

Letter Writing
This unit will explore friendly letters
Level-3rd Grade
by Nancy Hussey

Resources:

- Ahead of time invite students to bring to class any letters they have received that they would be willing to share.
- Gather some children's books that involve letter writing
 - The Jolly Postman by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
 - Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James
 - Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin
 - Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary
 - Kids' Letters to President Obama by Bill Adler and Bill Adler, Jr.
- Bring examples of different kinds of letters such as letters from a friend or relative, cards, and postcards. If none are available you can use examples found on the internet.
- Graphic organizer for writing a letter
- Paper
- Envelopes

Standard and Objectives

4030-08 Standard VIII: Writing-Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

4030-0801 Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas

- a. Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing literature and informational text, and reflecting on personal experience.

4030-0802 Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

- a. Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words and sentences (e.g., beginning, middle, end; main idea; details)

4030-0804 Objective 4 Edit written draft for conventions

- a. Edit writing for correct capitalization and punctuation (i.e., capitals in holidays, titles, dates, greetings and closings of letters, personal titles, contractions, abbreviations)
- b. Edit for spelling of grade level-appropriate words
- c. Edit for standard grammar (e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, comparatives, superlatives, pronouns).
- d. Edit for appropriate formatting features (e.g., margins, indentations, titles).

4030-0805 Objective 5: Use fluent and legible handwriting to communicate.

- a. Write using upper-and lower-case cursive letters using proper form, proportions, and spacing.

- b. Develop fluency with cursive handwriting.
 - c. Produce legible documents with cursive handwriting.
- 4030-0805 Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres
- a. Produce personal writing (e.g., journals, friendly notes and letters, personal experiences, stories, literature responses).

Expected outcome: Students will write an original handwritten letter

Day 1- Introduction

Objective: Students will prepare to write by experiencing the genre through published books, letters, thank you notes, cards, and postcards.

Immerse the students in examples of letters by reading aloud from books that feature letters: The Jolly Postman by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James, Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin, Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary, Kids' Letters to President Obama by Bill Adler and Bill Jr Adler

Mini Lesson

- Begin by briefly discussing letters. Ask, “Who has received or sent a letter recently?” “What did the letter look like?” Talk for a minute about the importance of sending and receiving letters.
- Say, “Today we are going to read some books that include letters. As you listen see if you can notice anything that is the same from one letter to the next.”
- After reading, show the students some examples of letters you have received from friends or relatives. Express how much you enjoy receiving mail.

Sharing- Allow students who brought in letters they have received to share them

Accountability/Assessment- Explain that the best way to make sure you receive a letter is to send one. Model who you might choose to write to. Think aloud as you make your list including someone who wrote to you, someone you haven't seen in a long time, or just someone special you want to write to.

Day 2-Prewriting

Objective: Students will learn the parts of a friendly letter and begin planning their letter.

Mini Lesson-

- Review yesterday's discussion of letters. As a group sort some examples of letters. Explain that there are different types of letters (friendly letters, business letters, letters to the editor, etc.). Say, “The type of letter we are going to be writing this time is a friendly letter”.
- Read aloud a few more examples of friendly letters from home or some from one of the

books listed in the previous lesson. Say, “While I read to you notice things that the letters have in common”. Stop reading periodically to discuss the things that they have noticed.

-Distribute some examples of letters and in small groups have the students look for the different parts there are to a friendly letter and what those parts include. After a few minutes have them share what they discovered. Say, “As you have found, letters have different parts. Friendly letters have five parts (Using an overhead point to each part of a letter as you explain). The heading. This includes your address and the date. The salutation, or greeting. This usually begins with the word *Dear* followed by the name of the person you are writing to with a comma after it. The body is where you write your thoughts and ideas. This comes on the second line after the salutation. Each time you change thoughts you should start a new paragraph. The closing is two lines below the body. You capitalize only the first word and it is followed by a comma. Last is the signature that comes just under the closing”.

Shared Writing-

Using an idea from one of the books featuring letters you have read aloud (The Jolly Postman, Dear Mr. Blueberry, Dear Mr. Henshaw, Kids’ Letters to President Obama, etc.) do a quick interactive writing activity being sure to include the five parts. You may want to use this class letter to make a chart labeling the five parts of a letter.

Accountability/Assessment-

Have the students reread their list of people from yesterday they might want to write to. Have them select who they will write a letter to.

*Sharing-*Allow each student to tell who they will be writing to

Day 3-Writing

Objective: Students will begin to write an original friendly letter

Mini Lesson-

Again using sample letters point out the things that are included in a letter. This time emphasize what it was that the person wrote about Say, “Now that you have chosen who to write to you will need to decide what you want to include in your letter. You may want to share a story that happened to you or something that has been on your mind. You may want to tell about something you are going to do. You could tell the person about the latest book you have read or share a favorite poem you think they would like. You might also ask them a few questions they could answer”.

Accountability/Assessment- Have the students brainstorm and make a list of things they may want to include in their letter. As they write their ideas walk around and see what they have written in their list.

Model writing a friendly letter on an overhead thinking aloud as you write

Accountability/Assessment- Have them pick an idea from their list and begin writing. (You may want to print a graphic organizer so that they will format their letter correctly. While they are writing walk around the room and conference with students. Compliment them

on using the correct form for writing a letter (having a heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature).

Sharing- Have a few students share what they have written.

Day 4-Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

Objective: Students will reread their letter and correct their spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Mini Lesson-

Say, “It is important that your letter is easy to read and interesting. Today we are going to read our letters again to make sure the sentences make sense. Also check to see that you started a new paragraph each time you switched to a new idea in your letter.”

Accountability/Assessment- Have the students read their letters over and make some changes to improve their letters. When they are finished have them work with partners and check for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Compliment students on the changes they have made to their letters. Compliment them for correctly spelling the words on the word wall.

Sharing- Have a few students share the changes they made to their letters.

Day 5-Publishing

Objective: The students will use fluent and legible handwriting to make a final copy of their letter and envelope.

Mini Lesson- Say, “It is important that your envelope is addressed correctly so that the letter will be delivered to the person you are sending it to”. Demonstrate addressing an envelope while you say, “Write the full name of the person the letter is being sent to and the complete address in the middle of the envelope. Put your name and return address in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope and the stamp will go in the upper right hand corner”.

Accountability/Assessment- Have the students neatly write a final copy. When they are finished have them address the envelope.

Sharing- Allow anyone who would like to show or read their finished final copy

Evaluation- Use a rubric to score the students letters. There are several online that can be adapted to fit your own class. This is a link to one that I thought would work well

<http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/letterrubric.htm>