

# Writing a dirge for The Hindu, dt:5.10.25, pg.no.7 handwriting

In today's digital world, the simple act of writing notes by hand feels increasingly rare

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**A**t the bank recently, I was asked to submit a written letter for closing my account. What should have been a simple task turned into a surprising challenge. My handwriting, once steady and familiar, looked uneven and squiggly. It dawned on me that I had not written a letter by hand in decades, as most of my communication these days happens through WhatsApp or email. Rarely do I put pen to paper.

The shift from handwriting to digital text began with the rise of computers in the late 20th century. Word processors replaced typewriters, and as the Internet and smartphones became widespread, typing quickly became the norm for everything – emails, essays, messages. The speed and convenience of digital communication are undeniable. One can edit, share, and store text more efficiently than ever before. But this ease has come with a trade-off.

For generations, handwriting has been a fundamental part of education. Schools used to dedicate entire periods to handwriting. There were notebooks with red margins, teachers with hawk eyes, and the dreaded four-line rule. One misguided 'g' would invite the teacher's wrath. Learning to shape letters and form words marked an important developmental milestone. Handwriting was not only a means of communication but also a vital tool for learning and cognitive development.

In today's digital world, however, the simple act

of writing notes by hand feels increasingly rare. Yet it remains a powerful and personal way to connect – with us and with others. Though the need for handwriting may be fading, it has not vanished completely. It still holds value as a human art form, worth preserving and celebrating.

Growing up in the early 1950s, long before smartphones and Internet postcards became a cherished means of communication, postcards were not only a symbol of travel but also a lifeline between friends and family. We eagerly awaited the daily arrival of the postman, hoping for a letter from a loved one. There was unmatched joy in receiving a handwritten note, and these moments kept our writing skills alive. Postcards, with their limited space, also sharpened our ability to express thoughts concisely.

In today's world of instant messages,

photo-sharing apps, and social media updates, the process of choosing a postcard, writing a personal note, and mailing it feels almost antiquated. But its disappearance marks more than the end of a nostalgic tradition, reflecting the decline of handwriting itself.

The downfall of the postcard began with the telephone and accelerated with the Internet. Now, a traveller simply snaps a photo, adds a filter, and shares it instantly with the world. The classic "Wish you were here" has become a caption, not a handwritten message.

The art of handwriting is disappearing not because it is no longer useful, but because we have forgotten its value. Yet, in its quiet beauty, it remains one of the most personal forms of expression we have. It deserves not just remembrance, but revival.



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