

Opinion: Letter Writing

Unit Introduction

NOTE

This unit has been modified to focus on opinion writing. Notice the necessity to complete a persuasive letter. CCSS Standards are listed in Table of Contents after each lesson title as well as on actual lesson pages for new or revised lessons.

Unit Overview:

This unit teaches the structure and conventions of letter writing. It also introduces the concept of opinion writing, so it is imperative that you have students write persuasive letters. The graphic organizer will be utilized again in future units.

With guidance and support from adults, teachers may wish to have students email letters as a publishing option. This meets CCSS W.2.6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Student Goals for this Unit:

1. Students will write a persuasive letter that includes: date, salutation, body, closing and signature.
2. Students will spell most grade level high frequency words correctly.
3. Students will use correct ending punctuation and use commas in greetings and closings of letters.
4. Students will capitalize the first words of each sentence, the pronoun “I,” proper nouns (people’s names, days, months, holidays, product names, and geographical names) and titles (Mr., Mrs. etc.).

Table of Contents

Unit Introduction	LW- 1
Table of Contents	LW- 2
LW1. Building Prior Knowledge	LW- 3
LW2. Stationery Templates	LW- 5
LW3. Model Thank-You Letter	LW- 7
LW4. Letter Format (L.2.2.b)	LW- 9
Letter Pieces (LW4)	LW-11
Parts of a Letter poster.....	LW-13
LW5. Word Bank (L.2.2.e)	LW-15
Letter Writing Word Bank	LW-17
LW6. Capitalization (L.2.2).....	LW-19
Sample Letter (LW6)	LW-21
LW7a. Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer (W.2.1).....	LW-23
Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer Template.....	LW-25
LW7b. Writing a Letter from Your Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer (W.2.1)	LW-27
LW8. Using Strong Supporting Reasons in Persuasive Letters (W.2.1, W.2.5)	LW-29
Letter #1 (LW8).....	LW-31
Letter #2 (LW8).....	LW-33
Letter #3 (LW8).....	LW-35
LW9. Final Project—Day 1 Choosing a Purpose and Audience (W.2.1)	LW-37
LW10. Final Project—Day 2 Editing (W.2.1, W.2.5, L.2.2).....	LW-43
LW11. Final Project—Days 3 and 4 Finishing and Final Support	LW-45
<u>Teacher Resources</u>	
Mentor Texts—Letter Writing	LW-47
Letter Writing Posters	LW-49
Stationery Templates.....	LW-51
End of Unit Checklist.....	LW-53

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW1) Building Prior Knowledge

Minilesson Teaching Point: Elicit and build prior knowledge of letter writing.

Standards(s):

Materials:

- Letter writing mentor text such as Dear Juno by Soyung Pak (SF Unit 3, Week 2), Click Clack Moo by Doreen Cronin, Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James
- Chart paper and pens
-

Connection:

*“Today, writers, we will begin thinking and learning about writing **letters**. **Letters** are one way that people communicate. People communicate through **letters** for different reasons. In letter writing, like other genres, authors use an organizational format to help the reader understand the information.”*

Teach (modeling):

*“To get us thinking about the **purpose** of **letters**, I am going to read the story, Dear Juno by Soyung Pak. Some people write **letters** to thank someone, to share important information, or ask someone for something. As writers, I want you to be thinking about the **purpose** of the **letter** exchange between the main **characters**.”* Read the story.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“Writers, tell yourself why the main **characters** exchanged **letters**. Turn and talk with your neighbor.”*

ELD: *“The main **characters** exchanged **letters** because _____.”*

*“Now, writers, think about a time when you have seen a **letter**, written a **letter** or received a **letter**. Now, tell yourself why the **letter** was written. Was it to thank someone? Was it to share some sad or happy news? Was it to ask for something? ... Writers, turn and talk about the **purpose** of the **letter**.”*

ELD: *“The (my) letter was written in order to _____.”*

*“Writers, let’s make a list about what we already know about the **purpose** of **letter** writing.”*

Teacher records student ideas on the chart pack.

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, today you may choose to write a **letter** to someone. Think about the **purpose** of your **letter**, what you want to tell someone. If you choose to write a **narrative**, a **poem** or about something you know a lot about, make sure you think about the **purpose** of your piece. Who is your **audience** and what do you want them to know?”*

Closure:

Give students an opportunity to share their piece and purpose with a partner or share their topic and purpose in a pop-up share.

