

Birthday wishes: what to write in a birthday card



By [Keely Chace](#) on June 18, 2019

When it comes to signing [birthday cards](#), there are people who have no problem picking up a pen and adding a warm, personal message. Then there are those of us who sometimes have trouble getting beyond “Happy Birthday.” Wherever you fall on that inspiration spectrum, we have ideas to help you write a more meaningful message in your card.

In this guide, Hallmark writers offer birthday-message tips and inspiring examples. Just click on the appropriate category below to go straight to the birthday wishes you’re interested in, or you can read the whole guide and mix and match to create a custom message for your birthday person. We hope this little guide helps with the next birthday card you sign...and many more!

What to Write in a Birthday Card

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Happy Birthday Wishes

When the card has already said it all or you just feel like keeping things short and sweet, a few short, sweet words might be the way to go. Here are some ideas for adding a little extra warmth and personality to your mighty little message.

Examples

- “Happy, happy birthday, [Margie]!”
- “I hope you get to do something fun to celebrate!”
- “You deserve everything happy. Wishing you that all year long!”
- “[Aaron], hope you have a happy [27th]! Love ya!”
- “The happiest of birthdays to the [loveliest] of [daughters].”
- “Warmest wishes for a happy birthday,”
- “Hope today’s filled with all your favorite guilty pleasures!”
- “Hope you make your [25th] a birthday to remember!”
- “Go forth from this birthday and prosper in your [ukulele playing]!”
- “Another year older, and you just keep getting stronger, wiser, funnier and more amazing!”
- “Happy Birthday to one of my favorite people in the history of ever.”
- “Thanks for being here, for being you.”
- “Warmest wishes and love on your birthday and always!”
- “Be safe, have fun, take pictures, and enjoy every minute of this exciting time in your life!”
- “So grateful that God put you on this earth and in my life.”
- “Wishing you a happy birthday and a year that’s blessed.”

Writing tip: One Hallmark writer said she chooses her cards very carefully for each birthday person so that she doesn’t have to add much in the way of a personal message. In other words, it’s fine to let the printed message and design do most of the talking for you. Even professional writers do it!

Milestone Birthdays

The milestone birthday person might not wake up feeling like this birthday is particularly special or different from any other. So, it’s your job to let him or her know what a big deal it is to have a nice, round-number birthday!

Examples

- “[50] never looked so great!”
- “Happy Birthday, [Jared]! Now that you’ve arrived here, [40] will never be the same again!”
- “Turning [60] is big! Especially when it’s someone like you, who has made the most of each year and made such a positive difference for the people in your life.”

- “[30] is the perfect age. You’re old enough to afford the good stuff and still young enough to enjoy it!”
- “Happy [90th] Birthday, [Nana Betty]! Today, we’re celebrating the amazing [woman] you are, honoring the life you’ve lived and, just like always, loving you so much!”

Writing tip: Ages [16](#), [18](#), [21](#), [30](#), [40](#), [50](#), [60](#), [65](#), [70](#), [75](#), [80](#), [85](#), [90](#), [95](#) and [100](#) are traditionally considered milestones. Cards specific to these birthdays will feature the age number prominently in their design, but you can make any card a milestone card (or any birthday a milestone birthday) by writing that shiny new age number somewhere in your personal message.

Funny Birthday Wishes

Sharing a laugh in a [funny birthday card](#) is a great way to personalize a card for someone you know well. Wisecracks about getting older, jokes about over-indulging, gags about gifts (or the lack thereof)—all are good possibilities for funny messages.

