Sincerely, Snailmail-a 3rd Grade Service Project

Handwritten Friendly Letters to Seniors

Please note: This writing project will start at the beginning of November and completed by the Friday before Thanksgiving.

Objective: Students will write friendly Christmas letters for senior citizens in your local community.

Overview: The writing project includes three lessons. Basic materials needed are included and you may use additional resources. When letters have been reviewed and are ready to be sent, deliver them to your local senior citizens in your parish and/or senior center. If in Omaha, you can mail them/deliver in person, in one envelope, for the senior citizens at Heritage Community, care of Erin Albers. Letters need to be received by November 30.

Erin Albers

Heritage Communities

16934 Frances Street, Suite 200

Omaha, NE 68130

Lesson 1

Objective: Students will learn the parts and organization of a friendly letter.

Materials:

- I Wanna Iguana or I Wanna New Room by Karen Kaufman Orloff or a book written in letter format of your choice.
- Example of a friendly letter
- Template of a friendly letter
- Parts of a friendly letter diagram
- Paper for students to write first draft of a friendly letter

Procedure:

1. Introduce the objective and read to the students a mentor text of a friendly letter.
2. Show students the friendly letter example and how the personal/friendly letter has 5 parts.
3. Discuss each section specifically. Point out the purpose of each section—the Ideas and Content. Each section has Organization and Convention rules to follow: specific punctuation and capitalization, lines are skipped, certain lines indented.
4. Show and discuss the diagram of a friendly letter.
5. Tell students that they are going to write a friendly letter to an adult they know: a family member or a staff member at school.
6. Have each student fold a piece of handwriting paper in half vertically. This fold will aid students in where to start the heading, closing, and signature line. Or, you can use the friendly letter template that has the parts marked and the correct organization of the letter.
7. Students pick who they will write their friendly letter to. The first paragraph will be about what they are currently doing in school and the second paragraph will be about what they are doing outside of school time. Each paragraph needs to be three to five sentences and varying sentence structure.
8. With students' first drafts of their letters, go through the steps you use in your classroom to revise and then edit (e.g., CUPS) to improve their first drafts.
9. Have students create a publishable draft to then give to the person they wrote to.

Lesson 2

Objective: Students will write a friendly letter during the Christmas season to a homebound senior citizen. Students will learn about showing mercy to others.

Materials:
- Friendly letter example
- Background of Omaha's Heritage Community or your local senior care center
- Paper for writing first draft and special, decorative paper for writing the final, publishable letter.
- Rubric

Procedure:
1. Review the parts of a friendly letter.
2. Share the information about Omaha's Heritage Community and/or your local senior care center. Explain to students that as people age, it sometimes gets harder for them to take care of themselves and they may need help. Talk about those they know that live in assitive living, nursing homes, or have help from others in their own homes.
3. Discuss the Corporal Works of Mercy. There is always a need to show mercy to others and this can be acted out in our faith in many ways through service.
4. Tell students that many senior citizens do not have computers or cell phones, and love receiving hand-written letters. They know the effort it takes to write a letter.
5. Students will write a draft of a friendly letter to a senior citizen.
   - Discuss the rubric of a friendly letter.
   - Share with students that in their letters:
     1. We will leave out the heading because we do not give out personal information (last name, phone number, address).
     2. Do not fill their letters with only questions, but more details about their own Christmas traditions and well wishes during this season.
     3. Students will address their letters to, "Dear Friend," and sign their letters with their first names only.
     4. Their letters are going to be given to real people and they will love the letters from them! The seniors will not be able to write back, but will receive these letters like a gift from them!

- As a class, brainstorm ideas of what topics to write in the letters (sharing about their favorite Christmas food, music, activites, traditions as well as what they are currently learning about this season).
- Students write first draft of their letters.

6. With students' first drafts of their letters, go through the steps you use in your classroom to revise and then edit (e.g., CUPS) to improve their first drafts. Have students turn in their drafts and check over their revisions and edits. Provide feedback using the rubric and their first drafts in order to help them improve their letters for a final, publishable copy.