ELD: “*I wrote* _____. *My purpose was* _____.”

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW2) Stationery Templates

Minilesson Teaching Point: Introduce **stationery** templates as a letter writing option and/or tool.

Standards(s):

Materials:

- Pieces of **stationery** that include different scaffolded templates (see samples at end of this unit).

Connection:

*“Writers, today we will learn about a special kind of paper used for letter writing called **stationery**. In letter writing, like other genres, authors use different types of paper.”*

Teach (modeling):

In sequence, from most to least supportive, show students different **stationery** options. Point out the similarities and differences for each **stationery** type (template). Tell why authors might make different choices. Give different examples/reasons for various **stationery** choices. For example, *“If I was someone who had never written a letter before I might choose this **stationery**. I write my Grandma letters every Saturday so I might choose this paper.”*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“Writers, stop and think about what **stationery** you would like to try and why you would choose it. Tell your neighbor what stationery you would choose and why. Turn and talk.*

ELD: *“I will choose _____ because _____.”*

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Today, writers, you will make the **stationery** choice that is most comfortable for you. Think about who you will write to and what the purpose will be. Turn and talk.*

ELD: *“I will write a letter to _____ and (invite/thank/tell/ask/share) _____.”*

Before they start writing, ask students (status of the class) to tell you their plan. Who are they going to write to and what will they write about?

Closure: Ask students to think about the **stationery** they used and how it helped them write their letter.

ELD: *“The **stationery** helped me remember _____.”*
*e.g., The **stationery** helped me remember the date, write dear, skip lines, etc.”*

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW3) Model Thank You Letter

Shared Writing Teaching Point: Model a thank you letter with supporting details.

Standards(s):

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Marker
- Optional mentor text: Yours Truly, Goldilocks by Alma Flor Ada (use first letter in the book)

Connection:

*“Today, writers, we will be writing a **thank you letter** together. In the USA, it is customary to write a **thank you letter** to a person who has given you a gift or helped you in a special way. We need to collectively decide on a person to whom we will write our **thank you letter**.”*

Teach (modeling):

*“Writers, now that we have decided who we are going to write a **letter** to, I am going to model, or show you, how to write a **thank you letter**. First, since I want _____ to know what day I am writing this **letter**, I am going to put the date right here. When we write **letters**, the date always goes here.*

*Next, I am going to write the **salutation**. The **salutation**, or greeting, is the way we say hello in a **thank you letter**. Most letters use the word ‘Dear’ and the person’s name for the **salutation**.*

*Now, writers, we are ready to tell the person what we want to say. This is called the **body** of the **letter**. We indent the first line of the body.”*

Continue thinking aloud as you compose the thank you letter with your students. Comment on content, indentations, punctuation and capitalization as appropriate.

*“Now that we have finished writing the **body** of our **thank you letter**, we need to do the **closing**. The **closing** is a way of saying goodbye. The **closing** goes right here. There is always a comma after it. Finally, we need our **signature**, our name, so the person will know who is writing the letter.”*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Tell your partner who you will write a thank you letter to and what you will thank them for.”
Turn and talk.

ELD: *“I will write to _____ and thank them for _____.”*

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, as you plan what you are going to write today, think about your **purpose and audience**, whether you write a **thank you letter**, another type of **letter**, a narrative, a poem or list.”*

Closure:

Give students an opportunity to share what form of writing they chose and who their audience was.

ELD: “*Today I wrote a _____ . My **audience** was _____ .*”

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW4) Letter Format

Minilesson Teaching Point: Identify parts of a letter and place them in correct letter format.

Standards(s):

L.2.2.b. Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.

Materials:

- Copy of letter pieces found on page LW-11 for partners (can cut apart and put in envelopes or give full page and have students cut pieces apart)
- Parts of a Letter poster (may enlarge page LW-13 or use as is for poster)
- Multiple copies of the blank letter template for student use (page LW-14)

Connections:

*“Writers, yesterday we wrote a **thank you letter** together. We learned that letters have special parts with specific names: **date, salutation, body, closing, and signature** and that each part belongs in a particular place on the paper.*

Teach (modeling):

*“Today we will take another look at the main parts of a **letter** and where each part belongs. We will identify and name those parts together. Here is a poster that shows correct letter **format**.”* Teacher points to and identifies main parts of letter on poster. *I’m going to read a letter to you and while I’m reading, I want you to make a picture in your head of where the words should be placed on our blank **template**.”* Teacher reads letter.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“Now, writers, I will give you a **letter** which has been cut up into the main parts for you to put back together and place on top of your own blank **template**. Notice that, in addition to words, you have comma pieces”* (give to partners or small groups).