Examples

- “Happy birthday to my favorite former punk rocker!” (Or: hippie, goth, Valley Girl, grunge rocker)
- “From one of your favorite bad influences” (Added after the card’s printed “Happy Birthday”)
- “Hope it’s happier than me at a shoe sale!” (or: spa, bar, coffee shop, beach.)
- “You get to be the center of attention today! Tomorrow it’s back to me.”
- “Have a martini for me! Or two!” (Or: substitute recipient’s favorite drink.)
- “I think this is the year you get a pony! JK That’s never.”
- “Happy birthday to you and your cat! (I know how the cat hates to be left out.)”
- “May the cake calories go straight to your boobs!”
- “To quote Shakespeare: ‘Party thine ass off!’”
- “Dibs on the presents you don’t like!”
- “You totally don’t look like crap at all!”
- “I hope all your wishes come true, even the weird ones.”
- “Sorry there’s no money in here.”
- “Please stop aging so gracefully. It’s getting kind of boring and predictable.”
- “Have a great day, you old geezer! (Takes one to know one, right?)”

Writing Tip: Try to sound like talking. Like, if you say “like” all the time, write “like” a lot. It’s OK and it’s, like, more personal and the person can kind of hear you talking and from there, you can refer to something funny that happened and they’ll laugh because, like, it totally reminds them of when the funny thing happened!

Belated

Late really is better than never! If life, memory lapse or alien abduction has interfered with the timely delivery of your card, send it anyway. You can include a sincere or humorous apology...or just frame it as your way of extending the birthday fun!

Examples

- “So sorry these birthday wishes are late reaching you. I hope it was happy!”
- “Happy Birthday...a little late!”
- “You’re receiving this NOW and not on your ACTUAL birthday, because I am extremely thoughtful and wanted to be sure the celebration of YOU was not limited to just one day. That is so nice of me, right? Well, you are worth it.”
- “At least my Happy Birthday text was on time. That counts for something, right? Happy Belated Birthday!”
- “I don’t know where my mind was, but I forgot your birthday...until now. At least this way I’ll stand out from the crowd when I tell you you’re amazing and awesome. Have a great year!”

Writing tip: Cards made specifically for belated birthdays are good for when you remember the birthday after the fact. However, if you already have the card but just didn’t get it delivered on time, stick with what you’ve got. You can mention its lateness in your personal message—or not. It’s really your call.

For a Friend

Sometimes you just want to tell someone, “Thanks for being a good friend.” A birthday card is a great way to do just that.

Examples

- “Happy Birthday to a friend I couldn’t live without!”
- “In case I don’t tell you often enough, I really appreciate your friendship. And I’m so grateful for all you bring to my life!”
- “If life were a sitcom, you’d be the witty, glamorous friend and I’d be the dorky sidekick. And I don’t mind that at all. I hope you have a GREAT birthday.”
- “This getting older stuff isn’t for sissies. Glad I have a friend like you to go first!”
- “It just occurred to me that we really are becoming OLD friends. So glad we are.”
- “Love you, my sweet friend. Happy Birthday.”

Writing tip: If you’ve chosen a blank or just-for-fun card simply because you know your friend would like it, you can easily make it a birthday card by mentioning birthday somewhere in your personal message. [Friendship](#) is flexible like that!

For Mom

What you write to your mom on her birthday will depend on the kind of relationship the two of you share. In general, love, appreciation, and upbeat wishes are a good bet. If she's got a healthy sense of humor, feel free to make her laugh. You can always keep it light one year, and go more heartfelt the next.

Examples

- “Happy Birthday, with heartfelt thanks and lots of love, to my wise, wonderful, one-and-only Mom.”
- “You’re the best, Mom. Love you.”
- “Wishing a beautiful day for my beautiful Mom.”
- “The more time goes by, the more grateful I am to have you for my Mom.”
- “Hope your birthday brings some time to relax, do your favorite things, and remember how much you’re loved.”
- “I don’t say it enough, but it’s always true: I love you, and I feel so lucky to call you my mom.”
- “For all the days you’ve made happy for our family...all the ways you make us smile...happy birthday with lots of love.”
- “Wish I could be there to celebrate with you, Mom. Have fun! Miss you!”
- “Happy Birthday from your favorite! (I probably don’t even need to sign my name after that, do I?)”
- “With love from the reason for most of your gray hairs.”
- “Happy Birthday, Mom. I hope everything about today reminds you how loved and cherished you are.”

