

Australia Post – Personal Letter Writing (Foundation – Year Two)

Lesson overview	
<p>Writing a personal letter is a fun and engaging way to develop students' writing skills. When students are presented the opportunity to write about their interests and communicate with their friends, family and people who are familiar to them, the learning becomes meaningful and relevant to real life. Everyone loves receiving a personal letter in the mail! This lesson has been created to introduce letter writing to students and focuses on teaching the correct structure of a letter. Further letter writing activity ideas have been included so that teachers can integrate them into their literacy groups or the unit of work they are currently teaching. The lesson is supported by reference to the book 'The Postman's Dog' by Lisa Shanahan, however it can be easily adjusted to reference other books around the theme of letter writing or posting as the lesson inspiration.</p>	
Learning intention	
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and understand the importance of postal workers in the community. • Understand the structure of a letter including name and address, date, greeting, body, farewell, signature and postscript. • Participate in a joint construction of a personal letter. • Compose a personal letter to a member of their class independently or with assistance. 	
Resources – Main Lesson	Resources – Suggested Activity Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A copy of 'The Postman's Dog' by Lisa Shanahan or another story about letters. - Interactive whiteboard - Letter writing templates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australia Post logo - High-visibility vest - Australia Post Red Post Box - Recycled paper for making envelopes
Assessment	Differentiation
<p>Formative (Assessment for Learning):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring understanding throughout class discussion and questioning. - Collecting letters as work samples. - Student self-assessment - Peer Assessment - Teacher feedback 	<p>Structured: Use small group instruction to help support students while composing their letter.</p> <p>Core: Letter writing activities are adjusted to suit different levels in literacy groups.</p> <p>Extension: Students complete suggested activities in their literacy groups.</p>
Australian Curriculum Links	
<p>Foundation - English <i>Language:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes (ACELA1429) - Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences (ACELA1432) - Recognise that sentences are key units for expressing ideas (ACELA1435) - Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words (ACELA1817) 	

Literacy:

- Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar word and beginning writing knowledge **(ACELY1651)**
- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations **(ACELY1646)**
- Participate in shared editing of students’ own texts for meaning, spelling, capital letters and full stops **(ACELY1652)**
- Produce some lower case and upper-case letters using learned letter formations **(ACELY1653)**
- Construct texts using software including word processing programs **(ACELY1654)**

Year One - English

Language:

- Understand that the purposes texts serve shape their structure in predictable ways **(ACELA1447)**

Literacy:

- Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams **(ACELY1661)**
- Re-read student’s own texts and discuss possible changes to improve meaning, spelling and punctuation **(ACELY1662)**
- Write using unjoined lower case and upper-case letters **(ACELY1663)**
- Construct texts that incorporate supporting images using software including word processing programs **(ACELY1664)**

Year Two - English

Language:

- Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structures and language features that help the text serve its purpose **(ACELA1463)**

Literacy:

- Create short imaginative, informative and persuasive texts using growing knowledge of text structures and language features for familiar and some less familiar audiences, selecting print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose **(ACELY1671)**
- Listen for specific purposes and information, including instructions, and extend students’ own and others’ ideas in discussions **(ACELY1666)**
- Re-read and edit text for spelling, sentence-boundary punctuation and text structure **(ACELY1672)**
- Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower-case letters **(ACELY1673)**

General Capabilities

Literacy	Personal and Social Capability
Critical and Creative Thinking	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability
Intercultural Understanding	

Lesson introduction

15 mins

1. Begin the lesson by explaining to students what they are going to be learning about (see lesson intentions). Introduce the book ‘The Postman’s Dog’ by Lisa Shanahan. Discuss with students what they think the book might be about. Encourage discussion on what Posties do and why they are so important in our community.

2. Read the story to the students, stopping throughout to discuss key themes and confirm comprehension of what is happening.
3. After the story, discuss how Charlie the postman played an important role in the community and how he was so well-liked because of the kindness he showed to everyone. Discuss how all the members of the community wanted to help cheer him up when he was sad. Ask students to suggest things that they like to do to help when others are sad. Write these on the board to model sounding out of words and sentence structure. If the suggestion hasn't already been made, pose the question 'Do you think writing a letter to Charlie would also be a nice thing to do?'
4. Tell the students that they are going to help you write a letter to Charlie and at the same time, learn about how to write a letter correctly.

Main body of teaching**25 mins**

5. As a class brainstorm some ideas around what they are going to include in the letter. Explain to the students that the letter will be a personal letter to Charlie.
6. Refer to '[Writing a Personal Letter](#)' on our website to talk students through the structure of a personal letter.
7. Model writing parts of the letter and choose students to come out to the board to contribute to writing sentences or words, depending on the student's ability.
8. Once you have written, reviewed and edited the letter as a class, direct the students to write their own personal letter. They might like to choose someone in their class, a family member or a teacher in the school to write a letter to. Discuss what they might want to include in their letter, they could even write to someone about the story they just read.
9. Provide students with a [letter writing template](#).
Allow students time to brainstorm ideas and then write their own letter. Students will need different levels of support depending on their age and ability. You might support them in the letter writing process in the following ways:
 - Small group or individual support
 - Peer editing and/or feedback
 - Students type their letter

Plenary**10 mins**

10. Once students have finished their letters offer the opportunity for students to read their letter out loud to the class. Students may or may not choose to share.
11. Review with the students what they have learnt in the lesson and give them the opportunity to evaluate and give feedback on the lesson. You might ask students to self-evaluate using a rating scale on the following statements:
 - I understand how to write a personal letter
 - I enjoyed writing a personal letter
 - I would like more help when writing a personal letter
 - I will write more personal letters to my friends and family
 - Posties play an important role in our community

Further Activity Ideas

The following activity ideas have been developed to follow on from this lesson on writing a personal letter:

- Include letter writing as a literacy group activity and encourage students to [write letters](#) to other students, teachers, family members, the Principal and other staff in the school.
- Organise with a colleague to start a pen pal program between classes.
- Have a jar or a box in the classroom where students can put a piece of paper with his/her name on it in if they would like to receive a letter. Students can pull a name out and write a letter to the person as a literacy group activity.
- Students make envelopes to put their letters in. They learn to [correctly address the envelope](#).
- Students make a post box for the classroom.
- Students can post letters in the classroom post box.
- Make a postie uniform by pinning the [Australia Post logo](#) to a high visibility vest. Choose 1 or 2 students to be 'posties' for the week, to wear the vest and deliver the mail from the classroom post box to students and teachers in the school.

References

Shanahan, L. (2005). *The Postman's Dog*. Australia, Allen & Unwin.