After students have finished, teacher models correct placement of letter parts on poster-size template.

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, today you will write a **thank you letter** making sure you have included all the different parts of a **letter**. Writers, close your eyes and think about who you are writing to and why you are thanking them.”*

Then, have students turn and talk about who they are writing to and what they are going to thank them for.

ELD: “Today, I am going to write to _____ and thank him/her for _____.”

Before they start writing, teacher takes status of class. *“Writers, if you don’t have an idea, listen to your classmates as they share who they are going to write to.”*

Closure:

Give students an opportunity to read their letter to a partner. Partners can help each other identify the different parts of a letter.

Reflection:**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)**

Letter Pieces for Lesson LW4 Letter Format

What have you been doing since we saw you in August? Are you coming to our house for Thanksgiving? I hope we see each other soon.

Ferdinand

Dear Aunt Joan

Yours truly

November 12 2008

Thank you for the soccer ball you sent for my birthday. It is just what I needed so I can practice my soccer moves in the backyard.

, , , , ,

Parts of a Letter

Date (Month/day,/year)

Salutation (Dear _____),

Body

Closing,

Signature

Blank Letter Template for Lesson LW4

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW5) Word Bank

Minilesson Teaching Point: How to use Letter Writing Word Bank

Standards(s):

L.2.2.e. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.

Materials:

- **Letter Writing Word Bank** poster (copy and enlarge page LW-17 or make your own)

Connection:

*Today, writers, we will look at words and word choices that people use for letter writing. We will add this resource to our **writing workshop** tools.*

Teach (modeling):

Teacher introduces different sections of word bank poster. Teacher defines different sections of poster by term headings: salutations and abbreviations for names, and closing statements.

*“When we write the person’s name in the **salutation**, we sometimes need a title such as ‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.’ These titles are abbreviated, written in a shorter form. Our **Letter Writing Word Bank** poster shows how to write some common **abbreviations** you may need in the **salutation** of your letter.” Show ‘titles and abbreviations’ section on poster and explain each entry in that section. Point out that each starts with a capital letter and each abbreviation is followed by a period.*

*“When we get to the end of our letter, there are different **closings** we can choose. A **closing** is a way to say goodbye. Think about the person you are writing to and choose a **closing** that feels appropriate to you. If you are writing to your grandmother, you may want to use ‘love’ for the **closing**. If you are writing a **thank you letter** after a field trip, you may want to use ‘sincerely’ or ‘yours truly.’ When you write to a friend, the **closing** ‘your friend’ is appropriate.” Show each term on the chart and point out that each starts with a capital letter and has a comma after it when used in the closing.*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Options for turn and talk.

*“Writers, look at the **Letter Writing Word Bank** poster. What are two different ways you could end a letter? How do you spell the abbreviation for Mister? Find two words that you will use when you are writing a letter. Think about how you will use them.”*

ELD: “If I wrote a letter to _____ I would end with _____.”

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, before you start writing today, think about what you are going to write and the different resources you have available to you as a writer. If you are going to write a letter, you could use the **Letter Writing Word Bank** and the **letter template**. If you choose a different kind of writing, think about a resource or tool that could help you.” (Resources/tools may vary according to classrooms.)*

Closure:

“What resource did you use and how did it help you as a writer?”

ELD: “Today I used _____ which helped me _____.”

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Letter Writing Word Bank

Titles and Abbreviations	Closings
Mr.	Sincerely,
Mrs.	Yours truly,
Ms.	Best wishes,
Dr.	Love,
Sir	Your friend,
Miss	
Madam	

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW6) Capitalization

Minilesson Teaching Point: Capitalization

Standards(s):

L.2.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Materials:

- At least one example of letter with lots of capitalization (sample on page LW-21)
- Blank sentence strips and pocket chart (or blank cards and tape)
- Headings on sentence strips (or labeled columns on chart paper): (1) Pronoun “I,” (2) First word of each sentence, (3) Title abbreviations, salutation and closing, (4) Proper nouns (specific names of people, places, months, days)

Connection:

