



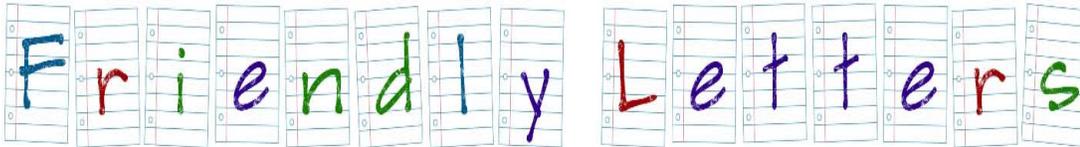
Southern Nevada
Regional Professional
Development Program

Volume 7, Issue 4

April- May 2011

The LeafLIT

A Literacy Publication



by Kathryn Limerick

It's a natural progression to move from narrative to expository writing and then to personal communication. At this time in the year, students feel good about themselves as writers, and are confident with paragraphs and multiple steps. Now they can communicate an idea in a letter format.

Teachers are always finding notes, catching students texting or having behavioral issues in the classroom at this time in the year. By the spring, the students know each other and are trying to find a way to share their feelings and ideas. This is the perfect opportunity to teach them a long-standing way to communicate... in an informal or friendly letter.

A friendly letter contains five parts: heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Many teachers have a favorite friendly letter song, like "A Friendly Letter" by Beth Pergola; the CD, Sing it Instead can be found on iTunes. Others can be found on various Internet sites that are set to common tunes. Some examples are:

Parts of a Letter: (Tune of the Addams Family TV Show)

<http://www.proteacher.net/discussions/showthread.php?t=67103>

The five parts of a letter
Are easy to remember
Heading, greeting, body,
Closing, signature

Parts of a letter (snap, snap)
Parts of a letter (snap, snap)
Parts of a letter, parts of a letter,
parts of a letter.



Bill Hanlon,
Director

RPDP Literacy Team:

Shan Cannon

RPDP
799-3835 x245

Robyn Markovic

RPDP-K/1
799-3835 x242

Adine Sibley

RPDP
799-3835 x256

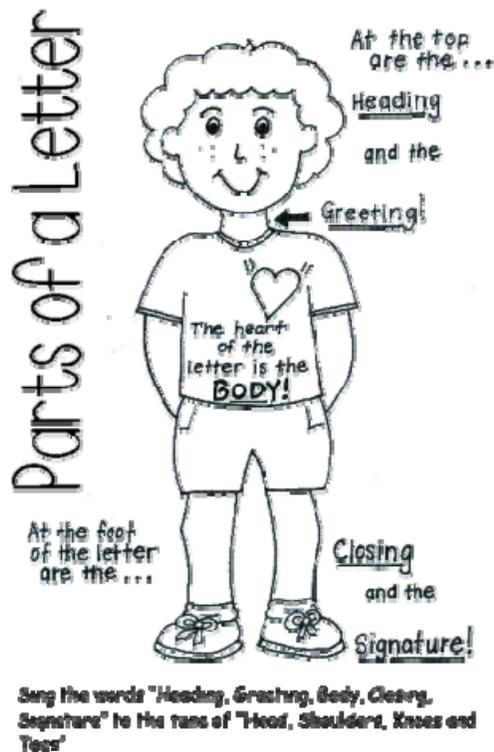
Chelli Smith

RPDP-Outlying
Counties
799-3835 x230

Friendly Letter

Parts of a Friendly Letter Song (& Visual Aid): (Tune of “Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes”)

<http://www.nhcs.k12.nc.us/parsley/curriculum/postal/FriendlyLetter.html>



Writing a Friendly Letter Song: (Tune of the Mulberry Bush)

<http://www.billings.k12.mt.us/literacy/friendlet.htm>

First you write the heading, heading, heading. First you write the heading: the month, the day, the year.

Next you write the greeting, greeting, greeting. Next you write the greeting. You start it off with "Dear".

Then you write the body, body, body. Then you write the body. You ask and tell some things.

Then you write the closing, closing, closing. Then you write the closing, "Your friend" or "sincerely".

Under that you write your name, write your name, write your name. Under that you write your name.

And then your letter's done.

