

Hallmark Writing and Editorial Portfolio Requirement

Thanks for your interest in applying for a Hallmark Writing or Editorial position! The exercises you'll see below reflect the diverse range of work Hallmark writers and editors do every day.

Completion and submission of these exercises is required in order to be considered for this opening.

Here's the most important thing to remember as you fill out these exercises: when we review your portfolio, we want to see *you* on the page. Don't give us what you think we want to read. Give us your voice, your perspective, your style. If you're funny, be funny. If you're emotional, be emotional. If you're weird, be weird. Show us what you'd bring to the table if given the chance to join our team. Show us *you*.

Finally, a few nuts-and-bolts items before you get started:

- Responses to Exercises 1-8 should be numbered and uploaded as a single, multipage Word document or PDF.
- Additional writing samples (see Exercise 9) should be uploaded as a separate file.
- Personal website or blog links may also be included in your additional writing file.

Good luck! We're excited to see what you can do.

Exercise 1: Introducing YOU!

Each Hallmark writer and editor brings to their work a new perspective that helps make our products authentic and unique. Having such a wide range of different points of view allows us to create messages that feel personal and meaningful to the people who buy our cards.

Your turn! Please consider what new outlook you would add to Hallmark, and respond to one of the following in your own style (in about 500 words):

- Something interesting about you
- A poignant lesson you learned
- Your favorite mentor
- The steps you took to address a challenge you've faced
- What made you want to apply for this job

Exercise 2: Your Own Greeting Card Collection

Hallmark writers and editors have to be constantly aware of the changing nature of relationships. Identifying new ways that people are expressing themselves and connecting with each other often leads us to create new kinds of messages to meet the ever-changing needs of the people in our world.

Your turn! Please propose a card collection that meets a need you've observed in culture. It could be rooted in age, ethnicity, sexual identity, relationship, occasion, tone, or anything else you can think of. Give the collection a name, explain who the target market is and why you chose that particular market, and write at least 3 cards that would appear in the collection.

Exercise 3: Writing – Verse

Although rhymed and metered verse is one of the most familiar forms of greeting card writing, it's not easy. Finding new ways to convey universally specific statements—using fresh language, unexpected imagery, and spot-on rhyme and meter—is part of what we do every day.

Take a look at the following examples:

You're the joy in my mornings.
The peace in my nights.
Whenever I'm with you,
the whole world feels right.
You make my heart happy
like no one else can.
So lucky you chose me.
So glad you're my man.

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Raised to listen.
Raised to think.
Raised to shine
and not to shrink.
Raised with strength
and hard work, too.
Bravely, fiercely
raised by you.

**

You're the frappe to my chino,
the marga to my rita,
the ginger to my sushi,
the hummus to my pita.
You're the jamba to my laya,
the salty to my sweet.
I just can't help but crave you—
you make my life complete!

Your turn! Write a rhymed and metered verse (8-12 lines) for one of the following card-sending situations:

- A romantic relationship (new love, anniversary, etc.)
- A family relationship (mom, dad, grandma, son, sister, etc.)

Exercise 4: Writing – Long Prose

Some card senders want to say more than a quick “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Mother’s Day.” They like to express themselves with longer messages. We write long prose (50+ words, not rhyming) to fit their card-sending needs.

Take a look at the following examples:

Christmas:

Like a favorite holiday recipe passed down,
the bond we share continues to bring joy.
Little things around us
may change through the years,
but between us,
the main ingredients stay the same--
laughter, love, and thanks for each other.

At the holidays and always,
so grateful for the brother you are,
the memories we've made,
and the lasting connection we share.

Mother’s Day:

Mom, it would be hard
to describe you in just a few words,
because there's so much to who you are.

There's the warm, gentle side of you
that takes care, listens and gives so much love.
Then there's the powerful side of you
that takes charge and makes things happen.
And of course, there's also your humorous side--
the part of you that can find the laughter
in almost any moment.

All those sides of you
have been a blessing and a comfort
at different times through the years.
All of them are beautiful expressions
of the strong, vibrant person you are!

