

Straight from the Source

For most of Alamo history, letter writing was the main means of communication. Letters that survive are primary sources, or firsthand accounts, that help piece together historic events and give readers an idea of the author's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

Dearest Friend

Use the template on the back to write a letter. Who knows? In a hundred years, maybe people will be reading your letter, too.

- 1 **Heading:** Write today's date and your location.
Example: San Antonio, T.X., Dec 5th, 2023
- 2 **Salutation:** Greet your recipient.
Examples: My beloved Mother, Honored Sir
- 3 **Letter body:** Share your reason for writing. Ideas include thanking someone for visiting or asking for help.
- 4 **Valediction:** Sign off and say farewell.
Examples: Your Mother, Ever your friend, Respectfully yours, Yours sincerely
- 5 **Signature:** End with your full name and, if applicable, your title (e.g. Lt. Col. comdt.)
- 6 **Postscript:** Add any forgotten information.
P.S. Crossing out mistakes was frowned upon, and you could not erase ink.



William Barret Travis

The Travis Letter

"To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World"

With the Mexican Army surrounding the Alamo and gaining in number, William Barrett Travis wrote an urgent, passionate call for aid. Hoping to move reinforcements into action, Travis vowed to: "Die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country - Victory or Death."

The Crockett Letter

"I am on the eve of starting to the Texas..."

In October 1835, David Crockett wrote to his brother about leaving for Texas. Interestingly, he also talked about returning to Tennessee. Because of this letter, historians know some of Crockett's motivations for heading west, which include a desire to "...explore the Texes well before [he] returns."

David Crockett



Today's date _____

Your Location _____

Salutation _____

Letter body _____

Valediction _____

Signature _____

Title and/or Rank _____

P.S. _____

1800's Slang

David Crockett was as colorful on paper as he was in person. Add some personality to your letter by using one of or more of these expressions.

some pumpkins - referring to a person or something that is special

"One of them thinks he's got a scrub [horse] that's some pumpkins." *A Quarter Race in Kentucky*, p. 118, 1846

wake snakes - to be mischievous, get into trouble, or get up and going

"Wake snakes, and walk your chawks!" David Crockett in *A Narrative of the life of David Crockett*, p. 35

highfaluting (*also written highfalutin*) - pretentious, fancy

"They were going it on the high faluting order. I heerd one slick-cheeked chap, what was sitting behind me, singing as they were playing." *Spirit of the Times*, 2 Feb. 1839

huckleberry above a persimmon - better than something else; a cut above

"It is a huckleberry above my persimmon to cipher out how I find myself the most popular bookmaker of the day." *Colonel Crockett in Texas*, p. 13, 1836

man alive - expression of shock or surprise; another way to say oh my goodness

"Man alive! what do you put yourself in such a plaguy passion for?" Mrs. Kirkland in *A New Home*, p. 168, 1840