*“Writers we know we start each sentence with a **capital** letter. We also know we **capitalize** the pronoun “I” and people’s names. There are other words that need to be **capitalized**. Today we are going to read a letter together and notice where we see **capitals**.”*

Teach (modeling):

Show the headings in the pocket chart (or the labeled columns on the chart paper). *“The first column reminds us **capitalize** the pronoun I. How many words do you think we will be able to put in this category?”* (Hopefully students will agree there will only be one word for this category.) *“The second column reminds us to **capitalize** the first word of each sentence. The third category is headed ‘Title abbreviations, salutation and closing.’ We talk about these special words and listed many of them on our Letter Writing Word Bank poster. Now let’s look at the fourth column on our chart. The heading is ‘**Proper nouns**.’ When we write the name of person, that word is called a **proper noun**. People’s names are not the only words that are **proper nouns**. The term ‘**proper noun**’ refers to any word that names a specific person, place, or thing. It might be a city or county, a specific park or building such as ‘Oaks Park’ or the ‘Keller Auditorium’ or (insert the name of your school). The names of specific months and days are also capitalized.”* Point out the examples of proper nouns already on display in classroom such as months and days on your calendar, place names on a map, etc.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Read the sample letter from the chart paper or overhead/ELMO. *“As I read this letter to you, put your thumb up each time I read a word that is **capitalized**.”* Teacher underlines words as students raise thumbs.

*“Now let’s make a list of all the words with a **capital**.”* Teacher writes each capitalized word on a card (place them in a pocket chart or have tape ready on back so you can move them around in next step).

*“Let’s put our **capitalized** words into the categories we talked about on our chart and see if all the words fit.”* Take each card and have students tell you what category they go in and move the cards into the pocket chart or onto your chart paper. You may want to have students come up and place the cards.

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, as you go off and write today, please focus on using **capitals** when you write peoples names, title abbreviations, names of places, beginning of sentences, salutations, and the pronoun “I.” You can refer to our categories list.*

Closure:

Have students read their papers to each other and notice the capitals as well as help one another add capitals where missing.

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Sample Letter for Capitalization Lesson (LW6)

September 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Brock,

Thank you for contributing to the Hamilton High fundraiser. Thanks to you, and other generous donors, we were able to fund our band trip to Washington, D.C. We have been able to do some sightseeing between concerts. Our teacher, Ms. Bell, took us to the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial, the Vietnam War Memorial and the Capitol. It feels strange to actually stand at places we have studied about but only seen in pictures before.

Tomorrow we are going to the Arlington Cemetery in Virginia. We are going to see the graves of President Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy and watch the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Hope you are enjoying yourself. Our band is hosting a special breakfast when we return so we can thank our donors again in person and share pictures of our trip. It will be on Tuesday, October 4, 2008. You will receive an invitation soon. Hope you can come.

Sincerely,

Roscoe Seltzman

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW7a) Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Shared Writing Teaching Point: Define and Model Writing a Persuasive Letter

Standards(s):

W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Prior to this lesson, students will need exposure to persuasive text. You may want to read a persuasive mentor text such as I Wanna Iguana by Karen Kaufman Orloff or Dear Mrs. LaRue by Mark Teague or Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin.

Materials:

- Mentor texts and/or letters that demonstrate persuasive text
- Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer from page LW-25 for overhead or ELMO, (or prewrite on chart paper)
- Individual copies of Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer for students

Connection:

*“Writers, we’ve been learning about letter-writing. We have written a thank you letter. Today we are going to write a **persuasive** letter. When you **persuade** someone, you give them specific reasons why they should do what you suggest or why they should agree with your opinion. Remember when we read I Wanna Iguana. (hold up the book) Alex writes to his mother giving her various reasons why she should let him have an iguana. In the end he **persuades** her.”*

Teach (modeling):

*“We are going to use this **Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer** to help us. Let’s begin by **brainstorming** something around our school that we think we could make better. For example.... We will write that here on the graphic organizer.”* Students frequently express strong opinions but in a very generic way. You may need to help students talk through being specific and narrowing the idea. Model filling in the first box of the organizer.

*“Now, let’s think of a person who could help us make that improvement or change. That will be the person that we are writing to so we will put his/her name here in the second box on the organizer. This is the name we will use in the **salutation** of our letter.”* Model filling in the second box on the organizer.

“Next, let’s think of three reasons why we think this should be done. We will list the reasons in the third section.” Students may want to list “It would be fun.” “Because I want to.” etc. This is an excellent time to model supporting opinions with strong reasons. Model filling in the third section of the organizer.

