

Friendly Letter Writing

Objectives

Students will read the primary document, a letter written by A. Hutchins in 1797 during Mississippi's territorial days and compare it to letters written today. The letter is a character reference and intended to persuade the recipient that Mr. Howard is a good person. Students will learn about the different types of letter writing (thank-you, invitation, postcards versus the more formal business letter) and those of the past and apply the friendly letter format.

The *Friendly Letter Writing* lesson is adaptable for grades 3-5.

Mississippi Department of Education 2011 Curricular Connections		
Common Core Language Arts	3 rd Grade	3.d.2, 3.e
	4 th Grade	3.e.1
	5 th Grade	3.e.1
	Writing Standards for Grades 3-5	1a-d
	Reading Standards for Informational Text for Grades 3-5	1, 2

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Activity One: Friendly Letter Background

Materials: Chalk board, dry erase board, or Smartboard access; sample of business letter from your class's language arts book.

Background Information: Everyone has to write. How do we communicate today? Phone, text, email, letter/mail, etc. Why do people communicate in each way? Is there a difference between writing a letter and sending text or email? What is a situation where people need to communicate by phone/voice? Email?

1. Discuss the background information with your class and list the different ways we communicate today.
2. Discuss why we write letters today even though we have email, texting, and other technologies. List reasons on the board. Guide students to making two categories (informal/formal or friendly/business) of the reasons.
3. Discuss why people wrote letters in the past, 200 years ago or more. Guide them to create a list of types/purpose of writing.
4. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast letter writing in the past and present.

Activity Two: Friendly Letter Writing

Materials: A *Hutchins* letter; sample of business letter from your class's language arts book.

1. Distribute the *A Hutchins* letter to your students and have them read the short letter written in Natchez in 1797. Read the letter aloud, identifying unusual vocabulary, and encourage students to define new words by using contextual clues.
2. Looking at the two categories of letters created in Activity One, what type of letter is this? How do you know that? You can extend this activity by having students hypothesize why the letter was written.
3. Present friendly letter following the format used in your class's language arts textbook. Compare to the format in the primary document. Model the friendly format by writing a letter together.
4. Write a friendly letter using the following prompts:

Prompt 1: Your local newspaper is holding a Person of the Year contest. Write a letter nominating someone you know for the contest.

Prompt 2: Write a letter to an out of town friend or family member and persuade him/her to read your favorite book.

Online resources for history of letter writing in the 18th century:

<http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter07/letters.cfm?showSite=mobile>

<http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/letterwriting/index.html>

I hereby certify that Mr.
 Joshua Howard some time after his
 marriage left this Country, and did return
 hither in the year 1789 where he has
 lived ever since and hath supported the
 Character of an honest peaceable Man, and
 a good Neighbour, —
 Natchez 15. Sept. 1799

A Hutchins

I certify having compared the above with the original
 in the possession of Joshua Howard Esquire, and
 do find the same to be a correct Copy of the S.^d
 original. At Second Creek the 31. day of July
 1799

William Dunbar

TRANSCRIPT

I hereby certify that Mr. Joshua Howard sometime after his marriage left this country, and did return hither in the year 1789 where he has lived ever since and hath supported the character of an honest peaceable man and a good neighbor.

Natchez 15th, Sept. 1797
 A. Hutchins

A. Hitchens

to J. Cortical

Joshua Howard

15th Sept. 1797

MDAH

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LESSON PLANS

TEACHER EVALUATION

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME _____

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS _____ **GRADE LEVEL** _____

LESSON TITLE _____

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?

2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?

3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?

4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?

5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:
____multi-day unit ____multi-week unit ____other

6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate

<u>Directions and Notes</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Curricular Connections</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Student Worksheets</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Interactive Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Historic Images</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>References and Resources</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

<u>Activity One</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Two</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Overall unit</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement. Comments may be entered in the space below.

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