Writing Tip: Sharing a birthday memory can be a fun idea for mom, too: “I still remember you all dressed up to go out for your 40th birthday. I thought I had the prettiest mom in the world. I still do.”

For Dad

Love, thanks, and warm wishes make good birthday messages for dad, too. Again, let your relationship be your guide, and write from the heart.

Examples

- “To my hero...my Dad.”
- “Birthday and every day, it means so much to have a great Dad like you.”
- “I really got lucky when I got you for my Dad.”
- “You’ve always been a great dad, and you’ve become a real friend, too. I love that...and I love you, Dad.”
- “For lessons you’ve taught...For days you’ve saved...For everything...Thanks, Dad.”
- “I’ve always been proud of the smart, honest, good man you are—and so very proud to be your son.”
- “You’re more than a dad. You’re the greatest man I know.”
- “Happy Birthday, Dad! Hope the sun is shining, and the fish are biting!”

- “I hope you get a hole-in-one today. If not, just lie and tell me you did anyway. I’ll never know the difference.”
- “For the man who taught me everything I know. From the kid who paid to attention to roughly half of all you tried to teach.”
- “You’ll notice this birthday card was NOT sent from prison. I have you to thank for that, Dad.”
- “Dad, I hope you find a fun way to waste some time on your birthday. You have my permission!”
- “You deserve a margarita with the good tequila today! And every day. Happy birthday to a top-shelf kind of Dad!”

Writing Tip: Even a dad who never gets mushy in person can still appreciate a warm and loving written message. Cards are a perfect vehicle for saying the heartfelt things that can be hard to say face-to-face.

For a Child

If you don’t like to write a lot on a birthday card, then send more cards to kids, because even those who have learned to read are often too excited to sit through a very long message. Keep your wish short, sweet and fun, and your card will be a hit with the [birthday kid](#).

Examples

- “[7] years awesome! That’s you!”
- “All hail the birthday princess! Have a royally sweet [5th], [Ella]!”
- “Yay! You’re [4] today! Love you, big [4]-year-old!”
- “Happy Birthday to our new favorite [6]-year-old!”
- “[Colette], you’re getting to be such a big [girl]! Happy [3rd] Birthday, Sweetheart. We love you!”
- “[Elliott]! How can you be [9] already? Why, just yesterday, you were [8]. Oh, well. Have a happy one, birthday boy!”
- “[Tyler], I’ve got a feeling you’re going to make a pretty amazing [11]-year-old. Happy Birthday!”
- “Hope this whole exciting year of being [13] kicks off with a very fun, very happy birthday!”

Writing tip: Some adults might not want to be reminded of their new age, but kids will love seeing that you know exactly how old they are now! If it’s not already printed on the card, be sure to write the birthday kid’s age somewhere in your message.

For a Spouse or Significant Other

If you’re married to or dating the birthday boy or girl, this is a great opportunity to strengthen your relationship. Depending on your circumstances, it might also be a great chance for a little flirtatious fun.

Examples

- “I’m so grateful you came into the world because you make my world better every day. Happy Birthday, Baby.”
- “Thanks for you being you and being mine.”
- “It’s your day, and I can’t wait to celebrate it with you.”
- “I hope your birthday is the happiest.”
- “Happy Birthday, Beautiful.”
- “Wish you were here for me to spoil today.”

Writing tip: Using your private pet name for the recipient can instantly make a simple message more warm and personal. No matter what you say, use words that sound like you.

For a Family Member

Chances are, your family members will be getting a lot of birthday cards from you through the years, so you can mix it up and write a longer personal message some years and a shorter message others. Love, compliments and warm wishes all work nicely for family. So do “Proud of you” and “I’m glad we’re family” messages.