*“Finally, we will **restate our opinion**. This is a chance for us to remind the reader what we want them to do and why we want them to do it.”* Let students make suggestions. You may want to show some samples from a mentor text or a persuasive letter.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“Take a moment to think of something you want to do or have and who you might try to **persuade** to help you. Turn and talk.”*

ELD: *“I want _____. I will try to persuade _____ to help me_____.”*

Share out student ideas.

Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, as you go off to write, you may choose to fill out your own **Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer**. Remember to state your **opinion** clearly, decide who you are trying to **persuade**, include at least three reasons and **restate** your **opinion**.”*

Closure:

Pop-up share. Have students tell what they wanted and one reason they gave to persuade the person.

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Name _____ Date _____

Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Your idea or opinion. (**What** you want to persuade someone to do)

A person who could help you. (**Who** you will persuade)

Three reasons why this is important. (**Why** the person help you)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Restate your opinion. (A final **summary** of what you want done)

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW7b) Writing a Letter from Your Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Minilesson Teaching Point: Model writing a persuasive letter based on the information you recorded yesterday on the Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Standards(s):

W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Materials:

- Shared Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer completed in Lesson LW7a
- Chart paper and markers (or paper and pen to use on ELMO or overhead)
- Individual copies of Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer for students

Connection:

*“Yesterday we decided it is a good idea to persuade _____ (name of person) to help us _____ . Then we filled in a Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer. Today we are going to use the information on our organizer to actually write a **persuasive letter**. ”*

Teach (modeling):

“I know letters need a date so I will start by putting the date here.” Indicate the correct location on the paper and write the date. *“The name of the month always starts with a capital letter and I know I need a comma after the day.”*

*“Next, I am going to write the **salutation**. I can see on our organizer that we are writing this letter to _____. For the **salutation**, I’ll write ‘Dear’ on this line and use a capital letter for ‘Dear.’”* Talk out whether or not you are using an abbreviated title and how to capitalize and punctuate the rest of the **salutation**.

*“Now, writers, it is time to tell the person our idea and supporting reasons. This is the beginning of the **body** of the **letter**. We **indent** the first line of the **body**.”*

Continue thinking aloud as you compose the persuasive letter with your students. Show stating the idea and the supporting reasons. Comment on content, indentations, punctuation and capitalization as appropriate.

“I’ll read back over the letter now to help me restate my opinion.” Model rereading the letter and also looking back at the organizer and then deciding how to phrase the final sentence.

*“Now that we have finished writing the **body** of our **persuasive letter**, we need to choose the **closing**. I’ll look at the **Letter Writing Word Bank** and decide which **closing** is appropriate for our **persuasive letter**.”* Talk through choosing an appropriate closing, placing it in the correct location, and adding the comma.

*Finally, we are ready for our **signature** so the person will know who is writing the letter. Sometimes the **signature** is not just one person’s name. In this case, let’s sign it ‘The Second Grade Class at (insert name of school).’”*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Yesterday we thought about who we might persuade to help us. Take a moment now to remember who you planned to persuade and what you wanted that person to do. Now think of three reasons that person should do what you ask.. Tell your partner what you want the person to do and why. Turn and talk.”

ELD: “I want _____ to _____ because _____, _____, _____.”

Share out student ideas.

Bridge to Independent Practice:

“Writers, today you may want to use a persuasive letter graphic organizer to plan your own persuasive letter. Remember to use strong supporting reasons or you may be ready to write a letter.”

Closure:

Share strong examples of completed organizers and/or letters.

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW8)

Using Strong Supporting Reasons in Persuasive Letters

Minilesson Teaching Point: Identify and use strong supporting reasons

Standards(s):

W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

Materials:

- Chart paper and markers (or paper and pen to use on ELMO or overhead)
- Sample persuasive letter with weak reasons and a one with stronger reasons (write your own or choose from three samples following this lesson)
- Individual copies of Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer for students

Connection:

“Yesterday we wrote a persuasive letter to persuade _____ (name of person) to help us _____. We made sure we included three strong reasons why _____ (name of person) should help us.”

Teach (modeling):

“Today we are going to spend some time looking at the importance of strong supporting reasons. When you try to persuade someone, you are more likely to be successful if you give specific, detailed reasons. For example if you want to persuade me to take you outside and the reason you offer is ‘because it would be fun.’ I wouldn’t necessarily be convinced. If you said, ‘we’ve been sitting at our desks and working hard for over an hour and we need to stretch and get some fresh air,’ I would be much more likely to agree.

