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# *Send Me A Letter!*

## *A Basic Guide to Letter Writing*

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Book Review by Andy Demaret

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**SEND ME A LETTER: A BASIC GUIDE TO LETTER WRITING.** Sol Gonshack and Joanna McKenzie. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982. pp. 245. \$6.95

The title of this text represents its contents well. The book is a guide to help the student of ESL learn to correspond better in a diversity of daily life situations through the medium of the formal written letter.

This book is *not*, however, your everyday Secretarial Science 101 textbook. Nor is this text just a series of cut-out lessons from some other text with an "ESL" title pasted on the front, as is sometimes the case with ESP materials. It is, rather, a fine example of what can be done in a specialized area of ESL.

Each letter form is introduced with a story situation in which essential words and phrases are glossed. Exercises follow that check the students' comprehension and reinforce vocabulary. Some of the exercises are constructed to further define the situation or problem which the students will later have to write about. A sample letter is then introduced within the context of the introductory story line. The final

assignments of each unit ask the students to write a letter from a similar situation outlined in the assignment.

A broad array of different types of letters is covered: complaint, information, goods and services, reservations, jobs and resumes, and finances. Each of these major areas is divided into a handful of different situations or units.

These thirty units are preceded by an introductory chapter on the "anatomy of a letter," which is a useful section for students who, because of their personal or cultural backgrounds, have had no previous exposure to or knowledge of formal letter writing. There is a final unit on writing short notes, but the coverage of this diverse subject is cursory. In this reviewer's opinion, this unit should have been either expanded or left out.

As mentioned in the book's introduction, *Send Me a Letter* is a "functional text" intended primarily to help high-intermediate to advanced ESL students at the high school, college or adult-education level handle some of the many everyday life situations requiring written communication. To this end, it seems this text will be a success.