



The Elf on the Shelf®

TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

Lesson Plan – Fourth 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 write a persuasive letter to the scout elf by using persuasive words and providing supporting reasons, facts and details.

Objective:

Students will write persuasive letters inviting the scout elf to visit their classroom for upcoming birthday celebrations.

Common Core Standards (Language Arts):

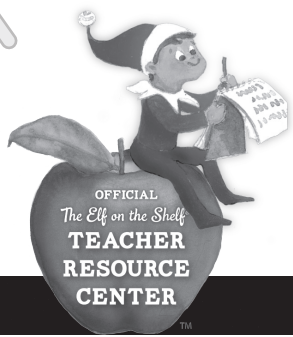
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.a Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1.b Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising and editing.

Materials:

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

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 student'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 notes 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.



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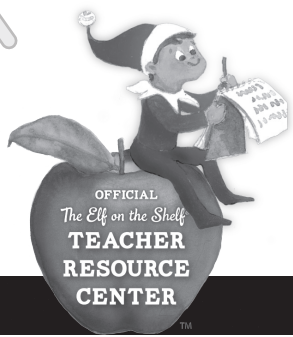
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- Attach balloons to the chair with string.
- Visit <http://www.elfontheshelf.com/blog/six-super-ways-build-birthday-chair> for more chair decorating ideas.

Lesson Procedure

- Ask students to recall memories with The Elf on the Shelf® 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? What would you like to share with the elf about your birthday?*
- Read *The Elf on the Shelf®: A Birthday Tradition* book to students. Prompt students to imagine what it would be like if the elf came to celebrate their birthday.
 - Ask students: *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? Did the letter ask you to visit someone or a special place? Have you ever written a letter to someone? What did your letter say?* Encourage students to share their experiences with sending or receiving a letter.
- Ask students: *What does “persuade” mean? Have you ever persuaded someone to do something for you?* Encourage students to discuss and share their ideas with the class.
- Explain to students that sometimes people write in a way that is intended to persuade others. Identify general characteristics of persuasive writing:
 - Writers state their opinion about something that is important to them and try to convince the reader to agree with their ideas.
 - Writers use persuasive language and strong reasons to convince their readers to agree with their point of view.
- Ask students: *How might you persuade the elf to attend your birthday celebration? What words might you use to describe your birthday celebration? What positive characteristics do you possess? In what ways have you changed since your last birthday? What have you accomplished this school year? What other goals would you like to accomplish this school year?* Discuss students’ answers and demonstrate how to construct persuasive sentences, e.g., *“Elf you must come celebrate my birthday. I’ve had a superb school year and have accomplished my goal of learning how to divide.”*
- Tell students they will each write a persuasive letter to the classroom elf using positive persuasive words and supporting reasons, facts and details. Their goal will be to persuade the elf to visit the classroom on their birthday.
- Guide students through the steps involved in persuasive writing:
 - Identify the audience.
 - Be clear about your purpose.
 - Give supporting reasons for your opinion.
 - Include facts and details to support your reasons.
 - Use persuasive word choices.



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- Using **Activity Sheet 1**, have students unscramble the positive persuasive words. Ask volunteers to use the words in a sentence to describe their birthday celebration. (Answers: best, superb, special, fabulous, important, amazing, awesome)
- Direct students' attention to the graphic organizer (**Activity Sheet 1**) for organizing their ideas for their letters. Remind students their letters should be directed to a specific audience, have a purpose, provide two supporting reasons, provide two facts and details and use persuasive words. Have students complete the graphic organizer, providing assistance when necessary.
- Before distributing **Activity Sheet 2**, use a picture of the scout elf or point to the elf's body to review parts of a letter:
 - Heading – head; Greeting – mouth; Body – body; Closing – leg; Signature – foot.
 - Please remember not to touch the actual scout elf in front of the children (The book *The Elf on the Shelf*®: *A Christmas Tradition* explains that touching a scout elf will make it lose its Christmas magic).
- Using **Activity Sheet 2**, have students write persuasive letters inviting the elf to their classroom for their upcoming birthday celebrations. Refer students to the persuasive words and graphic organizer on **Activity Sheet 1** for completing their letters.
- In pairs, have students read their partner's letter and use the *Persuasive Letter Checklist* at the bottom of **Activity Sheet 2** below to proof their partner's work. Have students review the checklist and edit their letters accordingly.

Follow-up/Extension Activities:

- Expand upon the checklist provided as students continue to write persuasive letters. Have students work in groups to provide edits and suggestions for their group members. Create rubrics to define what is expected of students for each writing assignment.
- Give each student an envelope for mailing his or her letter. Remind students how to address an envelope, place stamp and mail letter.
- Establish the scout elf as a pen pal to practice persuasive writing throughout the year. Have the scout elf assign students relatable topics. Ask students to write persuasive letters in which they form an opinion and provide supporting reasons, facts and details.
- After each elf visit, encourage students to write a persuasive digital story using PowerPoint slides and photos to persuade other classrooms to invite a scout elf to their upcoming birthday celebrations.
- Present persuasive skits based on your students' letter writing to other classrooms and school staff.
- Create advertisements encouraging the scout elf to visit at other special times throughout the year.



Come Celebrate With ME!

Do you want the scout elf to join your birthday hullabaloo? Write a letter persuading the elf to be a part of your birthday celebration! First, unscramble the positive persuasive words to the right. Then complete the graphic organizer. If you do a good job, the elf will dress in a birthday costume and hide in a special place to wish you a happy and magical birthday!

Directions: Unscramble the positive persuasive words below. Write the word in the spaces provided. Use some or all the words in your letter to the scout elf.

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sprebu	_ _ p _ _ _
alicesp	s _ _ _ _ _
abfulous	_ _ b _ _ _ s
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weasmoe	_ _ e _ o _ _

Directions: Before you write your letter to the scout elf, organize your ideas below. Include two supporting reasons along with facts and details to support those reasons.

Question: Why should the scout elf visit your classroom for your birthday celebration?

Topic: Birthday Visit from the Elf

Purpose:

Audience:

Supporting Reason 1:

Fact/Detail:

Supporting Reason 1:

Fact/Detail:



Hip Hip Hooray! A Special Birthday Message

I can't wait to cheer and shout, "Hip Hip Hooray Happy Birthday!" Persuade me to visit for your birthday. Remember to use your persuasive words, supporting reasons and facts/details to convince me to come!



Persuasive Letter Checklist:

- My letter has a clear purpose.
- My letter is written with a specific audience in mind.
- My letter uses strong persuasive words.
- My letter includes two reasons to support my opinion.
- My letter supports my reasons with facts or details.
- My letter is easy to read and understand.
- My letter has correct punctuation and capitalization.
- My letter uses correct spelling and grammar.
- I used my best handwriting in this letter.

Other Comments: _____

Reviewed by: _____