

Letter of Gratitude

Overview:

Students will write letters of gratitude to someone important in their life, reinforcing the skill of writing a personal letter, demonstrating the [pillar of caring](#) in a thoughtful way, and remembering that valuable gifts don't always have to have a monetary value.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pen
- Colored or fancy paper (optional)
- Envelopes or Pieces of Ribbon (optional)

Procedure:

1. Students will write a 5-minute journal response to the following question: What is your favorite gift that you have given to one of your loved ones to show that you care about them during the holiday season? (Or for birthdays or Mother's or Father's Day if you want to use the lesson at a different time of year.)
2. Discuss student responses to the journal, focusing on the thoughts that went behind the selections.
3. Introduce the concept of a presenting a loved one with a letter of gratitude as a gift: a thoughtful, specifically written expression of thanks to someone for all that they have done for you.
4. Review on the board the different purposes of a personal (friendly) letter and a business letter.
Personal (friendly) letter: informal, personal, often for expressing emotion or staying in touch in a relationship
Business letter: formal, often for a request, information, or desired goal
5. Review the format and punctuation of a personal letter:
Heading (date)
Greeting with comma and capitalization
Body of Letter with indented paragraphs and proper sentences
Closing with comma and first word only capitalized

Letter of Gratitude

Signature

Postscript if desired

6. Students select a parent, relative, neighbor, teacher, or other positive role model and create a brainstorm web of the things they appreciate about that person. Provide examples of specific things for which they can show gratitude. Generalizations such as “for caring about me” or “for being kind” should be followed up with specifics such as “for waking me up for school every morning,” or “for finding my favorite jeans on sale.”
7. Students write a draft of the letter.
8. Students edit and revise the letter.
9. Students write final draft of the letter (on colored or fancy paper if available).
10. (Optional) Students place letters in envelopes or roll and tie with a ribbon.
11. Students give their letters to the intended recipient.
12. Follow-up activity: Students write a journal response about the experience of writing a letter of gratitude and the reaction of the recipient. Students make a list of all the people they want to give letters of gratitude to; either for the next holiday season or throughout the year.

McREL standards

Language Arts

Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Level III [Grades 6-8]

Benchmark 5. Uses content, style, and structure (e.g., formal or informal language, genre and organization) appropriate for specific audiences (e.g., public, private) and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform).

<http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/>