

**Greetings From America**  
**Learning Center**  
**Lesson 3**  
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## **Learning Center: Reading and Writing about Letters**

### **Objectives**

- Students will read trade books about letter-writing
- Students will write and mail letters

### **Materials**

- A table
- A collection of books in which characters write post cards or letters.  
Suggestions include:
  - *Kate Heads West* by Pat Brisson
  - *The Jolly Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
  - *The Jolly Christmas Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
  - *Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Cleary.
- Papers, pencils, envelopes, lists of addresses of interesting people to write to. Letters to children's book authors may be sent to the publisher's address. You may want to use the following websites of celebrity addresses to construct your list.
  - <http://www.stararchive.com/>
  - <http://www.thezone.pair.com/address/>
- A poster demonstrating the correct form of a friendly letter.
- A poster demonstrating the correct form of a business letter.

### **Set Induction**

As a whole class activity, read aloud one or more of the trade books. Invite students to read more books about writing letters during their specified center time. Briefly introduce the other books in the center. Introduce students to the other center activities and center schedule.

### **Minilesson**

1. Ask students if they have ever received a letter from someone.
2. Share and discuss the posters depicting friendly and business letter forms. Correlate students' experiences with the correct letter form.
3. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the friendly and business letter forms.
4. As a whole class activity, write a friendly letter to the school nurse and a business letter to the school principal.
5. Working in cooperative groups, have students write either a friendly letter or a business letter to another adult in their school.

6. As a guided practice activity, demonstrate how to address envelopes correctly.
7. Take a class walk to the nearest Post Office mail drop-box and mail the letters.

### **Student Activities**

- Note: These activities may be done individually or in small groups.
- Read one of the books in the center.
- Identify a character to whom they would like to write a letter.
- Determine whether the letter will be written using a friendly or business form.
- Choose one of these letter-writing activities:
  - Write a make-believe letter to a character in one of the books.
  - Write to a favorite author, as Leigh does in *Dear Mr. Henshaw*.
  - Write a make-believe letter to a fairy tale character, as in *The Jolly Postman*.
  - Write to someone on the list of interesting people.
- Read, revise, and edit the letter with a study buddy. Teacher will do the final editing.
- Write the final copy, address the envelope, and mail the letter.

### **Extension**

- Establish your own post office system in your classroom or school.
- Go on a class field trip to the local post office. Mail the letters when you're there.