

## 49. Guidelines for “Letters Home”: Reflections on Internships

By David Guy, Writing Coach, Hart Leadership Program

### Things to write about:

- How your work is going. Success and problems.
- The physical space where you’re living, including the work place.
- Your daily life.
- People. All the best writing is about people.

We’ll start with this and build on it. I’ll make suggestions.

Writing as reflection and communication. Both are important. You don’t want to lose either aspect.

The stages of writing: notebook, the writing process, the finished product. Notebook is where it all starts. Tapping into the sub-conscious. How to access it. Free association. Dream. Free writing. Key to all writing. Realizing emotion. (Robertson Davies)

Action vs. Reflection. When it’s time to write home, you have material. You have also been stimulating the sub-conscious, and it is ready to go. Writing from a personal viewpoint about what’s around you. “How are things going?” The letter home is the complete answer to that question.

So: with this preparation, sit down and write. I will respond.

Keys to letters home:

1. Write from strong emotion
2. Be emotionally honest
3. Be concrete and specific
4. Show don't tell
5. Describe people and things
6. Limit yourself to 2-3 characters
7. Do #1 and break all the other rules

The letter home starts as a personal statement from the student in the midst of what they are doing. Eventually have something to “go public” with, and selected letters home are placed on the SOL web site, published in the annual booklet of student writing, etc.