

The TRAIN TO IMPOSSIBLE PLACES Adventures

Illustrations © Flavia Sorrentino



by P.G. BELL

WITH USBORNE, THE POSTAL MUSEUM
& THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST



Resource
for KS2
teachers

KIDS OF 2020 LETTER WRITING PROJECT

THE AIM:

Join the **Kids of 2020 Letter Writing Project** with P.G. Bell's *The Train to Impossible Places* adventures.

We think letters are wonderful things and in partnership with The Postal Museum and the National Literacy Trust we would like to invite your class to join our project for children today to write a letter to a child in 2030.

A selection of the letters will be chosen by The Postal Museum to be included in an exhibition, both online and hopefully in real life too!

Completed letters should be sent to publicity@usborne.co.uk or posted to:

Kids of 2020, Publicity Department, Usborne Books, 83–85 Saffron Hill, London, EC1N 8RT

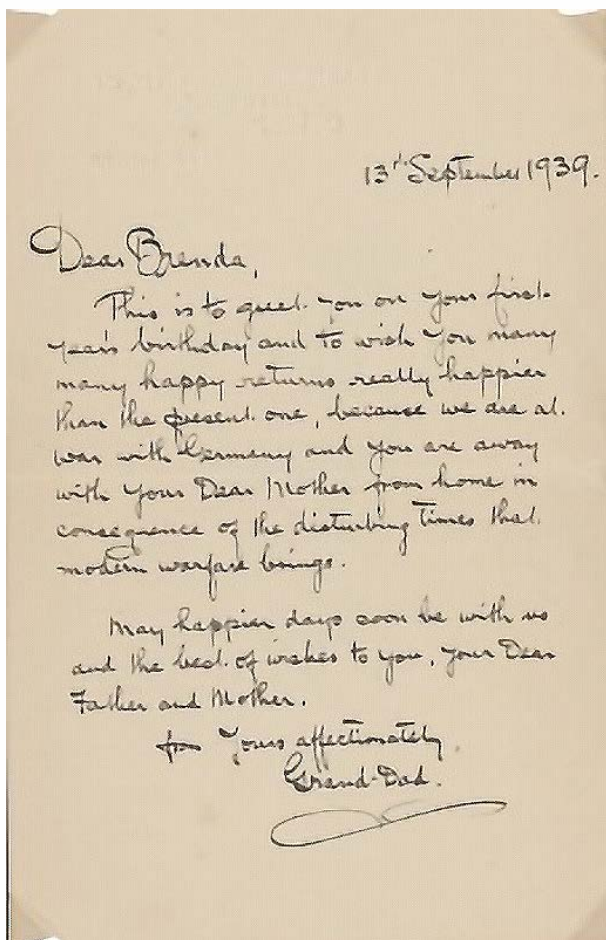
Letters need to be received by **2nd April 2021** to be considered for inclusion in the exhibition at The Postal Museum.

For more information and full T&Cs please visit usborne.com/kidsof2020

ABOUT THE SERIES:

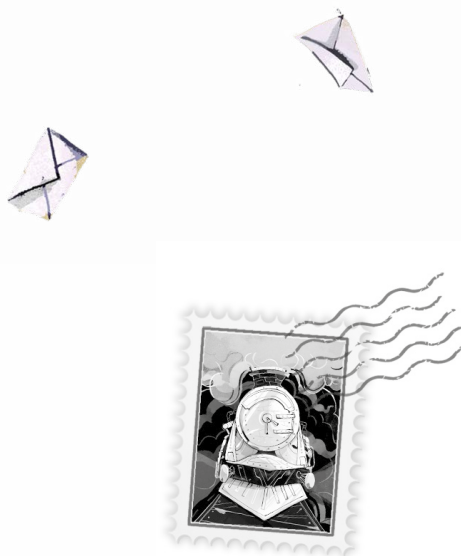
The Train to Impossible Places is a popular children's book series following the adventures of the Impossible Postal Express crew as they deliver packages and undertake perilous journeys around the Impossible Places. Starring Suzy, a physics-loving human girl, Wilmot the troll postmaster, and Ursula, a yellow bear, the *Sunday Times* praised the series as "rollicking entertainment".

LETTERS: IMPORTANT HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS



1. Frederick Tolhurst's letter to his grand-daughter Brenda on her first birthday. Dated 13th September 1939, the letter mentions the recent outbreak of World War Two, which began on 1st September 1939.

