Teacher Resource Letter Writing Class

Q Focus Questions

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- 1. What was the main point of the BTN story?
- 2. How many fewer letters were delivered across Australia last year than the year before?
 - a. 8 million
 - b. 20 million
 - c. 820 million
- 3. When did World Letter Writing Day begin?
- 4. Why does Richard want to bring back handwritten letters?
- 5. How can letters teach us about the past?
- 6. How did the letter that Meghan Markle wrote when she was twelve make a difference?
- 7. What is the difference between a formal and an informal letter? Give an example.
- 8. What are some of the benefits of writing letters?
- 9. How do you feel when you receive a handwritten letter in the post?
- 10. Who would you like to send a letter to? Why?

Activity

Class Discussion

Discuss the BTN *Letter Writing Class* story as a class, using the following questions to guide the discussion. Record the main points on a mind map with `Letter Writing' at the centre.

- What are the different ways that you communicate with friends and family? What types of technologies do you use?
- When did you last receive a handwritten letter in the post?
- How do you feel when you receive a handwritten letter in the post?





- How often do you write letters?
- Who would you like to send a letter to? Why?
- Do you think we should write more letters? Why or why not?
- What are the different parts or features of a letter? (e.g. date, postal address, greeting, signature).

Episode 30 29th October 2019



Students will practise the art of letter-writing. Students will investigate how technology has changed the way we communicate.

Curriculum

English – Year 6 Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text.

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience.

Re-read and edit students' own and others' work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices.

Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to audience and purpose.





Class brainstorm

Discuss the BTN *Letter Writing Class* story as a class and ask students to brainstorm who we send letters to. Below is a list to get you started.

- Friends, relatives or pen pals
- Politician about an issue important to you
- To your principal or teacher
- To a newspaper
- Dealing with banks

Students will investigate the purpose of a letter and then give examples of different types of letters, for example:

- A letter of invitation
- Job application
- Thank you letter
- Exchanging news
- Letters of complaint
- Making an appointment
- Asking questions
- Giving information about an event



Letter writing activities

Students will practise the art of letter writing. Below are some letter writing activities.

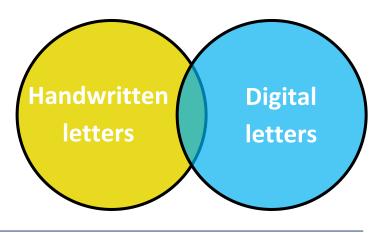
- Who would you like to send a letter to? Why? Students will design and create their own letter head or writing paper and write a letter to someone using their paper.
- Make a time capsule which includes a collection of letters handwritten by your students. Students can write to future students at the school telling them what school is like for them and then make a prediction about what school will be like in the future.
- Connect with a class from another country and ask if they would like to become pen pals with your class. Students will tell them what school life is like in Australia and then find out how their school life is similar or different.
- Students will explore an issue that is important to their school community. Students will then write a letter to their local council or member of parliament voicing their concerns and/or asking for change.
- Students will interview a friend or relative about letters they wrote (or still write).

Activity

Compare and contrast

Students will find similarities and differences between handwritten letters and digital letters. Use the questions below to start a class discussion. Use a Venn diagram to help organise the information.

- What are the differences and similarities between handwritten letters and digital letters (e.g. emails)?
- When would you hand write a letter?
- When would you send an email instead of a handwritten letter?
- What's the difference between a formal letter and an informal letter? Give examples.





Further investigation

Students will choose one of the questions below to explore in more detail.

- What type of language would you use in an informal letter to a friend or relative? Compare the language used in an informal letter to the language used in a formal letter. Give examples.
- Why are letters useful primary sources? Investigate how letters can tell us about the writer's opinions and personality and tell us more about the past. Choose an important letter in history to interpret and then explain your findings to the class. Here are some examples <u>link</u>.
- How has technology changed the way we communicate?
- What is meant by the term 'the art of handwritten letters is dying'? Explain using your own words.
- What is the future of 'snail mail'? Check out the <u>BTN Snail Mail story</u> then make some predictions about the postal mail system 20 years from now.

Activity

Persuasive text

Students will develop a persuasive text for or against the following statement: `We should write more letters.' Alternatively, students can develop their own statement. Students can use the information recorded on the mind map and their own research to help develop their argument. Encourage students to use a range of sources. Provide students with the following structure to follow when completing this activity.

Structure

Introduction

- What is the point you are trying to argue? Construct an introductory paragraph which states the issue or topic.
- Introduce the arguments that will be developed in the body of the text.

Body

- \circ $\,$ Construct arguments that support your point of view.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces each point.
- The rest of the paragraph gives more reasons.
- Arguments can be ordered from strongest to weakest.

Conclusion

- \circ $\;$ Restate your position on the argument.
- Construct a concluding paragraph that provides a summary of your arguments and a call to action.

Tips

- Who is your audience? For example, are you directing your argument at kids, teachers or politicians?
- Explore how language choices can have a big impact on persuading your audience.
- Which language devices give the report credibility and authority?
- Which are designed to create an emotional response in the listener?
- Provide facts and evidence to support your argument.
- \circ Write in the present tense.
- Check your spelling and punctuation.

Use this <u>Read Write Think persuasion</u> <u>map</u> to plan your exposition text.

O Useful Websites

World Letter Writing Day http://www.worldletterwritingday.com/index.html

Education – Australia Post

https://auspost.com.au/about-us/corporate-responsibility/our-community/education

Snail Mail – BTN

https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/snail-mail/10535178