Lesson 3

Objective: Students will write a final, publishable friendly letter about the Christmas season to a homebound senior citizen.

Materials:
- Students' first drafts of their letters to a senior citizen
- Christmas stationary, templates, and/or paper and art supplies for them to create their own decorated letter

Procedure:
1. Students will choose stationary or a template to write their final, publishable draft of the friendly letter to a senior citizen.
2. Using their best handwriting, students will write the final copy. Teachers continue to look them over and provide feedback on any needed edits.
3. Teachers may choose to have students share their letters with each other (e.g., author's chair or student pair share).
4. Students turn in their letters.
5. Teachers deliver letters in one envelope to local senior center and/or Omaha's Heritage Communites (care of Erin Albers).

About Heritage Communities

All Heritage Communities share a single mission: To create the senior living experience you want. We'll connect you to a community that matches your lifestyle, tastes and needs. Heritage Communities throughout the Midwest and Southwest offer vibrant Independent Living, with Assistive Living, and Memory Care.

Erin Albers

Vice President of Brand Strategy
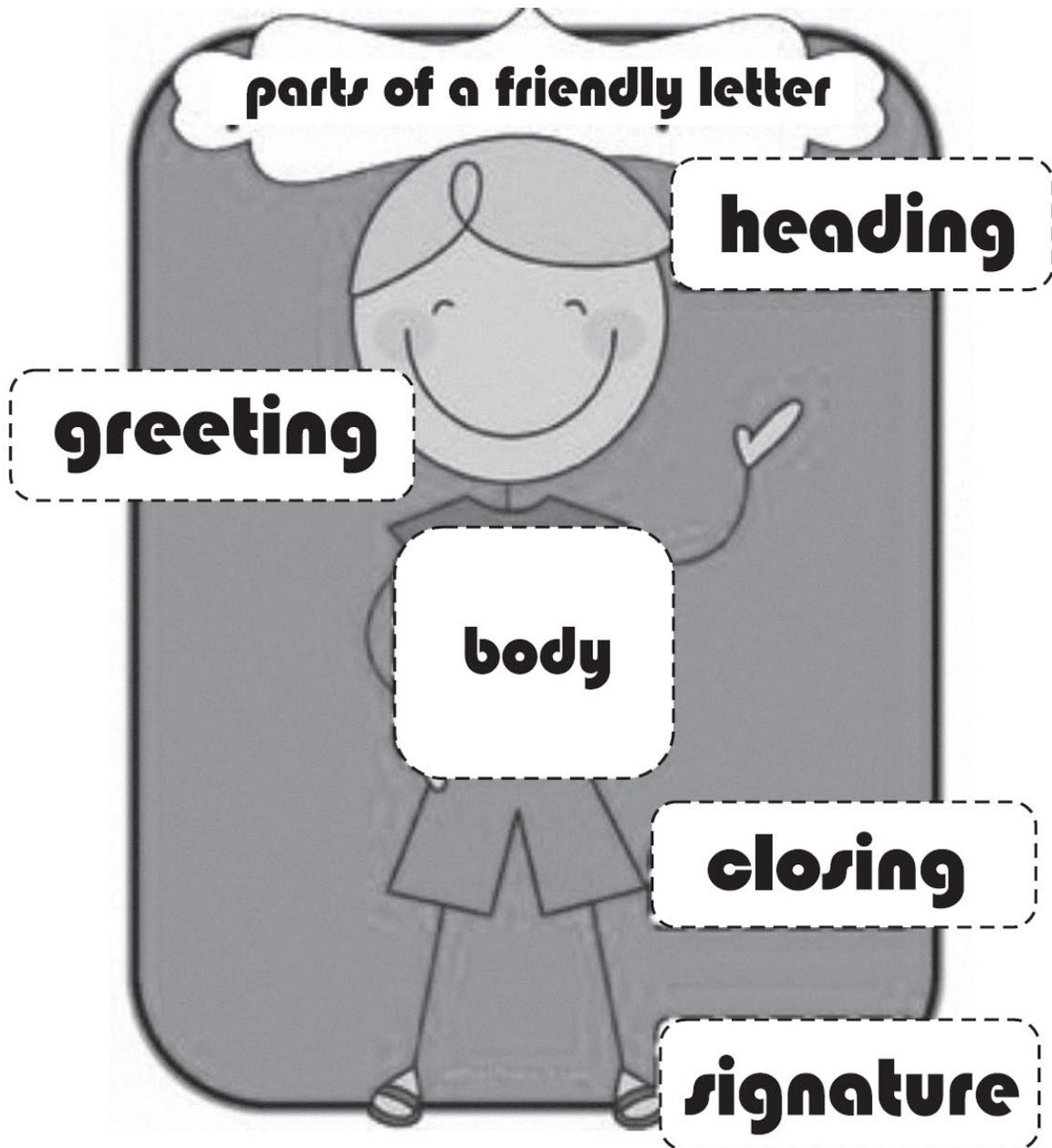
16934 Frances Street, Suite 200