Examples

- “Every year, I’m even more grateful to have a [brother] like you.”
- “We still remember the first time we laid eyes on you—on this day [23] years ago. You were so beautiful right from the start, and with every year, you grow even more beautiful. Hope you know how much we love you and how grateful we are to call you our [daughter].”
- “So proud of the person you are! So happy we’re family.”
- “I am just so in awe of you...and so proud to call you my [sister].”
- “Well, [Grandpa], another year has gone by, and I still haven’t come across anyone wiser, kinder, more generous or better at [checkers] than you. You’re the best!”

Writing tip: If your card doesn’t specifically mention your family relationship with the recipient, include it in your personal message. You can either address the recipient by the title you use for them (Nana, Pop-Pop, Aunt Suzie, etc.), or mention the relationship (sister, cousin, etc.) somewhere in your message.

Difficult Circumstances

Birthdays are happy occasions that sometimes fall during tough times due to illness, job loss, bereavement or other challenging circumstances. A birthday card is a great way to let the birthday person know you’re still thinking of (and celebrating) him or her even in the midst of a difficult year.

Examples

- “I know you’ve had some real challenges this year, and it has been great to see how well you have met them.”
- “What a year. You made it! Let’s celebrate THAT!”
- “Life owes you some really good times. Hope they start right now.”
- “You’ve had more than your share of challenges this year—hope this will feel like a brand-new year of better days.”
- “I hope this next year is gentle and sweet to you and gives you lots of reasons to smile and lots of time to rest.”

Writing tip: Humor can be a great day-brightener even in the midst of a hard time. If you know the birthday person appreciates a good laugh, feel free to choose a funny card and/or add a humorous personal message.

Professional Relationships

Let your relationship guide you when signing a birthday card for a co-worker. If it’s someone you’re close to, you can be as casual in your message as you would with nonwork friends. If it’s your supervisor or someone with whom you have a relationship that’s more strictly about work, then keep your message more formal.

Examples

- “Happy Birthday and all the best to you in the year to come!”
- “It’s a pleasure to work with you...and to wish you a happy birthday!”
- “[Karen], all work and no play makes us dull girls. So don’t work too hard on your birthday. Hope it’s happy!”
- “Unfortunately, I can’t take credit for baking you the cake in the break room. Fortunately, I can totally have a slice in your honor. Yum...and Happy Birthday!”
- “You make work a lot less like work. Thanks for all you do!”

Writing tip: Do resist any urge to talk shop when signing a birthday card for a co-worker. Your card is a place for official birthday business only.

Signing a Group Card

Here are some ideas for when you’re the umpteenth person to sign the birthday card, and all the obvious messages (and most of the space) have already been taken.

Examples

- “Celebrating you!”
- “Happy day!”
- “I salute you.”
- “Birthday cheers!”

- “Birthday hugs!”
- “Let the b-day fun begin!”
- “Let us eat cake!”
- “Have a sweet one!”
- “Huzzah to you on your birthday!”
- “Be so happy.”
- “Happy Birthday & Happy Year!”
- “Happy wishes to you!”
- “YES to party hats!”
- “...and many more.”
- “Another year more wonderful!”
- “You’re awesome!”
- “You’re the best!”
- “You look great!”
- “U look 2 good 2 B this old!”
- “Can’t believe you’re a year older!”
- “Here’s to you!”
- “Here’s to a great birthday!”
- “Make a wish!”
- “Wish for something good!”
- “Whatever you wish, I second that!”
- “Party on!”
- “Stay cool.”
- “Stay sweet!”
- “Honored to wish you a happy birthday!”
- “¡Salud! ¡Dinero! ¡Amor!” (Spanish for “health, money, love”)
- “Love you!”

Warm Closings

A warm closing before your signature is like the bow on top of the birthday gift. Choose one of ours, or come up with one of your own.

- Warmly,
- Love,
- With love,
- Lots of love,
- Love always,
- Much love to you,
- All my love,
- Best wishes!
- Best wishes on your birthday and always,
- All life’s best to you,
- Happy Birthday!
- Wishing you happiness,
- Warmest wishes,

- Gratefully,
- Blessings,
- God bless,
- Hugs and kisses,

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