

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Performance Standard 3C.J

Each student will write a letter to the editor of his/her local newspaper in which he/she addresses a current issue in the community. He/she will then write a friendly letter to a friend or pen pal who lives in a different region, telling the friend what he/she wrote about in the letter to the editor. The two letters will be evaluated for adjustments to audience and occasion, with an emphasis on adjustments to style, tone, level of formality, vocabulary, format, and structure, and the results will be rated accordingly:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- *Formatting the letter:* include the components of a business letter (i.e., return address, date, inside address, salutation, body, closing, signature); place components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) on the page; punctuate components.
- *Organizing content – Message and Tone:* include five required parts of the message (i.e., person addressed, nature of the problem, how it was discovered, what will satisfy the writer, how to reach writer) in the body; use formal tone; use appropriate language.

INFORMAL (FRIENDLY) LETTER

- *Formatting the letter:* include components of the friendly letter (i.e., date, salutation, body, closing, signature); place components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) on the page; punctuate components.
- *Organizing content – Message and Tone:* include in the body, the parts of the message recorded in the business letter; use informal tone.

Procedures

1. *In order to communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes (3C)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following:
 - Write on one topic for different audiences by adjusting tone, voice, vocabulary, and grammar conventions.
 - Accomplish the assumed purpose (e.g., job application, resume, petition).
 - Apply appropriate format and structure that effectively address a variety of real-life situations.
 - Adjust voice, tone, vocabulary, and grammatical conventions according to purpose and audience.
 - Evaluate a variety of compositions for purpose, structure, content, and details.
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Students will have studied letters to the editor and friendly letters with an emphasis on the proper tone, style, format, and vocabulary for each.
4. Students will have written several practice letters to the editor and friendly letters prior to the assessment.
5. Each student will write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper on a topic selected by the student of with limited support from the teacher.
6. Each student will then write a friendly letter to someone outside the circulation area of the newspaper, telling a friend what was said to the editor.
7. Evaluate each student's performance using the rubric. Add each student's scores to determine the performance level.

Examples of Student Work follow

Time Requirements

- Two class periods

Resources

- Writing materials, including available technology
- Copies of the writing assignment
- Letter to the Editor Rubric

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NAME _____ DATE _____

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds 15 - 16 total points
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets 11 - 14 total points | <input type="checkbox"/> Approaches 7 -10 total points
<input type="checkbox"/> Begins 4 - 6 total points |
|--|--|

	LETTER TO THE EDITOR		INFORMAL (FRIENDLY) LETTER	
	Format	Content – Message and Tone	Format	Content – Message and Voice
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All components of a business letter are present (i.e., return address, date, salutation, body, closing, signature). • All components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphs, sequence of components) are properly placed on the page. • All components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required parts of the message are present in the body. • Consistently uses formal tone. • Consistently uses appropriate language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All components of the friendly letter are present (i.e., date, salutation, body, closing, signature). • All components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphs, sequence of components) are properly placed on the page. • All components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parts of the message recorded in the letter to the editor are present in the body paragraphs. • Consistently uses informal voice.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most components of a business are present. • Most components are properly placed on the page. • Most components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All required parts of the message are present in the body. • Usually uses formal tone. • Usually uses appropriate language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most components of the friendly letter are present. • Most components are properly placed on the page. • Most components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parts of the message recorded in the letter to the editor are present in the body paragraphs. • Usually uses informal tone of voice.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some components of a business letter are present. • Some components are properly placed on the page. • Some components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the required parts of the message are present in the body. • Sometimes uses formal tone. • Sometimes uses slang or jargon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some components of the friendly letter are present. • Some components are properly placed on the page. • Some components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parts of the message recorded in the letter to the editor are present in the body paragraphs. • Sometimes uses informal tone of voice.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no components a business letter are present. • Few or no components are properly placed on the page. • Few or no components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or none of the required parts of the message are present in the body. • Seldom or never uses formal tone. • Overuses slang or jargon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no components of the friendly letter are present. • Few or no components are properly placed on the page. • Few or no components are properly punctuated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no parts of the message recorded in the letter to the editor are present in the body paragraphs. • Seldom or never uses informal tone of voice.
Score				

17 December 2001

Dear Katie,

I was reading the newspaper yesterday and I came across an article saying we should require passenger manifests. I know you are going out of the country this summer and I thought you might like to know what they had to say.