I am going to read a letter to you. Pretend you are the principal and think about whether you would be convinced to help.” (Read first letter.) “What does this second grade class want? What reasons are given?” (Underline or highlight key words in the reasons, or have a student come up and highlight the words.) “Thumbs up if you would grant this request based on these reasons.”

Now I am going to read a second letter that makes the same request. Listen closely to the supporting reasons.” (Read second letter.) “What reasons to have a school garden do you find in this letter?” (Underline or highlight key words in the reasons, or have a student come up and highlight the words.) “Thinking about these two letters, which one would be more likely to persuade you? Thumbs up for the first letter we read. Thumbs up for the second letter we read.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Writers, I’m going to give some reasons that students should all wear blue shirts tomorrow. Think about the reason I give and stand up if it’s a strong reason. Sit down if it seems like a weak reason to you. Remember, we are thinking about reasons we should all wear blue shirts tomorrow.

We should all wear blue shirts tomorrow because . . .

- *it would be fun.*
- *it's spirit week at our school and tomorrow is blue shirt day.*
- *blue is my favorite color.*
- *I just got an awesome, new blue shirt.*
- *the teacher said we are supposed to wear a blue shirt.*
- *my blue shirt is the only clean one left.*
- *it would be cool.*
- *we wear blue shirts on field trips and tomorrow we are going on a field trip.*
- *we are going to be using blue paint.*

Bridge to Independent Practice:

“Writers, whenever you try to persuade someone, remember to use strong supporting reasons.”

Closure:

Have a few students who wrote a letter volunteer to share a strong reason they used to support their request.

Reflection:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Letter #1

October 13, 2008

Dear Principal,

We would like to start a garden at our school. It would be fun to dig. We could watch things grow. Being outside is cool.

It would be awesome if you let us have a garden. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Second Grade Class

Letter #2

October 13, 2008

Dear Principal,

We would like to start a garden at our school. We could learn to garden and watch things grow. Digging in the dirt is good exercise. We could get outside more often and you know fresh air and sunshine are healthy.

Please consider letting us have a garden so we can dig and be outside. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Second Grade Class

Letter #3

October 13, 2008

Dear Principal,

Research shows that children who grow their own vegetables are much more likely to eat vegetables. In order to test this theory, we need a school garden. We believe that growing our own vegetables would be beneficial for several reasons.

First, to grow our own vegetables, we will need to learn about gardening. This would be a skill that could benefit us for the rest of our lives. Gardening gives us a chance to be outside more and get exercise, fresh air and sunshine. It teaches us responsibility because we will have to work hard to learn about gardening and to create and maintain the garden. We will experience a wider variety of vegetables than most of us get at home so we might start eating more vegetables. When we went on a trip to Zenger Farms, we tasted all sorts of salad ingredients like green peppers and brussel sprouts and arugala. Most of us were amazed to discover we liked them all! Some of our parents were shocked when we went home and asked for salad.

Thank you for reading our letter and considering our proposal. We hope you will agree that a school garden is a good idea and help us establish it.

Sincerely,

Second Grade Class

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW9)

FINAL PROJECT—Day 1 Choosing a Purpose and Audience

Student Goals:

1. Students will write a friendly letter that includes: date, salutation, body, closing and signature.
2. Students will spell most grade level high frequency words correctly.
3. Students will use correct ending punctuation.
4. Students will capitalize the first words of each sentence, the pronoun “I,” proper nouns (people’s names, days, months) and titles (Mr., Mrs. etc.).

Standards(s):

W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Description of Project:

Students will write a persuasive letter.

Day 1 Materials:

- Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer from Lesson LW7a
- Chart paper and markers

Day 1 Connection: “*Now that we know about **letter writing**, we are all going to write our own **persuasive letter**.*”

Day 1 Teach (modeling):

“*Writers, let’s review what we need to include in a **persuasive letter**. You know you need to state your **opinion** and give at least three reasons. You also know the importance of including details to make your letters interesting. Our graphic organizer can help us plan a persuasive letter.*”

Review the graphic organizer.