Omaha, NE 68130

What Makes a Good Personal Letter?

We write and send personal letters to people we know.
Personal letters have five parts.

parts of a friendly letter

heading

greeting

body

closing

signature

The **heading** of the personal letter gives the address of the writer and the date the letter was written. It goes in the top right-hand corner. A comma goes between the name of the town or city and the state. Another comma goes between the day and the year. A line of space follows the heading.

The **greeting** gives the name of the receiver. It goes on the left side of the letter. The words in the greeting are capitalized except for *and* between two people's names. A comma goes after the greeting.

The **body** is the message of the letter. It is what you want to say to the receiver. In the body each paragraph is indented. Leave an extra line of space below the body.

30 Bailey Road
Park Forest, CA 90317
July 30, 20—

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Ruiz,

Thank you so much for inviting me to spend last week at your cottage with you and Alicia. It was the best week!

Before Saturday I had never spent a night away from home. I was a little nervous about being in the country. What if there were weird insects or snakes? Well, there were insects and snakes, but they were interesting and not scary.

I loved everything we did on the water. I liked swimming in the lake, fishing from the boat, and canoeing to the store. I will never, ever forget the morning we paddled on the lake as the sun came up. I almost tipped the canoe when that big silver fish jumped out of the water to catch a bug. Have you caught any giant fish since I left?

I hope the rest of your summer is wonderful. Tell Alicia that I can't wait to see her back at school.

Your friend,
Layne

The **closing** goes after the body. It lines up under the heading. It is where you say goodbye to the receiver. Only the first word is capitalized. A comma goes after the closing.

The closing followed by a **signature**. The signature is your written name.
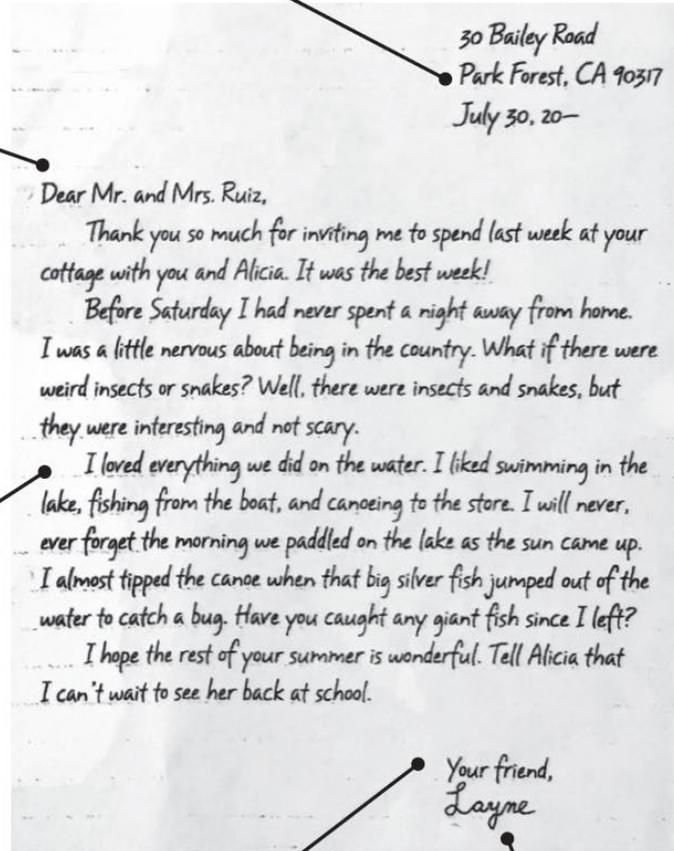
_____
(house number)   (street name)

