

**Dear Norman**

**Robert Richard**

Monday, 16th of June

Dear Norman,

Thank you so much for your letter which arrived just before lunch. It came as quite a surprise when you left with all of your possessions this morning. We did not understand why you left through the back door. Now we know that it was because you have gone to live in your tree house in the back garden.

I am sure that your decision to leave our family is a serious one. Therefore I would like to wish you all the best for the exciting new life you are starting on your own. Please do keep in touch from up there.

Love,

Dad

Monday evening

Dear Norman,

You are very sweet to take the time to write. Thank you for explaining our mistakes in such detail. Your father and I will find your advice very useful as your sister grows up.

I hope that life in your tree-house is calming down since you moved in earlier today. I could see from the dining-room window how difficult it was to carry all your things up that long, steep ladder by yourself.

How did you manage to get that big TV set up there? It certainly was clever. Now how will you manage to get electricity for it? I'll bet you have another clever idea!

Did you see those sweet, busy bees swarming around bellow your tree-house's porch this afternoon? I suppose they could have been hornets or wasps building a nest, but they looked to me more like jolly little bumble-bees.

No doubt you took plenty of food with you up into your tree-house. I'm afraid I didn't plan the day as well as you, so I have this extra cheese sandwich and a chocolate bar. I am sending them up your message rope with this letter in hope that you can use them in some way.

If you think of any other mistakes your father and I made, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Meanwhile, lots of love from

Mum

Dear Norman,

Mum and Dad say I can have your room. Ha-Ha.

Beth

Dear Sir/Madam,

The book you recently ordered, *How to negotiate*, has now arrived. We'll hold it for you in our shop for seven days.

Thank you for your order,

The Parkville Book Shop

Dear Norman,

I understand from your parents that I should not expect to see you in school for some time due to changes in your personal life. Please take as much time as you feel you need.

Perhaps school no longer seems important now that you live in a tree-house behind your family's home. That makes sense. Geography. Music. History: which of these lessons you missed this morning would be useful in a tree-house? None, probably.

What you need are different skills – skills useful for life in the wild: how to keep a small, safe fire burning for light and warmth; how to tell good berries, nuts and mushrooms from deadly ones; which animals you will compete with for territory. Unfortunately, we don't study any of these at Parkville School. You will have to do most of learning on your own now, Norman.

If you decide to continue any of your studies with us, please send me a note. I cannot send you all of the fun and friendship from our class here, but I can certainly send you the homework!

All the best wishes from me and from all of your classmates in Room 214.

Mrs Bouquet

Norm,

You don't know me very well but I've seen you around. My message is: go for it! Don't let them push you around! Stay up in that tree-house until you get what you want.

Your fan,

Daniel Barleycorn

Dear Norman,

Thank you for sending me your photograph. You look like a typical American boy. Here is my photograph. Maybe I look like a typical Japanese girl?

I am glad we are pen-pals. Now I can practise my English. Do you want to practise your Japanese? Ha-ha.

I am also glad that writing letters is your favourite hobby. What luck for me!

Your pen-pal,

Mariko

Dear Norman,

I hope you don't mind me putting this message on your rope. I am the guy who has come to fix your family's refrigerator (that's my blue and white van in the drive). Although we have never met, I am writing you this note because I moved into my own tree-house once when I was a teenager. I can't remember the reason.

Anyway, I want you to know that you have my support.

Darryl, Refrigerator Engineer, 38 years old

Hey, Kid

Put yourself together. You are making a fool of yourself. Surrender now. They will take you back. Trust me.

Signed,

Anonymous

Dear Norman,

I hope you are well and not spending too much time worrying about your lonely old grandmother. I'm fine most of the time. I do have bad days when none of my grandchildren have visited or telephoned, but I try to remain cheerful.

Your mother says you have been acting strange lately. Stop it; that's not polite.

Next time you speak to my son (your farther), please tell him from me (his mother) it's high time he wrote a letter to his mother (me).

I'm so glad you liked the sweater I sent for your birthday. I had to spend half the day crossing town to get it, and of course, it was not cheap. Still, it was worth it if you appreciate it so much.

I can't wait to see all of you next weekend. You are what keeps me happy!

Love,

Grandma

Hey Norm,

What's this about your living in your tree-house now? Totally cool! Does this mean you can eat whatever you want? Stop taking showers? Stop brushing your teeth? Are you going to wear the same clothes every day for a year? Just think, you can spend the whole day playing with your computer! You can stay up there for months. You can go on strike! This is cool. I wish I had enough of it.

Alfred.

P.S. Can I have your bike?

