

Let's Write a Friendly Letter

Give your students an authentic writing experience and a chance to build empathy by writing friendly letters.

Grades: 3-5

Time: One 45-minute class period and one 15-minute class period

Objectives:

1. The student will write a friendly letter that includes greeting, body, and closing.
2. The student will address an envelope using the correct format.
3. The student will understand how we use written communication to build relationships.
4. The student will understand how the mail system operates.

Materials:

- *A Friendly Guide to Writing a Friendly Letter* classroom poster
- Copy of *My First Draft* page for each student
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Copy of *A Letter for You*
- Pencils
- Envelopes (feel free to use the included template)
- Stamps (You might request that each student bring their own or ask families to send some in as a classroom donation)

Session I: Writing the Letter

Build background knowledge. Ask students to share what they already know about writing letters and about the U.S. Mail™ system.

How is mail delivered to your family?

Have you ever received a letter or card?

How did it make you feel?

What are some reasons we send mail?

Introduce the lesson. Share with students that they'll have the opportunity to write friendly letters to send in the mail. But first, they'll learn the parts of a letter.

Teacher Note: You have lots of options here! Students could write to deployed soldiers, seniors at a local nursing home, or family members. We do recommend you get parent permission for students to participate in this project.

Teach new vocabulary. Hang the *A Friendly Guide to Writing a Friendly Letter* poster where all your students can see it. Have students take turns reading the letter aloud and then sharing the call-outs. For letter greetings and closings, invite students to brainstorm fun ways to open and end their letters. Write them on the poster!

Model the process. Before having your students write their letters, model the process by writing a friendly letter together as a class. Make it fun and give students opportunities to contribute ideas.

Pre-writing. Distribute copies of the *My First Draft* page to your students. If they get stuck, they can check out the list of writing topics and questions to ask.

Independent work. Ask your students to write the first draft of their letters. Remind them to use the poster and the letter you wrote as a class as their models. Once they are finished, you may want to edit them or have them edit in pairs. Their final drafts will go on the *A Letter for You* worksheet. Make sure you give them time to fill out the fun elements on the side.



Session 2: Mailing the Letter

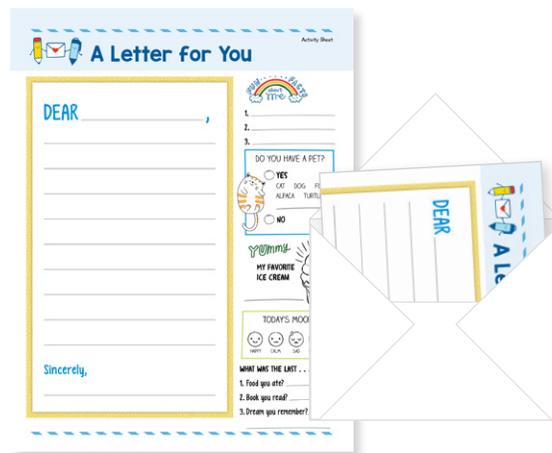
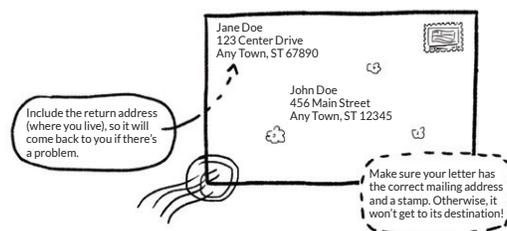
Once students have finished their letters, return their attention to the classroom poster.

Talk through the important elements of addressing an envelope: the correct mailing address, including the ZIP Code™ number, the return address, and, of course, a stamp.

Draw a large rectangle envelope on the whiteboard or chart paper. Model the process of addressing an envelope using your school address as the return address and the recipient's address as the mailing address.

Hand out envelopes and give students time to fill out their own, using their first and last name, school address, and recipient's name and address. (Note: For privacy, have students use their first name and last initial when writing to someone they do not know.)

Point out where the stamp would go and invite students to affix theirs to the envelope. Check out the extension activity about stamps below!



Create Your Own Stamp Designs

Teach your students about the importance of stamps with this fun assignment. Share the *Create Your Own Stamp Design* handout with your students. Invite students to share the facts they find there. Explain that stamps are designed to honor people, places, moments, and artifacts of American history and culture. Ask them: What or who will you honor with your stamp design? Invite students to draw and color their rough draft on the handout provided. Then provide each student with an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper for their final design. Consider displaying all your students' beautiful stamp designs on a classroom or hallway bulletin board. Ask each student to share the story of their stamp design on an index card and display it next to their stamp.



Continuing the Correspondence

If you decide to partner with a senior center or a group of soldiers, you may be able to make this a yearlong project. If students receive letters back, do some teaching around how to respond, such as answering questions, making connections, and asking new questions. Schedule letter-writing sessions regularly. There are some natural times to write during the year, such as holidays and special events. We've even included a fun card template for you to use!



