



Writing in the Style of the Past

STUDENT INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Around the Isle of Wight Steam Railway you'll see that some of the writing styles are old-fashioned, from the past. Words change over time, as they are replaced by other, more common words.

Texts from the past

TASK

- ✓ Have a look at the letter below. It was written in 1871 after a head-on collision near Sandown.
- ✓ Can you notice any unusual vocabulary?
- ✓ Answer the questions on pages 1 and 2, and then have a go at writing your own letter.

15th April 1871:

HEAD-ON ACCIDENT AT SANDOWN:

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My Dear Sir,

I did not report the slight accident we had on Saturday last (which might have been a most serious one) knowing there was no Board before Friday, and having been so fully engaged the last day or two. Our inspector was the first in error: in desiring the Ryde Station Master to telegraph the 12.24 train from Sandown should be sent on to Ryde - no telegram being necessary. In the second place, the Ryde Station Master instead of telegraphing "12.24 train will cross as usual at Sandown, and the special will await the arrival of the up train at Ryde" simply said "Send 12.24 train on to Ryde". Of course, the Sandown Station Master thought there was some detention at Ryde, and sent on the 12.24 train and the two trains met in the cutting close to the station instead of crossing at Sandown. Great credit is due to the enginemmen, and I would recommend that 20/- be given to each of them, and 5/- to each of the two firemen.

Yours faithfully,

J. BOURNE

R. Hicks, Esq.,
Secretary,
Isle of Wight Railway.

The gratuities recommended were paid, and the Board made suitable expressions of gratitude. Several passengers were quite seriously injured in the collision. Col. Yolland made a report to the BOT.

Questions

1. Even though the accident actually caused several serious injuries, why might the writer have described it as a 'slight accident'?

Questions (continued)

2. What reasons are given by the writer of the letter to explain why he did not report the accident straight away?

Writing task

- ▶ Imagine you were a passenger on the train, or a witness to the crash
- ▶ Write your account of the accident

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You can choose to write in one of these forms:

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- ✓ A letter (to a friend)
- ✓ A letter (to the railway company, as a complaint)
- ✓ A statement given to the police
- ✓ An interview given to the local newspaper, the "Isle of Wight County Press"
- ✓ A form of your choice

