

Writing sentences

Foundation



Lesson overview

This lesson consists of three activities exploring letter writing conventions and culminating in students writing a letter to their own pen pal. Schools may wish to set up a pen pal system with students at another school in Australia or encourage the students to choose their own pen pal. Register for **The Pen Pal Club** at auspost.com.au/penpalclub to assist you in arranging pen pals for your students.

The activities throughout this lesson will use the book *The Pen Pal Club* by Sally Morgan as a stimulus for writing letters to pen pals and exploring features of writing, from the very basic to the more complex. This lesson will primarily focus on the Literacy strand of the English curriculum however students will also explore aspects of the Language and Literature strands. Foundation students will explore how sentences are constructed and the basic grammar features needed to write them. Students will improve sentences by changing the grammar and then generate their own sentences with correct placement of capital letters and full stops. Students will then write a letter to their chosen pen pal including the features they have explored throughout the session as evidence of their learning.

Teachers may choose to organise an excursion to the local Post Office for students to post their letters at the end of these activities. This is a great opportunity for students to ask questions and expand their knowledge about the Australian postal system. Email penpalclub@auspost.com.au to arrange a tour of your local Post Office.

Learning intentions

Students will understand:

- What a pen pal is
- What a letter looks like
- What an address is for
- Sentences need capital letters at the beginning
- Sentences need a full stop at the end

Resources

- *The Pen Pal Club* by Sally Morgan
- Envelopes
- Stamps
- Supplementary interactive whiteboard (IWB) resources
- Capital Letters Display resource attached to this lesson plan

For schools that do not have access to an IWB, please be aware that the resources can be downloaded or accessed on personal devices, or used as a reference if teachers choose to provide their own resources.

Assessment

- Group discussions
- Group work (supervised)
- Self assessment activities
- Peer assessment activities
- Summative tasks (addressed envelope and letter)

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation – English Outcomes

- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations (**ACELY1646**).
- Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge (**ACELY1651**).
- 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**).

Differentiation

As with all our lessons teachers are encouraged to change or update the activities in order to cater to diverse student needs.

The activities in this unit have been differentiated for three ability levels (support, core and extension) with differing levels of support.

General capabilities

-  Literacy
-  Critical and Creative Thinking
-  Personal and Social Capability
-  Intercultural Understanding

Cross curriculum priorities

-  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (depending on school context)

Introduction

1. Gather the class as a group and read the book *The Pen Pal Club* by Sally Morgan.
2. Discuss the characters involved in the story and relate to the students' own experiences, i.e. where they live, what the weather is like, the kinds of animals they see in their local environments / backyards, etc.
3. Ask the students, 'what is a pen pal?' and, 'who can be a pen pal?' Collect student responses for assessment and to revisit throughout the lesson.

Activity 1

Introduction

1. Explain to the class that you will be learning (or recapping) how to write a complete sentence today.
2. Ask the students, 'What do sentences need?' Collect their ideas on the board.
3. Draw students' attention to the use of capital letters and full stops and explain that these are the features they will be exploring in this lesson.



Main body

1. Write the following sentence on the board: my cup is full.
2. Explain to the students that you need to fix this sentence by making sure it has a capital letter at the start and a full stop at the end.
3. Read the sentence together and check for understanding with the question, 'what would you most like your cup to be full of?'
4. Explain that sentences must have a capital letter at the beginning and a capital letter at the end to signal the reader when to stop.
5. Ask for a volunteer to add the full stop to the end of the sentence.
6. Look at the letter at the beginning of the sentence; how do we make this a capital letter? Show the class the difference between a lower case m and a capital M.
7. Hand out the *Capital Letters display sheet* to each table group and encourage students to use this to help them throughout the lesson.
8. Select a student to demonstrate how to change the first letter to a capital.
9. If needed, repeat the exercise with other sentences for the students to fix together. You may use your own or use the following;
 - the pen is black
 - our postie is tall
 - george loves to play soccer
10. Explain that the students will now complete this activity independently at their tables. Three differentiated activities have been provided below. Teachers are encouraged to select the most appropriate activity according to student ability, or provide another, more appropriate activity.
 - **Support** - Students work with an adult to update another sentence with a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. Students then construct a sentence together and ensure it has a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end.
 - **Core** - Students work independently to write a single sentence about their weekend with a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end.

- **Extension** - Students work independently to write 2 or more sentences about their weekend or what they like to do at school, ensuring they have correct placement of capital letters and full stops.

