

Dear boy letter essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

At the surface, the letter Lord Chesterfield writes to his son appears to simply offer his son simple sound advice with the intention to help his son. It seems that he is trying to give his son this advice in a friendly manner as opposed to a father giving his son advice. However, upon closer analysis of what Chesterfield writes, one can see how he is actually subtly reminding his son of his obligations and duties. Using strategies such as understatements, diction, and rhetorical questions, Chesterfield subtly leaves reminders to his son that shows what Chesterfield holds as high values: obedience and reputation.

In the beginning of the first paragraph, it seems that Chesterfield is insulting himself while complimenting his son. In lines five to seven he acknowledges the common belief that parental advice is just simply the “ moroseness, the imperiousness, or the garrulity of old age”. This creates a tone of harmlessness and satire in the paragraph, allowing Chesterfield to use understatements with effect later in the letter. In lines eight to twelve,, he goes on to seemingly compliment his son, writing that despite how young he (he being his son) is, Chesterfield knows his son can recognize good advice from bad advice. In lines twelve to seventeen, using a similar structure to lines eight to twelve, Chesterfield writes that he is flattered “ that your own reason, young as it is, must tell you, that I can have no interest but yours in the advice that I give you; and consequently, you will at least weigh and consider it well”. Using parallel structure here, Chesterfield is really saying that his son should know his father gives the best advice, and that his son better use his advice.

Later in the first paragraph, still using understatement, Chesterfield goes on to indirectly threaten his son to follow his advice – and enhances his threats with the use of diction. In lines twenty-five to thirty,, Chesterfield writes “ I do not, therefore, so much as hint to you, how absolutely dependent you are upon me...” Chesterfield is clearly pointing out his son’s dependence on him, and is threatening to cut him off financially if he does not follow his advice, for his father has no “ womanish weakness” and has no problems doing so. He writes that his son’s “ merit must, and will, be the only measure of my kindness” meaning the more merit his son has, the more generous he will be. He goes on to write that“ for the sake of doing right” his son must be “ noble” and “ generous”. These lines show how Chesterfield values obedience and his choice of words – such as noble and generous – also represent qualities a person with a good reputation has. Chesterfield later on describes what may happen to his son should be disobey, using words such as “ disgrace”, “ ridicule”, “ shame”, and “ regret” – words that describe a person with a bad reputation.

In the second paragraph, Chesterfield finally reveals his true purpose in lines thirty-five to thirty six and he uses rhetorical questions to enhance his reasoning for it. Chesterfield writes that he has “ often recommended to you attention and application to whatever you learn,” meaning he wants his son to try his best in whatever he does. In lines thirty-nine to forty-two Chesterfield writes “ for can there be greater pleasure than to be universally allowed to excel in one’s own age and manner of life?. This rhetorical question serves to make the advice Chesterfield gave to his son to appear to be a necessity to his life. His second rhetorical question serves to point out

how many opportunities his son has been given for success. Chesterfield is basically telling his son that he better not waste the opportunities he has had.

Using a sarcastic understanding tone in the beginning, Chesterfield seems to be trying to offer his son simple advice when in reality he is subtly threatening his son to follow orders. He explains the fate of his son should he disobey and waste the opportunities given to him, thereby also showing the values Chesterfield holds dear to himself. He embellishes his threats with rhetorical questions as if to make the choice to his son more obvious, also showing Chesterfield's morals more clearly. Through his subtle strategies, Chesterfield not only gets his point across to his son in an effective manner but shows what he values.