Write Thank-You Notes to Your School Community

Invite your students to write thank-you letters to members of your school community who help in so many ways. Begin by brainstorming as a class. Who helps make our school a wonderful place? Make a list. Hopefully, your students will have many names to suggest: the principal, librarian, parent volunteers, custodians. Invite your students to work in pairs or small groups to write one of the letters. Your students may want to illustrate their letters too! Explain that a thank-you letter must address the person clearly, say thank you, and explain what the thanks are for. Lastly, a thank-you note should express how the recipient of the letter makes you feel. When the thank-you letters are finished, have students address envelopes to the recipients and place stamps on them (ask families for donations!). Put them in a USPS collection box to be delivered back to school; it's way more fun than just dropping them in teacher boxes!

Name: _____

Create Your Own Stamp Design

Postage stamps are pieces of paper with glue or adhesive on the back. They are put on the corner of an envelope to pay the fee for having USPS take the envelope to where it is being sent.



Postage stamps are tiny works of art designed to reflect and celebrate the history of the country. They highlight heroes, history, important events, popular culture, and natural wonders. There's a story behind every stamp.

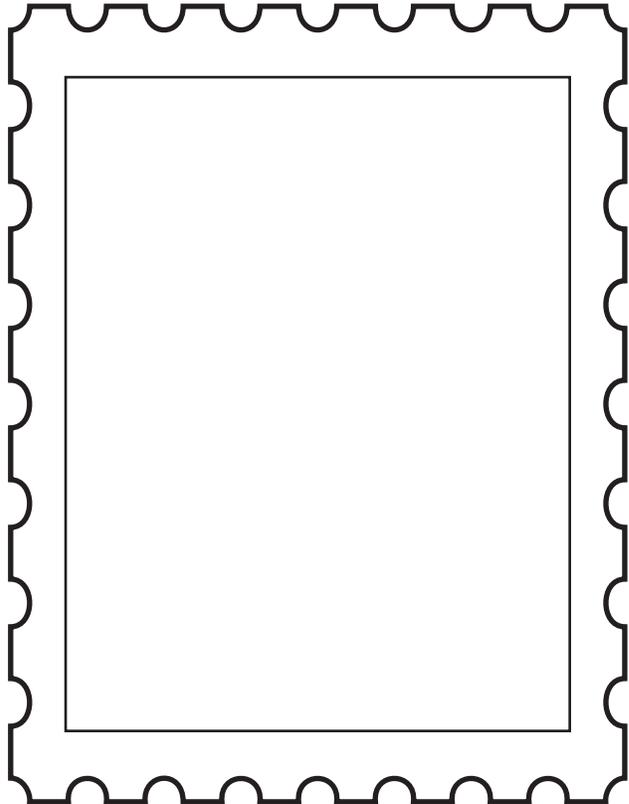
The first U.S. postage stamps were issued in 1847. The 5¢ stamp depicted Benjamin Franklin. The 10¢ stamp pictured George Washington.



In 1992, stamps became like stickers. Before that, you had to lick them for them to stick on the envelope!

The subject of my stamp is

I chose to honor this subject with a stamp because





A Letter for You

DEAR _____ ,

Sincerely,



- _____
- _____
- _____

DO YOU HAVE A PET?



YES

CAT DOG FISH
ALPACA TURTLE

NO

Yummy

MY FAVORITE
ICE CREAM



TODAY'S MOOD



HAPPY



CALM



SAD



GRUMPY

WHAT WAS THE LAST . . .