_____
(city, state)   (zip code)

_____
(month, day, year)

_____ skip line _____

_____ ,
(greeting)

_____ skip line _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ skip line _____

_____
(closing)

_____
(signature)

3rd Grade Friendly Letter Writing Rubric

	Emerging (1 point)	Progressing (2 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Advanced (4 points)
Ideas	☐ The writer creates a letter that is confusing to the audience ☐ Main ideas are undeveloped ☐ Supporting details are missing	☐ The writer creates a letter that, at times, is confusing to the audience ☐ Main ideas are present but weak ☐ Supporting details are limited and, at times, weak	☐ The writer creates a letter that is clear to the audience ☐ Main ideas are present and adequate ☐ Supporting details are adequate and focused	☐ The writer creates a letter that is engaging to the audience ☐ Main ideas are strong ☐ Supporting details are elaborate and focused
Organization	☐ Structure (greeting, body or closing) of the letter is not present or weak ☐ Sentences/paragraphing is ineffective or missing	☐ Structure (greeting, body, or closing) of the letter is present but underdeveloped ☐ Sentences/paragraphing is irregular	☐ Structure (greeting, body and closing) of the letter is functional ☐ Sentences/paragraphing is generally consistent	☐ Structure (greeting, body and closing) of the story is effective ☐ Sentences/paragraphing is consistent throughout
Voice	☐ The writer's "voice" is weak and conveys limited sense of the writer and/or not appropriate for the purpose of a friendly letter	☐ The writer's "voice" is present, but conveys limited sense of the writer and appropriate for the purpose of a friendly letter	☐ The writer's "voice" is present, conveys a sense of the writer, and is appropriate for the purpose of a friendly letter	☐ The writer's "voice" conveys a strong sense of the writer and is appropriate for the purpose of a friendly letter

Word Choice	☐ Word choice does not create a visual picture for the audience ☐ Word choice is neither specific, precise, nor varied (i.e., nice)	☐ Word choice creates a limited visual picture for the audience ☐ Word choice is, at times, specific, precise, or varied. (i.e., nice becomes friendly)	☐ Word choice creates a visual picture for the audience ☐ Word choice is mostly specific, precise, and/or varied (i.e., friendly becomes charming)	☐ Word choice creates a strong visual picture for the audience ☐ Word choice is specific, precise, and varied (i.e., friendly becomes charming and compassionate)
Fluency	☐ Use of only simple sentences ☐ Sentence fragments and/or run-ons throughout	☐ Use of mostly simple sentences ☐ Some fragments and/or run-ons	☐ Use of simple and/or compound sentences ☐ Few fragments and/or run-ons	☐ Use of simple and compound sentences ☐ No fragments and/or run-ons
Conventions	☐ Frequent capitalization errors* ☐ Frequent punctuation errors* ☐ Frequent spelling errors *That interfere with comprehension	☐ Some capitalization errors* ☐ Some punctuation errors* ☐ Some spelling errors *That interfere with comprehension	☐ Limited capitalization errors* ☐ Limited punctuation errors* ☐ Limited spelling errors* *That DO NOT interfere with comprehension	☐ Few to No capitalization errors* ☐ Few to No punctuation errors* ☐ Few to No spelling errors *With NO interference with comprehension