

The Elf on the Shelf®

TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

Lesson Plan – First Grade

Introduction:

Keep The Elf on the Shelf® tradition alive in your classroom by celebrating class birthdays all year round. By using *The Elf on the Shelf®: A Birthday Tradition* book and a scout elf in conjunction with this language arts lesson, you will provide an engaging and instructional way to celebrate students' birthdays while reinforcing their writing skills. In this lesson students will be introduced to the five parts of a friendly letter. Using prompts, students will then write a friendly letter to the scout elf.

Objective:

Students will recognize parts of a friendly letter and use prompts to write a friendly letter inviting the elf to visit their classroom for upcoming birthday celebrations.

Common Core Standard (Language Arts):

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic and provide a sense of closure.

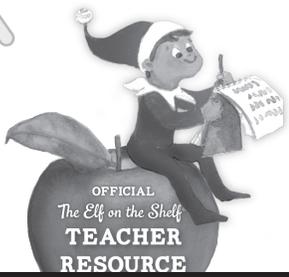
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Materials:

Scout elf (wearing cupcake suit and hat), *The Elf on the Shelf®: A Birthday Tradition* book, activity sheets 1, 2 and 3, pencil, crayons

Getting Started:

- If beginning this lesson mid-school year, start by celebrating birthdays that have already occurred. Continue celebrating individual birthdays throughout the remainder of the school year by having the classroom elf come back to visit. For summer birthdays, you may want to have an end-of-year celebration.
- You are encouraged to decorate each child's desk/chair for his or her birthday and have a class celebration incorporating the scout elf.
 - Here are a few chair decorating ideas to get you started:
 - Use construction paper and craft supplies to make a special sign for the birthday boy or girl. Use yarn or string to attach the sign to the chair.
 - Using string, attach a paper bag with the child's name on it to the back of his or her seat. Have the other students write a quick note to their classmate wishing him or her a happy birthday.
 - Use tape or string to attach candies, pictures or gifts to the chair. For example, if the birthday boy is a big dinosaur enthusiast, you could attach plastic dinosaurs or dinosaur stickers mounted on paper to the chair.
 - Attach balloons to the chair with string.
 - Visit <http://www.elfontheshelf.com/blog/six-super-ways-build-birthday-chair> for more chair decorating ideas.



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Lesson Procedure:

- Ask students to recall memories with their scout elf and share special stories of the scout elf visiting them during the holidays. If students have not experienced the scout elf, ask students: Have you ever had a special visitor during the holidays or for your birthday? What if an elf came to your birthday party?
- Read *The Elf on the Shelf®: A Birthday Tradition* book to students and then prompt them to imagine what it would be like if the elf came to celebrate their birthdays.
 - Ask students: *What would you like to share with the elf about your birthday? How might you invite your friends to your birthday party? Based on the story, how would you invite the elf to your birthday party? Have you ever received a letter? If so, who wrote you a letter? What did the letter say? Have you ever written a letter to someone? Whom did you send it to? What did it say?* Encourage students to share their experiences with sending or receiving a letter.
- Tell students that they will each write a friendly letter to the elf. Define a friendly letter as a letter written to people who are your family, friends, babysitter, teacher or anyone with whom you have a relationship.
- Using **Activity Sheet 1**, introduce parts of a friendly letter.
 - Heading – head; Greeting – mouth; Body – body; Closing – leg; Signature – foot
- Ask students to match the parts of a friendly letter to the appropriate body parts. Review parts of a friendly letter using the picture of the elf on **Activity Sheet 1** to reinforce that each has a place in the letter. Please remember not to touch the actual scout elf in front of children (The book *The Elf on the Shelf®: A Christmas Tradition* explains that touching a scout elf will make it lose its Christmas magic).
- Lead students through writing prompts for generating ideas for writing a friendly letter: *Whom are you writing to? When is your birthday? Why would you like the elf to visit for your birthday? What makes you special? What do you like best about school? What is your birthday wish?*
- Using **Activity Sheet 2**, have students write a friendly letter inviting the elf to their classroom for upcoming birthday celebrations. Refer students to the prompts they answered on **Activity Sheet 1** for completing the letter.
- Encourage students to draw their birthday wish on **Activity Sheet 3**.

Follow-up/Extension Activities:

- Create a friendly letter checklist to help students proof their work. Some items may include: *My letter has the date in the upper right corner; My letter has a greeting, followed by a comma; The body of the letter is indented; My letter has a closing line, followed by a comma; My letter has a signature.*
- Give each student an envelope for mailing his or her letter. Show students how to address an envelope, place stamp and mail letter.
- Establish the scout elf as a pen pal to practice letter writing throughout the year.
- For upcoming student birthdays, review parts of a friendly letter and practice letter writing to remind the classroom elf to visit for each student's birthday.
- After each elf visit, encourage students to write thank-you letters or poems about their birthday celebration. Have students retell their birthday experience by creating a digital book or scrapbook using photos.



Birthday Surprise

I want to join in the birthday hullabaloo! Write a friendly letter inviting me to your birthday celebration! First, let me help you identify the parts of a friendly letter. Then I'll dress in my birthday costume and hide in a special place to wish you a happy and magical birthday!

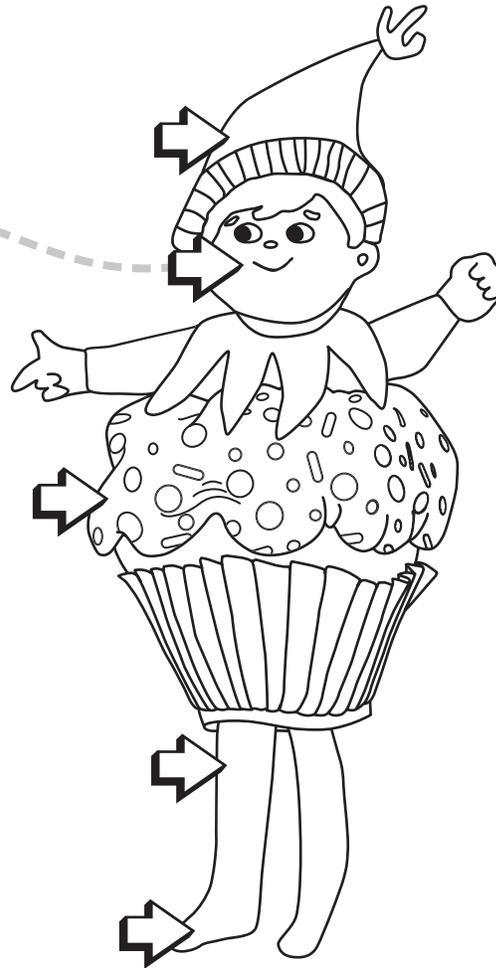
Closing

Body

Greeting

Signature

Heading



Whom are you writing to? _____

When is your birthday? _____

Why should the elf visit for your birthday? _____

What makes you special? _____

What do you like best about school? _____

What is your birthday wish? _____



Hip Hip Hooray! A Special Birthday Message

I can't wait to cheer and shout, "Hip Hip Hooray Happy Birthday!" Share your birthday wishes by completing the friendly letter below. Remember to include all five parts of a friendly letter.

Heading (Date)

Greeting

My birthday is _____ I would like to invite you to my birthday because _____

I am special because _____

My favorite thing about school is _____

My birthday wish is _____

I hope you can celebrate my birthday with me. Hope to see you on my special day.

Closing

Signature



Hip Hip Hooray! A Special Birthday Message

Draw your birthday wish.