This bill was cut from the anti-terrorism package passed last month. It's pointless to bring the moot issue back. Currently, 85 percent of airlines give passenger manifests before landing. The writer says that the idea is; if your plane does not give the manifest before landing they will not be allowed to land. This idea was taken out of the anti-terrorist bill passed last month by President Bush, but they are considering it again.

I guess the main airlines that don't comply with this are those in the current "terrorist" countries. That's still not much of a reason. You may want to write someone on your opinions.

I wrote a letter to the editor talking about how much of a hassle this would be. What would happen if someone on your plane was denied entry to the United States? Would you have to return to the country you flew from?

The article even stated: "Requiring passenger manifests isn't the solution." They said it was only part of the plan. I just wonder what other kinds of restrictions they are going to put on passengers.

I hope all goes well on your trip. See you when you get back.

Sincerely,

817 South Washington Street
Wawa, Illinois 61***
March 20, 2002

Pantagraph Letters to the Editor
Pantagraph
301 West Washington Street
Bloomington, Illinois 61702-2907

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am responding to the article entitled "Feds Buckle on Seat-belt Goal" which was published on March 18.

The federal government has recently reassessed their goal of getting 90% of Americans to wear seat belts by 2005. The government believed that this goal set by the Clinton administration is unattainable and has lowered their target to 78% by 2003. However, I believe the target of 90% is still very attainable for Illinois to achieve. We should do everything in our power to reach it.

According to an August 28, 2000, press release from Governor Ryan, Illinois has recently reached an all-time high for seat belt usage with a total of 70.2% of people buckling up. This is a nice feat, but we can do so much more. Right now, Illinois exercises secondary enforcement laws on seat belts for adults. In other words, adults can only be issued seat belt citations if they are pulled over for another offense. This is unlike primary enforcement law where people may be pulled over by merely not wearing a seat belt. However, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), by adopting new primary enforcement laws, we could raise seat belt use rates by an average of 17%. In another study by the NHTSA, Illinois could save an additional 124 lives, 3,894 injuries, and over 260 million dollars by implementing primary enforcement laws.

Illinois is currently seeing an increasing in awareness and seatbelt usage, and now is not the time to start backing down from our goals. Instead, we need to continue striving to reach our full potential. We can help do this by informing our state legislators about the facts on seat belts and urging Springfield to pass primary enforcement laws.

Sincerely,

Dear Maria,

Hi, how are you doing? It's been a few days since we last talked. Did your test go well on Friday? I hope all of your studying paid off.

I wanted to tell you that I wrote an article to the Pantagraph on seat belts, and I think it's going to be published this Friday. Ever since my cousins died in the crash last year, I have been pretty emotional on this issue. In the paper's article, the author wrote how the federal government has reduced the goal of getting 90% of people to wear seat belts to 78%! This mere 12% change is the difference between saving over a hundred lives, thousands of injuries, and millions of dollars; these numbers don't even take into consideration the emotional burden placed on thousands of people. It really makes me upset because this stuff happens everyday. Just two weeks ago, one of my friends lost his aunt and his cousin in a car accident because they weren't buckled in. If they had only been wearing their seat belts, they would still be here today.

I hope my letter opens the eyes of a few people, and I hope you always remember to buckle up too. Don't forget! I couldn't stand losing another friend to this cause.

Sincerely,

1402 N. Mulberry Street
Groves, Illinois 60000
17 December 2001

The Pantagraph
Letters to the Editor
301 W. Washington Street
Bloomington, Illinois 61702-2907

Dear Editor:

In the November 12th paper there is an editorial from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on the subject of required passenger lists. I believe that we are going too far in asking for passenger manifests. If the armed guards in airports aren't enough I don't think this will make any difference.

This issue was chopped out of the anti-terrorism package passed last month by President Bush. If it has already been dropped why does it need to be reconsidered? Currently, 85 percent of international airlines voluntarily give their manifests before landing. That only leaves 15 percent for this law to apply too. I believe this will further hinder the airline industries rather than helping them recover from the loss of sales following the September 11th attacks. The bill proposes that the manifest has to be given in order to land. That in turn may slow air traffic or stop certain airlines from flying to the United States altogether.

The article states: "Required passenger manifests is not the answer." They say this is only part of the net to catch terrorists. What kinds of things will they come up with next? The article also states, "American airline passengers are putting up with a lot of inconveniences." This will slow air traffic even if implemented, especially if they find someone on the passenger list they don't want in the country. Would you like it if your plane weren't allowed to land because someone on your plane was refused entry to the country?

Sincerely,