- Food you ate? _____
- Book you read? _____
- Dream you remember? _____

Envelope Template

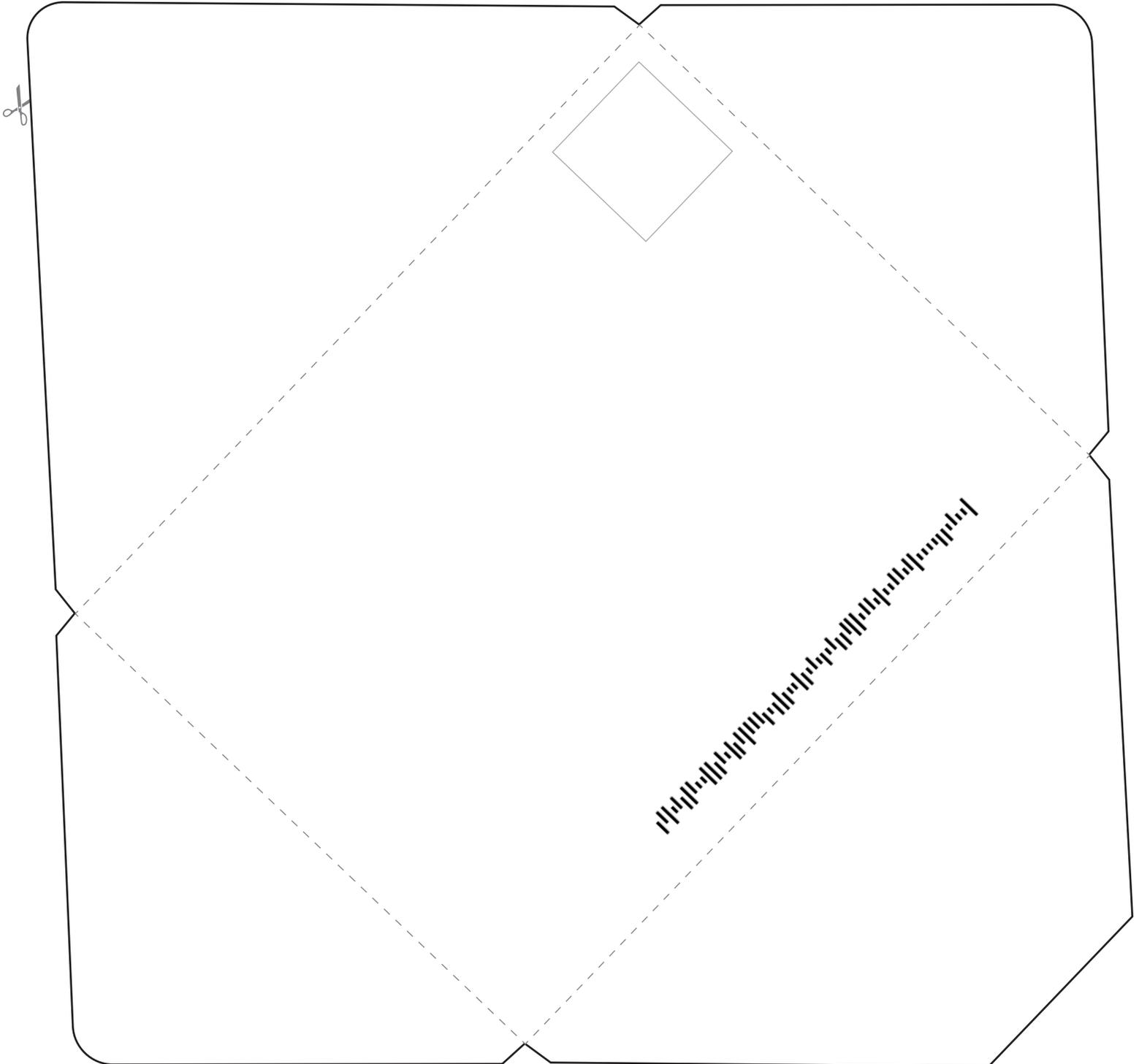
Follow these easy steps to make your own envelope and get your letter in the mail.

YOU WILL NEED: Glue stick, scissors, pencil, ruler, tape (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. Cut out** the envelope along the solid back line, making sure not to cut inside the lines as the envelope won't seal correctly.
- 2. Fold** along the dotted lines with the printed side facedown. Use the ruler to help you fold in a straight line.
- 3. Unfold** the top flap. **Glue** or **tape** the bottom flap onto the side flaps; be careful not to get glue on the inside of the envelope!
- 4. Insert** your card or letter in the envelope and seal it with glue, tape, or even a sticker! Now write the address and add a stamp.

TOP▼



Card Template

Follow these easy steps to make your own card and get your letter in the mail.

YOU WILL NEED:

Scissors and a pencil

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cut out** the card along the solid back line. Try to make your cuts as straight as possible!
- Fold** along the dotted line. Use the ruler to help you fold in a straight line.
- Now it is time for you to fill in your card. **Write** your letter on the inside of the card, just like you have practiced in class.
- Follow** the instructions on the Envelope Template worksheet to make your own envelope, place your stamp, and get your card in the mail.





A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO



WRITING a FRIENDLY Letter



HEADING

Put your address at the top. Be sure to include the date!

GREETING

Many letter writers start with "Dear," the person's name, and a comma. But you can also come up with your own greeting, such as:

- Aloha
- Howdy



CLOSING

Lots of letter writers use "Sincerely" to show that their letter is ending. Here are some other ideas:

- See you later alligator,
- Kind regards,

ENVELOPE

Make sure your letter has the correct mailing address and a stamp. Otherwise, it won't get to its destination!

Jane Doe
123 Center Drive
Any Town, ST 67890

September 15, 2021

Dear Grandpa,

I miss you so much. I am having a great school year so far. Fifth grade is awesome! It is sunny and warm here in Florida. I am playing soccer this year. I'm still trying to get my first goal. I wish you could come to one of my games.

How are things in Seattle? Is it raining? Have you gone to Pike Place Market recently? I remember when we went there together and bought flowers and saw the pig statue. I know her name is Rachel, but I think it should be Priscilla.

Love,
Jane

P.S. I can't wait to see you this summer!

BODY

This is where your message goes! In a friendly letter, you should use a casual tone. Check your grammar and spelling and write neatly.

POST-SCRIPT

P.S. means "written after" and is the perfect place to include anything you forgot to mention in the body.



Include the return address (where you live), so it will come back to you if there's a problem.



Jane Doe
123 Center Drive
Any Town, ST 67890



John Doe
456 Main Street
Any Town, ST 12345