Letter dated 13 September 1939 E15611/03
© The Postal Museum & Brenda Fitch



2. Illustrated envelope, dated 26 June 1917.

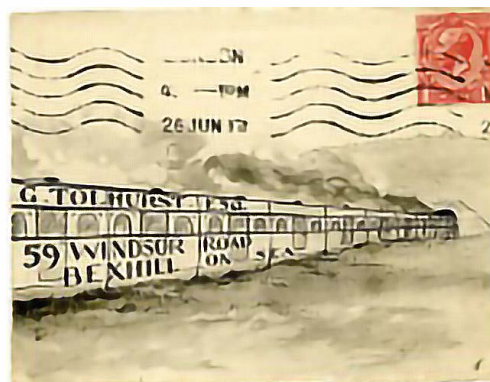
The envelope has been previously cut out and only the front remains. The illustration depicts a steam train entering a tunnel.

Across the train is written the recipient's address:

'G. TOLHURST. ESQ/ 59 WINDSOR ROAD/ BEXHILL ON SEA'

Train envelope 2014-0038/93

© The Postal Museum



3. Illustrated envelope, dated 28 July 1915.

The envelope has been previously cut out and only the front remains.

The illustration is hand drawn and depicts a bird in flight. The recipient's name and address is written on a sign which is carried in the bird's mouth:

'F. Tolhurst. Esq./ "St Lawrence"/ HORNCHURCH./ ESSEX.'

Bird envelope 2014-0038/57

© The Postal Museum



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is happening in the letter dated 1939? What do you know about the year 1939?
- How do you think the little girl's granddad feels in the letter? Why? Can you see any similarities to the year 2020?
- Which is your favourite illustrated envelope? Why? How are these envelopes different to modern envelopes?
- Why do you think these letters are now considered to be important historical documents?

ACTIVITIES: THINKING ABOUT 2020

1. Why is 2020 such a significant year in our history? Think about the **IMPACT** of the events of 2020 by drawing three circles: one for your own experience, one for your family's experience, and one for society as a whole or on a worldwide scale. In each circle, draw or write down words that might summarise the different experiences of the pandemic.

See template on page 4.

2. Create a **COLLAGE** showing all of the things that remind you of the year 2020. Your collage might include drawings, pictures or newspaper clippings of people wearing face-masks, following social distancing rules, using hand sanitiser, walking down empty streets, doing some home learning or general lockdown activities — or perhaps there's something you'd like to include that is more personal to you. Remember, 2020 is not just defined by the pandemic. What else happened to you that you would like to mention or celebrate?

See template on page 5.

3. Once you have created your collage, you might also want to create a **MOODBOARD** or an **EMOTIONS DIARY** — tracking how you felt each month of 2020, from January through to December.