11. When students have completed this activity they will need to assess their work. Working with a partner, students should use the *Assess My Writing* activity sheet to check that their partner has included a full stop at the end of their sentence and a capital letter at the beginning. Level 1 students can complete this activity in their group.
12. Students could rewrite their sentences with correct punctuation if necessary.

Plenary

1. Bring the class back together on the carpet and ask students what they have learnt about sentences today. Review student ideas collected at the start of the lesson and ask students; Did we know that sentences need capital letters and full stops before? Do we know that now? Ask if anyone feels they need more practice at this. Provide opportunities for practice as appropriate.

Activity 2 Introduction

1. Revisit *The Pen Pal Club* by Sally Morgan. Ask the class, 'who received letters in the story?' and discuss what the letters were about.
2. Ask students who they are planning to send their letters to. Collect their ideas on the board.
3. Brainstorm what students will need to send a letter and collect their ideas. If not identified, point out the need for an envelope, an address and a stamp.
4. Show the students an envelope on which you have written the school's address. Ask students, 'why do we need an address?' Point out where the capital letters and full stops are in the address.
5. Using Google Earth or Maps, zoom in on your school and explain the different sections of an address as you zoom out. If students know their own addresses teachers may choose to repeat this activity with them!

Main body

1. Explain that students will be making up addresses for some of their favourite movie or book characters today.
2. Display a picture of a familiar movie character on the board.
3. Discuss with the students where the character might live.
4. As a class, fill in the address template for the character on the IWB 'Where do I live?' slide.
5. Explain that the students will now complete this activity independently at their tables. Three differentiated activities have been provided below. Teachers are encouraged to select the most appropriate activity according to student ability, or provide another, more appropriate activity.
 - **Support** - Students work with an adult to create an address for one of their favourite movie characters on the *Character Address* template. Adults involved should encourage students to think creatively, using what they know of that character's world. The adult should encourage children to think about where the capital letters and full stops should be placed in this address.
 - **Core** - Students work in pairs to create a silly address for one of their favourite movie characters. They should ensure they have included capital letters for each place and a full stop at the end of the address. Both students should write out the address.
 - **Extension** - Students work independently to write a silly, but believable address for their favourite movie or book character. They should ensure they have included capital letters for each of the place names and a full stop at the end of the address.
6. When students have completed this activity, hand out the *Self Check* assessment sheets to each student. Encourage them to check their work for capital letters at the start of each place name and a full stop at the end of their address.
7. Students should rewrite their addresses with correct punctuation. Teachers may provide an opportunity for extra practise as required.

Plenary

1. Bring the class together as a whole group and direct student's attention to the list of people they want to write their letters to, as discussed at the beginning of the lesson.
2. Explain that the students will need to find out their pen pal's addresses in order to be able to send their letters to the people they want to write to.
3. Provide each student with an envelope to take home with a homework note for parents and families to help their child find the appropriate address.
4. Direct students to return their envelope to school once they have written their letter recipient's address on it.
5. Alternatively, teachers may choose to keep envelopes at school and direct students to find their pen pal's address at home and then help them write it on to the clean envelope with correct punctuation at school in a further literacy session.

Teacher Note: Register for **The Pen Pal Club** at auspost.com.au/penpal to assist you in arranging pen pals for your students.



Activity 3

Introduction

1. Gather the class as a whole group and refer to the letters in the book *The Pen Pal Club* by Sally Morgan.
2. Discuss how the letters are structured. Point to the greeting, main text and sign off. Display the letter writing template on the board for students to refer to throughout the lesson.
3. Brainstorm with the students what they might want to say to their pen pal. Collect students' ideas on the board.
4. Direct students' attention to the pictures of the camels and the crocodile drawn in the letters by Maria and Jack respectively. Explain to students that they may choose to draw their pen pal a picture once they have finished writing their letters.
5. Explain that students will be writing their letters to their pen pals today. Remind students about their prior learning regarding essential features of sentences. Encourage students to use the *Capital Letters display sheet* to help them identify the correct formation of the letter they need.

