

Brotherhood Letter

Writing the letter to your lodge secretary is a chance for you to reflect on some important aspects of the Order of the Arrow. It is intended to help you clearly think about the ideals of the OA, and how you've put them to use in your life – whether you ever realized it before, or not. You should think about the following things and convey them in your letter

- **Explain what you think the Obligation means** – This at first can be an intimidating request, but it's not as hard as you may think. First realize that you're being asked what you 'think', in other words, for your opinion. There is no single correct answer, so you shouldn't worry about being wrong.

What has proven helpful to many Arrowmen in your position is to have the Obligation right in front of them when fulfilling this requirement. Read a few lines at a time, and ponder what exactly it is you've obligated yourself to. Once you've written down your thoughts, you're done with this part of the letter.

- **Describe how you have been fulfilling this Obligation in your troop or team and in your daily life, and how you have used your understanding of the Ordeal to aid in this service** – Now that you know what the Obligation means to you, its time to ask yourself how you've been fulfilling it in your daily interactions with Scouts and non-Scouts alike.

Also, how has the Ordeal experience helped you fulfill the Obligation? Remember that the Ordeal's aim was to teach you the importance of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service. One question you might ask yourself is 'what did the challenges of the Ordeal teach, that has helped me to better serve my unit?'

- **A description of your specific plans for giving service in the lodge program** – When you were inducted into the OA, the only commitment you made was to return in service to your unit. Now that you've chosen to become a Brotherhood member, it is time to make a commitment to the Order of the Arrow. Your plan for service doesn't have to be anything overwhelming, in fact it's not expected to be.

If you don't already know where your help is needed, ask the youth leaders of your lodge or chapter where they could use your help.

Putting it all together

You now know what it is you need to say. The next step is deciding how to say it. When typing or writing out the letter, it might be helpful to address the points as they appear above, or in your OA Handbook. There is no need to go beyond the points that you've been asked to address, and there is no minimum length to your letter. However, a thoughtful letter will likely take up at least half a page.

If you're still not sure what's expected, here is the sample framework of a letter an Arrowman wrote to his lodge secretary on his way to Brotherhood.

[Insert Date]

Dear Lodge Secretary,

In my efforts to become a Brotherhood member in the Order of the Arrow, I'd like to tell you what our Obligation means to me. I believe that [insert what the Obligation means to you].

Since I completed the Ordeal, I have worked to fulfill the Obligation by [insert what you've done to fulfill the Obligation].

I gained an understanding of [insert an ideal that the Ordeal helped you understand better] at the Ordeal that has helped me in my daily life by [insert how it has helped you]. In addition, I have been able to serve my troop by [insert how you have served your unit].

I look forward to sealing my membership in the Order of the Arrow by becoming a Brotherhood member. As a Brotherhood member of [insert lodge name] I plan to serve the OA program by [insert how you plan to serve].

Yours in Brotherhood,

[Insert your name here]