Day 1 Active Engagement (guided practice):

“*First, writers, stop and think about what you want to persuade someone to do and three reasons why he or she should do it. Turn and talk about what you are going to persuade someone to do.*”

ELD: “*I am going to persuade them to _____ because _____.*”

“*Now, stop and think about who you are going to write a letter to. Turn and talk.*”

ELD: “*I will write to _____ because I want to persuade them to _____.*”

Day 1 Bridge to Independent Practice:

*“Now begin with your **graphic organizer** to plan your **letter**. As you begin your draft, you may want to refer to the Letter Writing Word Bank or the Parts of a Letter chart. At the end of our writing time today, I will collect the **draft** so I can see how you are doing.”*

Day 1 Closure:

“Read your draft to a partner to make sure your message is clear and you have all five parts. Listeners, restate the message you heard and ask for clarification as needed.”

ELD: “Your letter tried to persuade the reader to _____.”

“I didn’t understand (what/why) _____.”

Collect the drafts to analyze and help inform your instruction and possible groupings for tomorrow. (One possible group is those who don’t have all five parts.)

Day 1 Reflection:

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW10)

FINAL PROJECT—Day 2 Editing

Standards(s):

- W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
- L.2.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Day 2 Materials:

- Drafts from yesterday
- Persuasive letter written together earlier
- Class set of highlighters

Day 2 Connection:

*“Now that we have **drafted** our letters, it’s time to **edit**—check our spelling and our **capitals** and **periods**. Today we are going to use our **highlighters** to help us check our **capitals** and **periods**. You may use the **word wall** and our letter writing **word bank** to check your spelling.”*

Day 2 Teach (modeling):

*“Let’s remind ourselves how we can use **highlighters** as a tool to check carefully. We are going to practice together with the **persuasive letter** we wrote earlier. We start at the top and drag our finger along each line just like when we read. When we write the date, what word should be capitalized? Turn and Talk. Let’s make sure we see a capital letter at the beginning of the name of the month. If the capital letter is there, we’ll highlight it to show us we found it. If not, we’ll fix it and then highlight it. We know there should be a **comma** in the date. Turn and tell your neighbor where the **comma** should be. Show me if it’s in the correct place with a thumbs up or thumbs down.”*

Day 2 Active Engagement (guided practice):

Continue guiding the class through what we expect, checking to see if it’s there and fixing if needed before highlighting.

Day 2 Bridge to Independent Practice: *“Tell yourself what you are working on. If your **message** was not clear, you need to **revise** your words. If your **message** was clear, you are ready to get a **highlighter** and **edit** your work. I will be collecting your **revised** and **edited drafts** at the end of writing today.”*

Day 2 Closure: Students check to see if partner agrees with the highlighting.

Collect the drafts to analyze and help inform your instruction and possible groupings for tomorrow. Look for students who highlighted incorrect things.

Reflection:

Informational Writing: Letter Writing (LW11)

FINAL PROJECT—Days 3 Day 4 Finishing and Final Support

Day 3 Materials:

- Revised and edited drafts
- Letter writing resource posters such as Word Bank, Letter Format, etc.
- Optional: sample of an addressed envelope
- Highlighters
- Stationery
- Envelopes

Day 3 Connection:

*“After writing our first **drafts** and **revising** and **editing**, it is time to make our **letters** ready to send.”*

Day 3 Teach (modeling):

*“We want to choose **stationery** and use our best handwriting so our **letters** are easy to read.”*

Introduce stationery choices. Model choosing stationery and thinking carefully about where each part your letter will go. Review leaving margins, indenting, commas, etc.

“When we finish writing our letter, we need to address an envelope so we can send our letter.”

Show the envelope or envelope choices. Model addressing an envelope using a return address in the upper lefthand corner and the address of the recipient in the center. It is not our intent to get into a detailed discussion of postal abbreviations and so on at this time. Simply model name on first line, street address on second line and city, state, zip on third line.

Day 3 Active Engagement (guided practice):

Return drafts to students. *“Check yourself and see where you are in the writing process. Am I still writing and revising? Am I ready to edit? Am I ready to choose stationery? Let’s take our time and make sure we do our best work.”*

Day 3 Bridge to Independent Practice:

Take a quick status of the class. *“When you know where you are in the writing process, signal me with your hand. Who is still writing and revising? Who is ready to edit? Who is ready to choose stationery?”*

Day 3 Closure:

Collect the drafts and final letters for review. When ready, help students deliver letters appropriately.

Reflection:

Day 4: Students continue with the process until finished. Support individually and in small groups as needed. When finished, students return to independent writing workshop projects.

