Desired Results for the Unit

Established Goals:
Students will be able to write effective letters appropriate for a variety of contexts.
Students will be able to apply their writing skills to the format of letter writing.

Understandings:
*Students will understand that...*
Writing is a valuable means of communication and expression; Letter writing is a form of dialogue between correspondents.
The letter-writing format is a tool that allows writers to effectively convey information.
Purpose and audience may have a large impact on content, but not necessarily on form.

Essential Questions: (taken from the UMASD Curriculum Guide Writing Component)
“How do we guide the type of writing with purpose and audience?”
“What are the characteristics of effective written communication and how do they determine the quality of writing?”
“How do we convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings through the recursive process of writing?”

Key Knowledge and Skills:
*Students will know...*
Essential letter-writing vocabulary
The different purposes and formats of letter writing (invitational, friendly, etc.)

*Students will be able to...*
Write letters (invitational, friendly, etc.) using the correct format, correct grammar and punctuation, and well-developed paragraphs
 Appropriately respond to written letters
Edit and revise error-ridden example letters, as well as their own drafts
State their purpose and audience in a given piece of letter-writing

Relevant PDE Academic Standards
1.4.3.B. Write informational pieces using illustrations when relevant (e.g., descriptions, letters, reports, instructions).
1.2.3.E. Read, understand, and respond to essential content of text in all academic areas.

Assessments

A student who really understands...

Can explain—
The purpose of each type of letter
The format for each

Can interpret—
A written letter

Can apply—
The format and conventions of letter writing to his or her own letter writing
The conventions of grammar and punctuation to letter writing

Sees in perspective—
The letter-writer's purpose in composing a given letter

Demonstrates empathy—
By writing letters from others' perspectives
By composing an effective get-well card

Reveals self-knowledge—
By identifying weaknesses in letter writing during the revision stages
By writing about the self in a friendly letter

Performance Tasks:
Write a reply to my friendly letter
Write a letter to an author
Write an invitation
Compose a thank-you note to someone in the school

**Other Evidence:**
Show revisions made to a letter draft
Homework and in-class worksheets on the parts of a letter
Participation in whole-class led revisions and letter writing
Participation in discussion of purpose, audience, and format of example letters

**Self-Assessment and Reflection:**
Write a reflection on the changes made in a letter draft
Write a letter to self, encouraging him or her to accept and improve on weaknesses in writing

**Learning Plan**

**Lesson Plans:** (See the following pages)
Lesson 1

Objectives:

SWBAT identify a friendly letter in many forms.
SWBAT use a graphic organizer to organize their thoughts.

Materials:

*Dear Peter Rabbit* by Alma Flor Ada
Prewriting Organizer

Activities: (45 minutes total)

Call students to the carpet. Introduce the unit of letter writing and read aloud the Essential Question: “How does writing do our talking?” Pause for a moment to let students think about that, but hold off on discussion until a few letters in *Dear Peter Rabbit* have been read.

Read *Dear Peter Rabbit*. Pause after the second letter and ask what the character is saying in the letter. How does writing do his/her talking? Probe student responses for a short discussion.

Then, display my introductory letter and reread it. Tell students that the letters in *Dear Peter Rabbit* and my own letter are what we call ‘friendly letters.’ Give a brief definition of a friendly letter: a letter written in a personal voice. It should read almost as though you were speaking directly to the reader.

Ask a student to highlight (on the Smartboard) the place where I state my purpose— that is, why I was writing to the class— and what my purpose was. Explain that students will be writing a reply to my introduction letter over the next week with the same purpose: telling me about themselves.

At this point, hand out the prewriting organizer. Continue explaining that “we will go through every stage of writing starting with prewriting (and ending with a final draft); so, to start, we need to brainstorm and organize our thoughts.” Ask a student to name a topic in my introductory letter (ex: my favorite things) and a few details that I gave (ex: soft sweaters), then model the use of a prewriting diagram using the students’ responses.

---

**Diagram:**

- Very soft sweaters
- Flipping through a new book
- The smell of Spring
- Favorite Things
Brainstorm a few more topics from my letter or that students would like to add in their own letters. Encourage students to write the topics that they would like to include in the center of the organizer diagrams. Hand out additional copies as necessary, and give the tip that students can add item lines to the diagrams if they have more details than lines.

Finally, send students to their desks to do their prewriting. Circulate and support as necessary.
Dear Class,

Hello! I am so excited to get to know each of you, and I thought you might want to know a bit about me, too.

I am from Bethesda, Maryland, which is only half an hour away from the nation’s capital, Washington, D.C. My mother and father still live there, and my brother is a college student in Boston, Massachusetts. Sometimes, it is hard for me to be so far away from my family, but that makes it extra special whenever we are all home.

