



How to...

DID YOU KNOW?

The word "gratitude" is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness.



Express your gratitude

Being thankful for what you have can make you happier and healthier.

You probably say "thank you" often—such as when a friend holds the door, a teacher stays after class to help you with a problem, or a grandparent sends a gift for your birthday. At Thanksgiving, we have a special opportunity to give thanks and reflect on what we are grateful for. Showing gratitude makes others feel good, but it also helps you feel more joyful and less sad or stressed, according to experts at Harvard University. It is also something you can practice year-round. Here's how.

Do a "gratitude search"

Start by taking a few minutes to think about what you're grateful for. Is it someone or something that makes you happy or makes you laugh? Is it someone you know—like a parent, teacher, or coach—who helps support you, even when you don't ask? Is it something that makes your life better? Maybe it's an activity or a hobby you enjoy doing with others. It can also be something you have that you realize others may not have.

Make it a habit

Try getting into the routine of noticing and thinking about the things you're grateful for while you're going about your day. You can jot them down in a notebook or write

them on sticky notes and make a "gratitude wall" in your room. You could also write what you're grateful for on colorful scraps of paper and save them in a jar. Whenever you need a mood boost, you can take them out to remind yourself of what makes you feel happy and thankful.

Volunteer your skills

Giving your time to others helps them—but it can also benefit you, too. For example, if you rake the leaves or shovel snow for an elderly neighbor, you can take a moment to feel thankful that you were able to make their day easier. If you help a sibling with their homework, you can feel good about sharing your knowledge.

Share thanks with family

Thanksgiving is a perfect time to exchange feelings of gratitude with family. At the dinner table, you can suggest that each person takes a turn to share at least one thing they feel thankful for. You can also discuss taking a meditative "gratitude walk" between dinner and dessert, to appreciate the company of the people in your life and the natural beauty of the outdoors. You could even follow the holiday with a note of thanks to family members you love. (See the box at right.)



Do a good deed.

Thank-you notes



Whether you're thanking someone for a gift, their time, or just for being great, here's how to write a note to be proud of.

Start with a greeting. Begin with the person's name: "Dear ____" (fill in their name).

Be specific. Clearly write about why you're thanking the person. You can use phrases like "Thank you for the..." and "I am grateful for..." Then explain why you're thankful. If someone did something kind, tell them how that helped you. If they gave you a gift, add what you love about it.

Sign your name to end the note. You can use "Warmly," "Sincerely," "Love," or whatever you wish before your name.