



Lessons from Scout Elf School:
Write Away





Note to Teacher

In addition to Santa letters, thank-you notes for gifts, and invitations, there are many occasions for students to practice writing a friendly letter throughout the year. In this activity, students can practice their handwriting and demonstrate all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas.

Core Curriculum Standards

CCSSCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSSCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSSCRA.L.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Activity Instructions

- Demonstrate and review the parts of a letter: heading, greeting, body, closing, signature.
- Model the process by writing a friendly letter together as a class.
- Brainstorm as a large group possible topics to include in a friendly letter.
- Create a writing workshop environment where students can work independently and/or with their peers by exchanging ideas, brainstorming ideas and sharing supplies.
- Give students ample time to write and revise their friendly letters.
- Facilitate share-time to illustrate how we grow as writers with practice and opportunities to tell our personal stories.
- Optional: other than hand-delivery, review how letters reach their destinations and how to address an envelope.



Beginning Learners

- Print a copy of the letter printable for each student.
- With guidance from an adult and suggestions from peers, use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to fill in the parts of a letter.

Progressing Learners

- Have students write a draft letter on blank paper.
- Students should:
 - Use linking words (because, therefore, since, for example) and incorporate descriptive details to create more complex sentences.
 - Organize thoughts into multiple, more fully developed and logically ordered paragraphs.
 - Collaborate with peers to edit.
- Provide a copy of the letter printable for each student and have them transfer their revised draft to the printed template.

Advanced Learners

- Have students write a draft letter on blank paper.
- Students should:
 - Use linking words (because, therefore, since, for example) and incorporate descriptive details to create more complex sentences.
 - Organize thoughts into multiple, more fully developed and logically ordered paragraphs.
 - Incorporate dialogue and/or narrative storytelling.
 - Experiment with advanced punctuation, transitions, word choice, sentence structure and tone to achieve a unique author voice.
 - Brainstorm various informal closing salutations and choose one that fits best with the tone of their letter.
 - Practice using postscript (P.S.) to emphasize something relevant but not mentioned earlier in the letter.
 - Collaborate with peers to edit.
- Provide a printable letter template for each student, or have students design their own letter digitally.