

# Pliny the Younger

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus  
To Accompany Wheelock, Ch. 12

--Born in 61 CE in Comum, Pliny the Younger was raised by his uncle, Pliny the Elder. Pliny the Younger studied rhetoric under Quintilian, and rose up the political ladder, becoming a successful lawyer and in 100 CE, consul.

--Pliny the Younger is known mainly from his letters and inscriptions. Of his letters, ten books remain that deal with the everyday life of a Roman aristocrat and cover such topics as dinner parties, hunting, dealings with slaves, the state of literature in the Empire, and the welfare of his friends.

--In the ancient world, letters were generally written on one of three things: parchment (*membrana*), papyrus (*charta*), or wax-covered folding tablets (*codicilli* or *tabellae*). Papyrus and parchment were rolled up and sealed with either a string or wax.

--To write on parchment or papyrus, a reed pen (*calamus*) and ink (*atramentum*) were used. For a wax-covered tablet, a *stylus* was used.

--In Rome, a government postal service was implemented in the reign of Augustus, but was used for official correspondence only. Private individuals used their own personal slaves (*tabellarii*) or the postal service of tax farmers (*publicanorum tabellari*).



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Wax tablet and stylus

Carrie Matthews, 2007