Main body

1. Explain that the students will now try to draft their letters to their pen pals independently at their tables. Three differentiated activities have been provided below. Teachers are encouraged to select the most appropriate activity according to student ability, or provide another, more appropriate activity.
 - **Support** - Students sit in a small group with an adult. They use the *Letter Template* activity sheet to draft a letter consisting of one or two sentences to their pen pal. On the back students may choose to illustrate their letter with a picture like Jack or Ruby in *The Pen Pal Club*.
 - **Core** - Students work independently to draft their letter to their pen pal in the *Letter Template* activity sheet. Each letter should consist of at least two sentences separated by full stops. On the back students may choose to illustrate their letter with a picture like Jack or Ruby in *The Pen Pal Club*.

- **Extension** - Students work independently in their writing books or on paper to draft a letter to their pen pal, using the template on the board as a guide. Each letter should consist of at least three sentences separated by full stops. Once they have finished, students may choose to draw a picture for their pen pal to describe something they wrote about in the letter.

Throughout this activity, teachers should play the role of facilitator, assessing and filling gaps in students' learning by observing work, answering questions and providing guidance where necessary.

Plenary

1. Using the *Self Check* assessment sheet, students should check their writing for capital letters and full stops.
2. You may choose to provide a further opportunity for students to produce a final draft of their letter.
3. Support the students in putting their letters into their addressed envelopes and applying a stamp.
4. Organise an excursion for the class to post their letters to their pen pals at your local post box or Post Office as appropriate. This is a great opportunity for students to speak to posties and direct further questions about the postal service to the people who will handle their letters. Alternatively, students could post their letters as a homework task to promote family involvement.

Going further

1. Encourage students to consider questions they would like to ask a postie.
2. Brainstorm with students what they think happens to letters after we post them.
3. Discuss writing a letter to someone in another country.



Capital letters!

Aa

Bb

Cc

Dd

Ee

Ff

Gg

Hh

Ii

Jj

Kk

Ll

Mm

Nn

Oo

Pp

Qq

Rr

Ss

Tt

Uu

Vv

Ww

Xx

Yy

Zz

Assess my writing!



Partner assessment. Read your partner's writing and draw a smiley face if they have included the following.

Capital letter at the
start of every sentence

Full stop at the end
of every sentence

Character address

Write your character's details and draw your character at their home!

Name

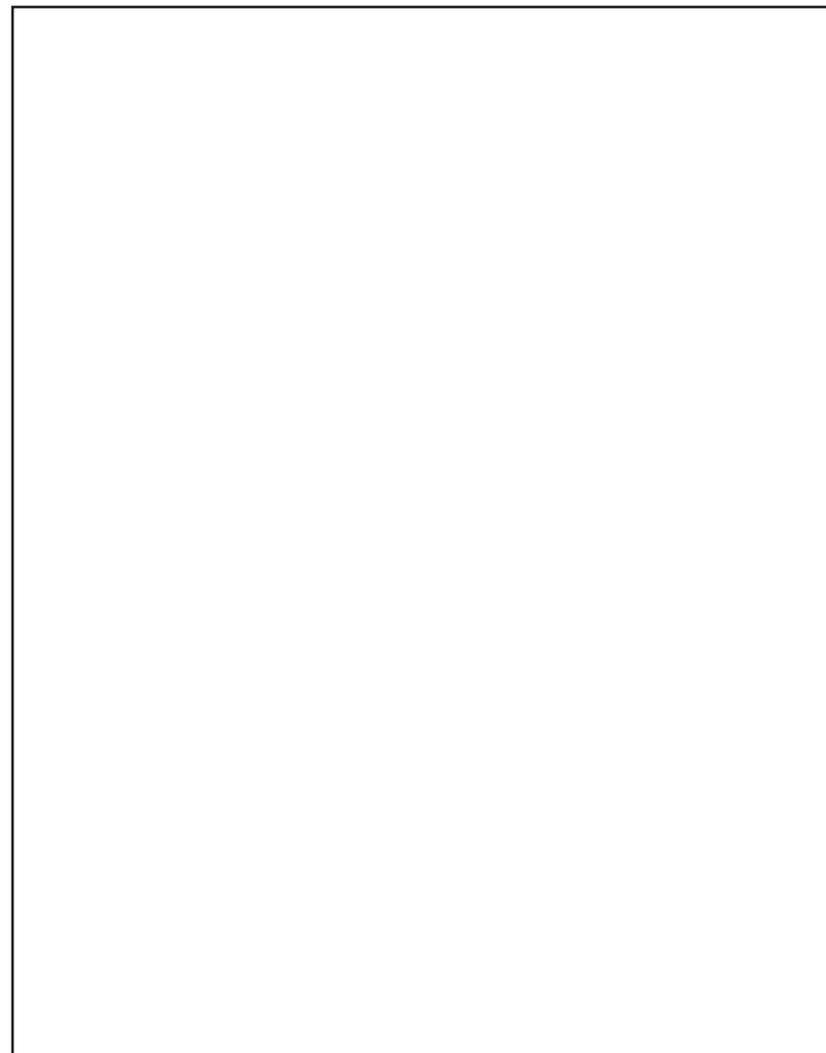
House Number
and street

Suburb

State

Postcode

Country



Self check!