Some of my favorite things are very soft sweaters, the sound of flipping through a new book, and the smell of Spring. Two of my hobbies are cross-stitching and horseback riding.

My favorite school subject is reading, because I like to hear other people’s stories. Math is my second favorite because I love the challenge of figuring out puzzles. I am proud of my ability to listen to my friends when they are upset and help them feel better.

Right now, the thing I am looking forward to the most is being your teacher in Room 122!

Sincerely,

Ms. Lauren
Lesson 2

Objectives:

SWBAT identify by name and define the 5 parts of a friendly letter

Materials:

Write on Track
Dear Peter Rabbit
Friendly Letter Template

Activities: (35+ minutes total)

Ask for students to summarize Dear Peter Rabbit as review, then turn to the second letter. Pose the question: “What information does this letter give us?” Take all responses that can be defended and point out the date, addresses, names, and content if students don’t. Explain that there is a standard way of organizing all of this information so that people know just where to find it when they read letters (pass out copies of Write on Track as this happens). (7 min)

Have students open their books to page 94 and call on students to read each paragraph. Instruct students to find and put their finger on each part of a letter as we read each part’s definition on page 95. Pause after the description of the closing and ask if anyone can suggest other things to say for a closing. Look through the Dear Peter Rabbit letters for additional closings. (7 min)

Continue choosing students to read through the sample letter on page 95. Afterwards, ask the class what the purpose of the letter is. Get at the idea that ‘Andrea’ is responding to a picture and most likely some questions from ‘Ms. Nathan.’ Ask what these questions might be. (5 min)

Bring students’ attention back to the smart board and display the second letter in Dear Peter Rabbit. Ask for a student volunteer to highlight the closing of the letter. Follow up with “what does that piece of the letter tell us?” Then ask for someone to block highlight the body of the letter. Again ask what that part of the letter tells us. Label each part as it is highlighted and repeat for each of the five parts of a letter. (7 min)

Turn attention back to WOT page 96. Give the students a transition statement along the lines of “Now that we’ve had an introduction to what a friendly letter really is and what it looks like, we can talk some more about your own writing process.” Again call on students to read paragraph by paragraph pages 96-97. Point out that we have already done the prewriting; Jamar’s list is just like the list we made of topics to include in our letters. (7 min)

Now, we are on to step two! Hand out the friendly letter template and let students work with any remaining time.
Lesson 3

Objectives:

SWBAT state how letter writing changes depending on the intended audience.

Materials:

* Write On Track
  Friendly letter template
  Popsicle sticks with students’ names on them for random assignment
  Prewriting Organizer

Activities: (30 minutes total)

Introduce this lesson’s activity: write a practice friendly letter about Candlebrook cafeteria food! Remind students to use *Write On Track* to review the parts of a letter if they need to. Draw popsicle stick names to pair students for this activity and assign their letter recipient: either the principal, their mothers, or a friend in class. Pass out friendly letter templates and prewriting organizer sheets. Instruct students to choose one of two roles; each partnership should include one pre-writer and one draft writer. The pre-writer records notes of both partner’s ideas on the organizer, and the draft writer writes the draft by taking both his and his partner’s input. (4 min)

Give students time to pre-write and write their drafts. Circulate and guide partnerships as necessary. Collect prewriting and letter sheets as students finish.
Lesson 4

Objectives:

SWBAT give constructive verbal feedback on a peer’s writing.

Materials:

Writing Letters Checklist
Students’ working drafts

Activities: (40 minutes total)

Begin with 20 minutes of free writing time for students to finish their letter drafts.

Then, call students to the carpet. Review the writing process outlined in Write On Track by showing pages 96-97, then reread the Revising section to the class. Pass out the Writing Letters Checklist and instruct students to use it to guide their writing process after writing their first complete draft. Explain that the checklist will be used as a rubric when I look at their final drafts. (5 min)

Transition by saying that we all work to revise our own writing, but sometimes other people can see ways to make our writing better that we don’t see ourselves— “That’s why Mrs. Posey and I walk around and talk with each of you about your writing. Have you ever noticed how we ask questions and give suggestions? Now it’s your turn to do that.” Explain that we will be doing something called ‘peer conferencing,’ which just means giving your partner advice about how to make their writing better. Students should use the Writing Letters checklist for Revising questions to look for ways to improve friendly letters. (3 min)

Display the sample friendly letter from Worksheet page 74, absent some of the five parts, and ask students for their suggestions based on the questions in the Writing Letters Checklist. Make notes about the missing parts on the letter itself, but write student comments regarding clarity and details below the letter. Encourage students to be kind and specific in their feedback and praise responses that would be ideal in a conference. Model how the writer should respond: by asking clarifying questions about the other person’s suggestions, by writing down what they suggest, and by listening with an open mind. Next, display a blank list and ask students to generate some rules we can all live by when conferencing with our peers. Write down the rules that most students agree to (by show of hands). (15 min)

With time, let students who haven’t finished continue work on their drafts and assign students who have to partners for peer conferencing. Monitor conferences closely and give guidance.