Reflection on this Unit:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Mentor Texts

Letter Writing

- Ada, Alma Flor. Dear Peter Rabbit.
- Ada, Alma Flor. With Love, Little Red Hen.
- Ada, Alma Flor. Yours Truly, Goldilocks.
- Ayres, Katherine. A Long Way.
- Bourgeois, Paulette. Postal Workers.
- Bradby, Maire. The Longest Wait.
- Brill, Marlene Targ. Bronco Charlie and the Pony Express.
- Carter, Don. Send It!
- Caseley, Judith. Dear Annie.
- Cassels, Jean. Br'er Rabbit Captured.
- Colbert, Jan and Harms, Ann McMillan, editors. Dear Dr. King Letters from Today's Children to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Cronin, Doreen. Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type.
- Cronin, Doreen. Giggle, Giggle, Quack.
- Cuneo, Mary Louise. Mail for Husher Town.
- Danneberg, Julie. First Year Letters.
- Day, Alexander. Special Deliveries.
- Dragisic, Patricia. How to Write a Letter.
- Dunbar, Joyce. The Secret Friend.
- Edwards, Pamela Duncan. Dear Tooth Fairy.
- Flanagan, Alice. Here Comes Mr. Eventoff with the Mail!
- Fleming, Candace. Boxes for Katje.
- George, Jean Craighead. Dear Rebecca, Winter Is Here.
- Gravett, Emily. Meerkat Mail.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Canada.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from China.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Grand Canyon.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Italy.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Mexico.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Peru.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Scotland.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Turkey.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Yellowstone.
- Halvorsen, Lisa. Letters Home from Zimbabwe.

Harrison, Joanna. Dear Bear.

James, Simon. Dear Mr. Blueberry.

Johnson, Jane. My Dear Noel: The Story of a Letter from Beatrix Potter.

Keats, Ezra Jack. A Letter to Amy.

Kelly, Irene. A Small Dog's Big Life: Around the World with Owney.

Klingel, Cynthia. Postal Workers.

Landstrom, Lena & Olaf. Will Goes to the Post Office.

Leedy, Loreen. Messages in the Mailbox.

Levinson, Nancy S. Snowshoe Thompson.

McDonald, Joyce. Mail-Order Kid.

Moss, Marisa. Luv, Amelia, Luv, Nadia.

Nolen, Jerdine. Plantzilla.

Owen, Ann. Delivering Your Mail: A Book About Mail Carriers.

Orloff, Karen Kaufman. I Wanna Iguana.

Pak, Soyung. Dear Juno.

Papademetriou, Lisa. My Pen Pal, Pat.

Pattison, Darcy. The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman.

Pattison, Darcy. Searching for Oliver K. Woodman.

Poydar, Nancy. Mailbox Magic.

Ross, Lillian Hammer. Buba Leah and Her Paper Children.

Ross, Tony. Little Wolf's Diary of Daring Deeds.

Rylant, Cynthia. Mr. Griggs' Work.

Schimmel, Schim. Dear Children of the Earth.

Shea, Kitty. Out and About at the Post Office.

Steffensmeier, Alexander. Millie Waits for the Mail.

Stevens, Janet and Susan Stevens Crummel. Help Me, Mr. Mutt! Expert Answers for Dogs with People Problems.

Stewart, Sarah. The Gardener.

Teague, Mark. Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School.

Teague, Mark. Detective LaRue: Letters from the Investigation.

Trumbauer, Lisa. What Does a Mail Carrier Do?

Tunnell, Michael O. Mailing May.

Van Der Linde, Laurel. The Pony Express.

Williams, Vera B. Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea.

Letter Writing

- Can invite, thank, share information or persuade
- Is made public when you send it
- Includes a date, salutation, body, closing and signature

When I revise my letter,
I want to make sure . . .

- I have included a date, salutation, body, closing and signature.
- my message is clear.

When I revise my letter,
I need to check . . .

- my spelling,
- my letter formation,
- my capitals,
- my punctuation

so the person can read it!

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End of Unit Checklist: Letter Writing

Marking Key: X = Independently / = With Support — = Not Yet Demonstrating STUDENTS		Writes a persuasive letter including all 5 parts of a letter	Clearly states opinion	Supports opinions with several details	Uses comma in greetings and closing	Spells most high frequency words	Uses correct ending punctuation	Uses correct capitalization	
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