*Dear Occupant,*

I am writing to you today with a very special offer. We at Family Publications would like to send you the next 12 months of *Good Boy* magazine for only £4.99. What a deal! That's only 42p for issue!

For only 42p you get *Good Boy* magazine every month. Each issue is packed with ideas to help you become the perfect son and brother: How to help your sister to do the dishes; Cleaning your room before mum asks; Enjoying garden chores.

Plus there are our regular features: "The Polite Crossword", "Thank you letter of the month", and "Table Manners".

Do your entire family a big favour – order today. Don't miss another month's issue of *Good Boy* magazine!

But wait! That's not all! If you order now, we will also send you – absolutely free of charge – the *Good Boy* baseball cap. Wear it and all your friends will know what a Good Boy you are!

Why not by a Good Boy today? Order now!

Yours, sincerely,

The Marketing Department

*Good Boy* magazine

Dear Norman,

Your pest of a sister told me on the bus today that you have moved into your tree-house and aren't coming to school any more. How are we going to sit together in a bus and meet in the corridors if you don't go to school? Daniel Barleycorn wants to go out with me. I said no because I'm going out with you. Now I am not so sure. If you and I can't talk on the bus and meet at lunch, there is nothing left of our friendship. Will you be installing a telephone in your tree? A fax? I doubt it.

I think our relationship has reached a turning point. This is curtains. I am truly sorry...

I will always love you,

Eileen XXX

Dear Norman,

You are invited to a birthday party for Alison Child, the most beautiful girl in our school.

Refreshments & possible kisses.

Saturday, 11 May, 5 p.m. RSVP

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter explaining why you don't want any pocket money this week. It made your mother and me wonder how much we would save if you continue this practice for the remainder of your childhood: 10 years x 52 weeks per year x £2 per week pocket money = £1,040 total savings. (You might want to check our maths).

Isn't it amazing the way it adds up?

Love,

Dad

Dear Norman,

Congratulations!

Your essay, "Peace Now", has won First Prize in the Parkville Gazette's Solving the World's Problem contest! The judges were especially impressed by the section, "Peace Begins in Your Own Back Yard".

As you know, the First Prize in the solving the World's Problems contest is a trip to Washington DC where you will visit the White House and actually discuss your essay with the President of the United States. You will be able to take one of the members of your family with you on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Please ask a parent or guardian to contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements for the trip.

And congratulations once again on your wise essay!

Best wishes,

The editor

The Parkville Gazette

Dear Norman,

Dad says I should write. I miss you. I think you should move back into your house. I don't think you should be on strike against everything any more. It's boring.

I haven't decided yet about letting you have your room back. We can negotiate.

Your sister,

Beth

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter. I understand your feelings. It will be OK just to move back into the house. Don't forget to wipe your feet.

Love,

Mum

**Answer the questions:**

**Part I.**

1. What aim was Norman trying to achieve?
2. What is the main message of the story?
3. How does epistolary genre contribute to deeper understanding of the conflict? What was the conflict? Who was the conflict between?
4. What role do the letters play for developing the plot? Why did the writer tell us about so many different letters from so different people?
5. Do you approve of Norman's parents behaviour? Would the reaction of your parents be the same or different? If you were his parents what would you do in this case?
6. What could Norman's tree-house look like? What was it made of? What was the interior?
7. Who admired Norman most for what he had done?
8. Whose letter do you think was most likely to annoy Norman?
9. Beth's letters show a change in her attitude to Norman. Why do you think her attitude towards Norman changed?
10. How do we know that Norman actually answered the letters he received?
11. Why do we not need to see any of Norman's replies to the letters he received?

**Part II.**

1. Why did Norman's mother flatter her son about "being clever"?
2. What are the relationships between Norman and his sister? Do you think Beth is his younger or elder sister?
3. Why did Norman order a book about negotiating?
4. What is your opinion about Mrs. Bouquet's letter? What kind of teacher is she?
5. Do you think Norman was enthusiastic about Mrs. Bouquet's suggestion of sending him homework?
6. What made Daniel Barleycorn write a letter to Norman?
7. Why can't Daryl remember the reason why he moved to his own tree-house when he was a kid?
8. Who could be the author of the anonymous letter?
9. How close is Norman's grandmother's grandmother with her children and grandchildren?

10. What does Alfred hate most of all about his life at home?
11. Who do you think sent Norman an invitation to Alison Child's birthday party?
12. Why did Norman's father raise the question of his son's pocket money?
13. What did Norman's mother mean by writing "Don't forget to wipe your feet."?
14. What reason or whose letter do you think made Norman in the end change his mind about staying in the tree-house any longer?