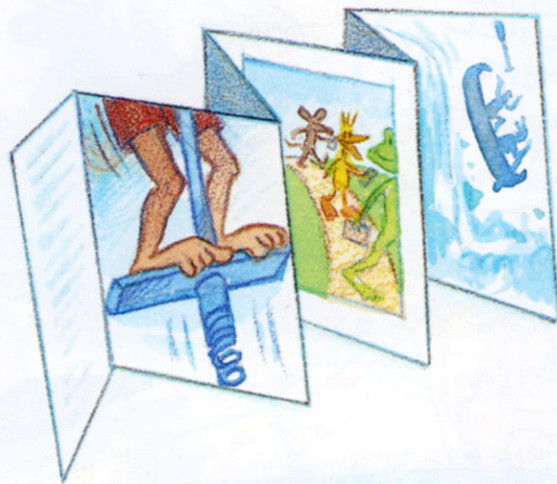
Use Postcards from the Past

If you have some old postcards around the house, why not write a story based on the pictures? The cards can provide the setting for your story, like a city hall, a school, a market that was torn down. The people on the cards can be your characters.

Write a Mystery Story

Or maybe you want to create everything in the story yourself. Let's say you'd like to write a postcard mystery. You can write the story, and give a new clue on each card. (The clue might be found on the picture side, or on the written side. Whether you use words or pictures, make sure your clues help tell your story.) On the last card, the mystery will be solved!

Better yet, don't reveal the final solution! Keep your friend waiting for the next installment. Mail the next folding postcard a few days later.





How about a Never-ending Mystery???

Or . . . send the first folding postcard, with the mystery unsolved, to a friend. Ask your friend to make *another* folding postcard that continues the mystery. And so on. Back and forth, from friend to friend. Maybe ten folding postcards later, the mystery will be solved!