Self assessment. Draw a smiley face if your writing has:

Capital letter at the
start of every sentence

Full stop at the end
of every sentence

Finger spaces
between my words

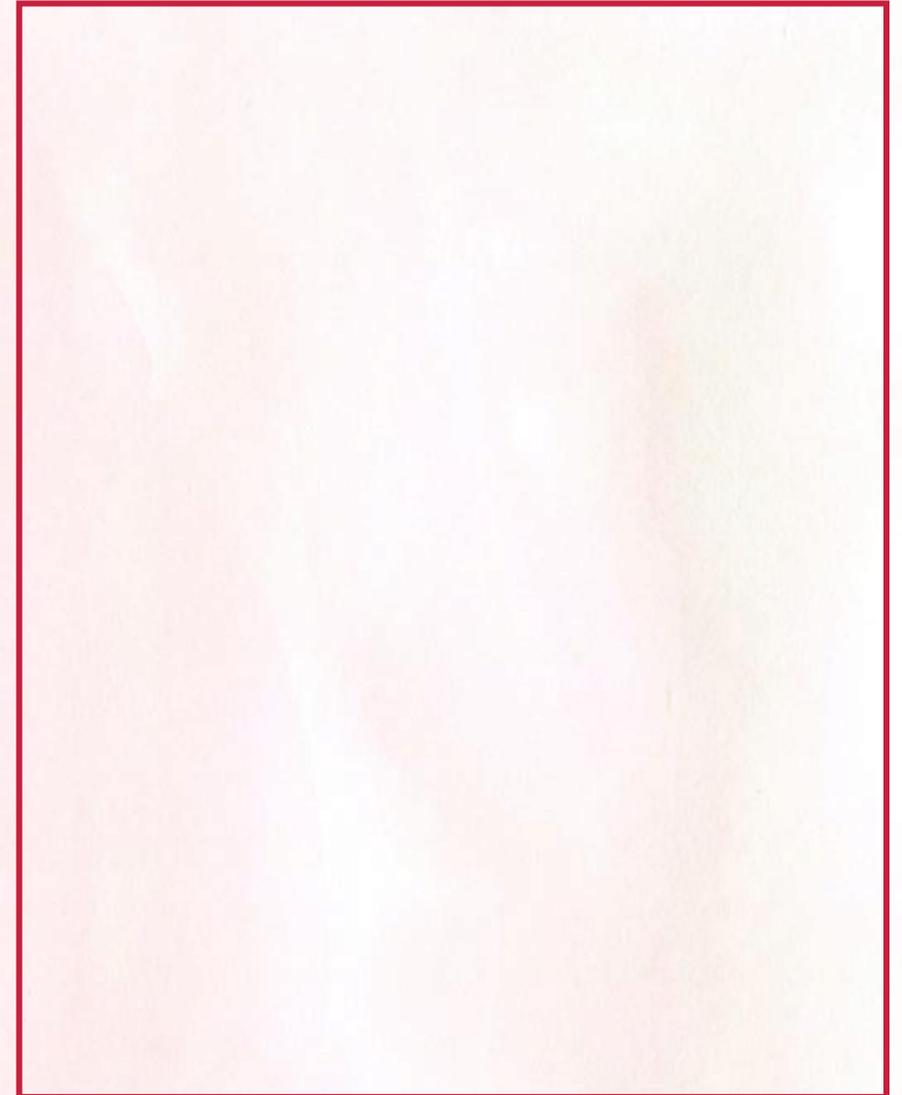
The Pen Pal Club

Foundation



Where do I live?

- **Name** _____
- **House number** _____
- **Suburb** _____
- **State** _____
- **Postcode** _____
- **Country** _____



Letter template

Dear

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

From,
.....

Letter Template

- Greeting - Who are you writing to?
- Main letter - What will you write about?
- Sign off - your name