Follow-Up: Turn the conferencing rules into a poster and post above the cubbies.
Writing Letters

**Revising**
- Does my letter include all five parts?
- Is my purpose clear?
- Does my letter sound as though I am talking to my reader?
- Is my letter interesting?
- Could I add more details?

**Proofreading**
- Did I use commas correctly?
- Did I use capital letters and end marks correctly?
- Did I spell all words correctly?

**Final Copy**
- Is my copy neat and easy to read?
- Did I leave proper space for margins?
- Did I skip a line beneath my title?
Lesson 5

Objectives:

SWBAT recognize proofreading marks and name their meaning
SWBAT correct their own writing for spelling errors

Materials:

Letter drafts
Writing Letters Checklist
Proofreading practice worksheet

Activities: (50 minutes total)

Display a letter (from one fairy tale character to another) with many spelling and grammatical errors and two missing parts (date and closing). Announce that we are moving into the proofreading stage of our writing, so we're going to want to be effective editors. (1 min)

Pass out the Proofreading Practice Worksheet. Introduce proofreading marks as a tool for giving feedback on the nitty gritty bits of writing quickly and clearly. Go over the marks for capitalization, deletions, insertions, new paragraphs, making something lower case, spelling errors, and switching things around. Ask for questions or requests for clarification. Review as necessary. (7 min)

Display the error-ridden letter again. Ask students to point out errors and corrections for the displayed letter one by one. Review symbols as they apply to student generated edits. Allow students to make the proofreading marks on the smartboard. Don't let students forget to add the missing parts of the letter with proper formatting. (7 min)

Have students complete the proofreading practice worksheet. Explain that students must have the teacher check it for understanding before they can begin proofreading their own letter drafts. (5 min)

Have students work independently to proofread their own letter drafts, then pair up students as they finish. Make sure that partners are different than the pairings from the conferencing exercise. Have partners swap drafts and add any corrections necessary to their partner's draft. (15 min)

Have students write polished final drafts and turn them in. Remind students to use their Writing Letters Checklist to check their work before turning in their final drafts. (15 min)

Homework: Finish final drafts if necessary
Use the proofreading symbols above to correct each sentence.

1. I was so when I saw you yesterday!
2. thanks so much for the robotic toy dog.
3. You are very Special to me.
4. Can I see you next summre?
5. Do you want to see a movie week next?
6. Let's do this again next summer again!
7. Hi! My name is Davey, and I would like to ask you some questions because I am a huge fan of your books.
8. Syncirally, and with all of my love, Jamie.
Lesson 6

Objectives:

SWBAT name other types of letters and define each
SWBAT write a thank-you note

Materials:

Thank You Note Notes Sheet
Copies of the Goldilocks to Baby Bear note

Activities: (48 minutes total)

Begin with a modified KWL chart: What have we learned about letter writing so far, What do we know about other kinds of letters, and What do we want to know. Prompt student input with the questions “Why else might we want to write to someone?” and “What else might we want to write to someone about?” Probe students for the names of those different kinds of letters and the variety of purposes that people have for writing (use the word ‘purpose’ to build key vocabulary). Include all student responses in the chart. When discussion dwindles, pull out the letter types that students gave and give the titles for types that students did not label (thank-you notes, invitations, condolences, get-well cards, request letters). (10 min)

Announce that we will be writing thank-you notes, invitations, and request letters. Ask students, “Why are thank you notes important?” Follow up with “What does it mean to someone to get a thank you note?” “How does it make them feel?” (3 min)

Pass out the Thank You Note Notes Sheet and Goldilocks to Baby Bear note and explain the writing prompt of writing a thank you note to someone other than a teacher in the school. Explain that the purpose is to show gratitude to someone that does things for us every day but might not feel appreciated. Suggest the school nurse, cafeteria workers, custodians, etc. (10 min)

Give a mini-lesson on the components of a thank-you note by reading aloud the Goldilocks to Baby Bear example and explaining each part in isolation- students can either note-take the Baby Bear thank you note example or by beginning to draft their own thank you letter in the notes sheet spaces. Have students complete the Thank You Notes Sheet, get it checked by a teacher, and write rough and final drafts of their thank you notes. Give students time and blank cardstock to work. (25 min)

Homework:

Interview a relative or friend about different kinds of letters they have received. What kinds of letters were they? What were they about? How did your interviewee feel? How did he or she respond? Take notes so that you will have plenty to share with the class in the next lesson.
Putting Together a Thank You Note

Below are the parts of a thank you note. Each part also has some lines for you to write an example. Get your pieces together and make a super note!