Visit <http://www.rpd.net/teachers.html> for Literacy Resources

Friendly Letter

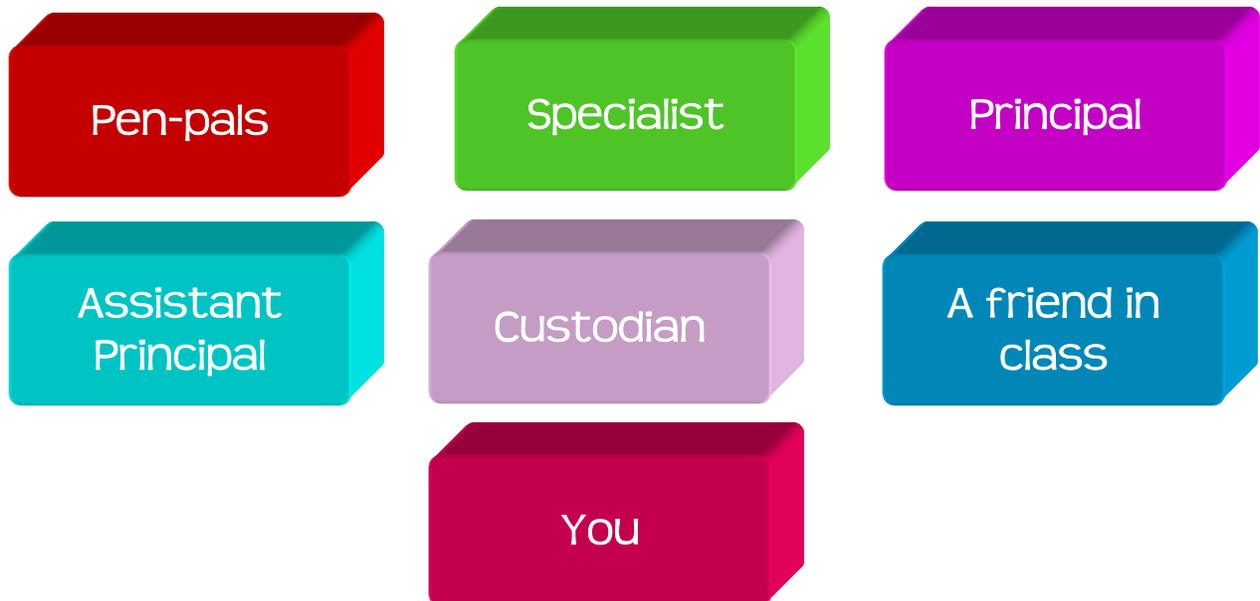
Friendly Letter Song: (Tune of The Brady Bunch Theme Song)

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/friendly-letter-song-tune-of-the-brady-bunch-theme-song/>

Heading, greeting,
Body, closing,
And signature.
These are the five parts
Of a friendly letter
That we have learned today.
Duh duh duh duh duh.

Now that the students have a tool to remember the parts of the letter, they need to know **how to write the letter**. Read-aloud books are a great place to begin. There are numerous books that work well for opening lessons, and there are many lesson plans online that complement those books. Wonderful picture books such as Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James and A Letter to Amy by Ezra Jack Keats work as well as short chapter books such as Frog & Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel and Arthur's Pen Pal by Lilian Hoban.

Once students are familiar with some of these books and have been shown samples of letters, they will need to find a reason for writing. This is an area where teachers can be extremely creative! Pen-pals are a wonderful reason to write. This type of writing can be modeled by working with another teacher at the school or an old friend. Below are some ideas of people that students can write to and receive a response:



Visit <http://www.rpd.net/teachers.html> for Literacy Resources

Friendly Letter

Begin with the Heading: This contains the address, city, state and zip code. Don't forget the date!

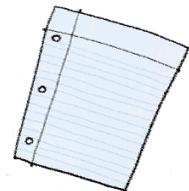
Next the Greeting: Greetings usually start with "Dear" and the person's name.

Now the Body: This is the fun part! For the content of the body of the letter, allow students to brainstorm topics and questions using a Circle Map or other organizational tool. Keep the body short for the first letter. The first paragraph could start out asking how the person is doing, and could also offer a compliment such as, "I think it is really great that we are pen-pals." In the next paragraph, the author can ask questions and tell the reader some things about himself. Finally, students can write a short and sweet sentence to close the letter such as, "I can't wait to hear from you. Write soon."

The Closing: This goes above the signature and is followed by a comma. Some common closings are: "Love", "From", and "Your friend".

Finally, the Signature: Make sure students understand that this is not the time to scribble. As fun as it sounds, the person receiving the letter needs to be able to read the name of the sender.

While students are waiting for letters to be answered and returned, they can learn about and use other forms of informal writing, like thank you cards and invitations. They can decorate them using some ideas and lessons from the art teacher or another creative genius in the school. Remember, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Happy writing!



For past **LeafLIT** newsletters visit www.rpd.net.