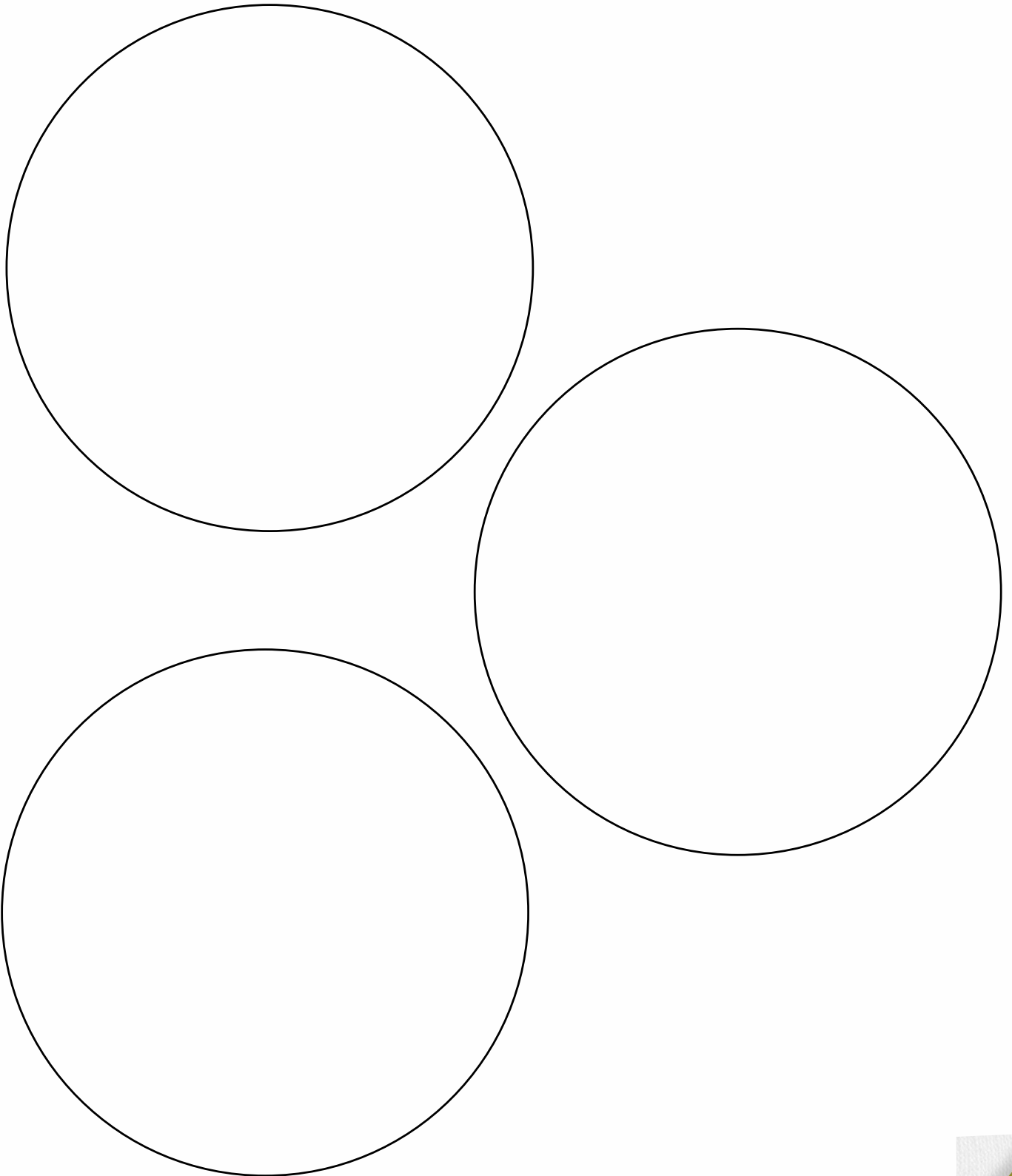
See template on page 6.

4. Consider why the lockdown in 2020 might prompt a return to a more traditional method of communication: writing letters. What is the benefit of writing letters as opposed to communicating on social media or via text? Write a list of the benefits of writing letters. Why do we do it?

See template on page 7.

ACTIVITIES: THINKING ABOUT 2020

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Three large, empty circles are arranged on the page for a drawing or writing activity. One circle is positioned in the upper left, another in the lower left, and the third is on the right side, overlapping the bottom of the other two. The circles are intended for students to draw or write words summarizing their experiences of the pandemic in 2020.

ACTIVITIES: THINKING ABOUT 2020

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2020

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JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER

ACTIVITIES: THINKING ABOUT 2020

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LETTER-WRITING TIME: SEND A LETTER TO A CHILD IN 2030

Use your reflections on the year 2020 to **write a letter to a child in 2030** about your experiences. Since you're writing to a child the same age as you, make sure you write about the sorts of things you like to read about, and make the style fun and engaging.

Before you begin, use an A3 sheet of paper to create a map of everything you would like to say in your letter. Use the headings below to help you start planning:

- Will your letter be formal or informal? Why?
- What language choices will you make? What vocabulary will you use?
- What sort of tone will your letter have?
- How will you open your letter?
- How will you close your letter?
- How many paragraphs will it have?
- What will you say in each paragraph about the year 2020 and how you felt?

When you're ready to start writing, use the template on the next page (based on Wilmot's Top Tips) to write your letter.

THE ENVELOPE: CREATE A UNIQUE DESIGN!

Take a look at the envelope examples from The Postal Museum. How might they inspire you to create your own designs? What can you draw on your envelope that represents the year 2020?

Once you have finished your letter and envelope design, consider how your letter might be considered an important historical document one day, just like the letters that are archived in The Postal Museum!



LETTER WRITING TIME: LETTER TEMPLATE



Recipient's address

[Large yellow rectangular box for recipient's address]

Your address

[Large yellow rectangular box for sender's address]

[Small yellow rectangular box for sender's address]

Date

Greeting

[Small yellow rectangular box for greeting]

Your letter

[Large yellow rectangular box for the main body of the letter]

Closing farewell

[Small yellow rectangular box for closing farewell]