The **greeting**: this is where you name the person you are thanking.

Example: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

The **expression of gratitude**: Say thank you for something.

Example: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

The **detail**: Tell how you plan to use whatever you are saying thank you for or tell how much it means to you. Compliment it in some way.

Example: ____________________________________________
Your relationship to the person you are thanking:
Mention their importance in your life by saying something about how you've known them in the past and when you might see them again in the future.

Example: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

More gratitude: Say thank you again.

Example: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Closing and signature: Say goodbye and sign the note.

Example: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________
Dear Baby Bear,

Thank you so much for the wooden birdhouse you made for me! I have already put it up in the garden and it’s beautiful. The birds love it so much that I have to refill it with birdseed every morning just to feed them all!

I was so glad you could come to my birthday party! It made me very happy to have you there to celebrate with me, and I can’t wait to play again sometime soon. Thank you again for your wonderful gift!

Your dear friend,

Goldilocks
Lesson 7

Objectives:

SWBAT make predictions about a fiction text

SWBAT make inferences about a written letter

Materials:

Copies of Tony’s Bread

Activities: (45 min)

Begin by calling students to the carpet and asking them to flip through the story. Ask what they think of the story just by looking at the pictures and the shape of the text. What do they notice? What do those things tell us about the story? If students don’t, then call attention to the letters in the story. Ask for predictions about what role the letters might play in the story of the characters’ lives. (10 min)

Begin to read the story by popcorn reading (One student calls on another who has his or her hand raised when the teacher says ‘popcorn.’ Students should raise their hands to volunteer if they would like to read and have not yet done so). Address possible misunderstandings as we read. As letters are introduced, ask again for what role they play. Why does Angelo choose to write letters rather than speaking to Tony and Serafina? Touch on the concept of persuasion both within the context of letter writing and the context of the story. (20 min)

When we finish the story, discuss what role the letters played and whether students’ predictions were close. Discuss what type of letter each one in the story could be categorized as, but encourage multiple answers and recognition of ambiguity. (15 min)
Lesson 8 (2 days)

Objectives:

SWBAT compose a request letter

Materials:

Copies of *Tony’s Bread*
More About the Author-Illustrator handout

Activities: (90 min)

Read the Meet Tomie dePaola page of *Tony’s Bread* and the rewritten handout of the More About the Author-Illustrator page, then briefly discuss what we have learned about him, both directly from the text and as inferences about him based on the facts in the text. What opinions do we have of him? Record student responses on the smartboard. Tell students that their next letter assignment is a letter to the author; students will have the opportunity to ask him questions through writing. (10 min)

Have students draw a floorplan of dePaola’s house as they imagine it. What kind of things would be important to him? What would he have in his house? (10 min)

When students have finished that, give them a few minutes to brainstorm questions they have for dePaola individually. When students finish, ask for some students to share and encourage students to write down questions (their own or others’) that they would like to ask. After the sharing, students begin their drafts. (15 min)

Finished drafts will be followed by partnered conferences and proofreading, then finalized drafts. (40 min)

When most students are finished their final drafts, give a minilesson on envelope addressing then use the envelope correction worksheets for practice. (15 min)

Collect letters and envelopes, copy them, then send the letters.
Lesson 9

Objectives:

SWBAT compose an invitation

Materials:

Invitation Notes Sheet

Activities: (45 min)

Announce that we will be writing invitations to our wax museum today. Hand out the Invitation Notes Sheet and display an example invitation. Explain the information that goes into an invitation- who is hosting the event, what the event is, when the event is (date and time), where the event is (name of venue, address), and perhaps why the event is being held. (15 min)

Have students fill out the blanks in the notes sheet with the who, what, when, where, and why of their wax museum event. Give the address of the school and the date of the museum. (5 min)

Have students write their drafts on a sheet of paper. Remind students to address the invitation to a recipient and to include a signature. When students have proofread their own work and checked that everything is included, give them folded cards to write inside and decorate. (25 min)

Concluding Activity:

As students finish their invitations, have them join me on the carpet. Have them discuss uses for letters in the world and record their ideas on a poster paper (Head the paper: “Dear world, This is why we appreciate letters.” and at the bottom of the page, write “Sincerely,” with space at the bottom for students to sign). Display the poster prominently.

As students finish their contributions to the poster, ask them to write friendly letters to themselves about their strengths and weaknesses in letter writing. Check for understanding of the assignment, hand them lined paper, and send them to their desks to write.
### Putting Together an Invitation

**Who?**
- **Definition:**
- **Example:**

**What?**
- **Definition:**
- **Example:**

**When?**
- **Definition:**
- **Example:**

**Where?**
- **Definition:**
- **Example:**

**Why?**
- **Definition:**
- **Example:**