Your turn! Pick 2 of the following occasions, and write 1 card (non-rhyming, at least 50 words each) for each of them:

- Christmas
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Graduation
- Easter

Exercise 5: Favorite Characters

Hallmark makes cards that feature characters and content from TV and movies. Some cards focus on a specific character, like Darth Vader, Snoopy, or Wonder Woman. Others include a whole franchise, like The Avengers, Modern Family, or Harry Potter. Hallmark writers and editors become pop culture experts so we can make products that feel right for fans of every age.

Take a look at the following examples:

Wonder Woman

It must be sweet to be so amazing
in a world of ordinary mortals.

Wishing you the wonderful kind
of birthday you deserve.

Yoda

Great things I see in your future.

Cake, for example.
The happiest of birthdays, I wish you.

Your turn! Pick 1 of your favorite characters, movies, or shows, and write 2 birthday cards that bring it to life. The cards can be straightforward, funny, or somewhere in between.

Exercise 6: Humor!

Humor writers at Hallmark are expected to fail. No joke. Think about it like batting averages in baseball—often it will take 5-10 tries to write a home-run humor card. But the chance to make people laugh in front of card displays across the country makes all the swings-and-misses worth it.

Your turn! In response to the photo below, write at least five different card ideas. These ideas can include word balloons, captions, card-insides, a joke that starts on the cover with the punch line on the inside of the card, or any other approach you can think of. We won't judge you on your less-funny attempts—we just want to see the funniest card you can write, and taking several tries is usually the best way to get there. So take some chances and be funny!



Exercise 7: Sendability

Hallmark writers and editors are tasked with a unique challenge: to create cards that can be sent by millions of people, but still feel perfect and personal to each and every one of them. We find the things that people have in common—emotional and relational needs—and use them to write messages that feel authentic while remaining broadly sendable.

Your turn! Read about the following two card-senders and their relationships with their moms, and write one Mother's Day card that both of them could send. Then, briefly explain your thought process behind why you created message you did and how it relates to the card-senders' relationships.

Card-Sender One:

When she was growing up, Mandy never doubted that her mom loved her, but because of a hectic work schedule, her mom wasn't around as much as Mandy wished she could have been. But now, Mandy is grown up, her mom is retired, and they've formed a deep friendship. Mandy cherishes the relationship they share now, and she knows her mom does, too.

Card-Sender Two:

Brian has years of great memories with his mom. They were close when Brian was growing up, and now that he has kids of his own, Brian has a whole new level of respect for the many things his mom did for him, and a deeper appreciation for the close relationship they still share.

Exercise 8: Rewriting

Writers and editors at Hallmark have a huge database of writing at their disposal to use when making cards. In addition to writing original pieces, we're often asked to reimagine an existing piece in a new way—changing a Birthday card to an Easter card, for example. See below:

Original Birthday Piece:

*Make time to be with people who make you happy.
Slow down to watch something captivating in nature.
Celebrate everyday blessings big and small.
Do what's good for your soul on your birthday.*

Easter Version:

*Springtime reminds us to slow down and watch something beautiful.
Easter reminds us to celebrate blessings both big and small.
Hope this reminds you how warmly you're thought of... now and always.*

Notice how the Easter version uses elements from the original Birthday version *and* adds new elements to create a message appropriate for Easter.

Your turn! Write two versions of the following piece—one version for a friend on their birthday, and a second version for a dad on Father's Day.

*Bigger, Brighter, Merrier...
That's how Christmas is with all of you.
That's why this comes with lots of love for the whole family,
to wish each of you an unforgettable holiday,
filled with the same joy you're always sharing.*

Exercise 9: Additional Writing

In addition to the exercises in your portfolio, **please include a separate file containing 3 to 5 additional writing samples.**

YES to: poems, articles, essays, music reviews, blog and other appropriate social media posts, excerpts from short stories, screenplays, scripts, advertising campaigns, marketing collateral, recent work that you think will show us the full range of your talents. If you have a website with work you would like us to see, please include the url(s).

NO to: Term papers or academic articles