

WRITE AN ISSUE LETTER

Ages 11 to 14 (Level 3)

Description:	The learner will write a persuasive letter about an issue s/he is concerned with using the format of a formal letter.
Leading question:	What is an issue that means a lot to you and that you would like to see changed? What should that change look like?
Age group:	11-14
Subjects:	Civics, Language/Writing
Total time required:	45-60 min/day over 4 days
Self-guided / Supervised activity:	Self-guided
Resources required:	Paper, writing utensils

Learning outcomes:	<p>The learner will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify issues in his/her community that need change ● Think critically about the arguments for and against creating that change. ● Think systematically about the actions needed to make that change happen and any possible limitations related to taking these action steps. ● Use the format of a formal letter. ● Build a logical and persuasive argument. ● Think systematically about the processes and costs of instituting plans for the recommended change. ● Identify ways to capture the attention of the public during a commercial or announcement.
Required previous learning:	<p>Familiarity with writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.</p> <p>Basic addition and multiplication.</p>
Inspiration:	N/A

Topics/concepts covered and skills developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal letters, critical thinking and communication skills ● Writing ● Thinking systematically/Argumentation

	10 minutes	<p>perhaps you would like your community to come together and build, grow, or renovate a local library. Write down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who you are addressing this to (i.e. your target audience). Examples of who this could include your peers, the parents in your community, a school leader, a community leader, etc. • The change you would like to see. For example, is it that you want more books to be added to the library because it does not have enough books or that the books are only suitable for certain groups of children/students? • Possible concerns your target audience might have and ways you could address their concerns. Try to put yourself in their schools and consider the issue from their point of view. For example, perhaps someone might be concerned that children are not using the library enough to warrant adding more books. What are some ideas you could provide to address this concern? <p>Learners will complete a table similar to the one below</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="467 894 1401 1623"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Issue 1: Unwanted teenage pregnancy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concerns</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target audience</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Change needed</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ways to address the issue</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Issue 2:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concerns</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target audience</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Change needed</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ways to address the issue</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Issue 3:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concerns</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target audience</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Change needed</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ways to address the issue</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Issue 1: Unwanted teenage pregnancy		Concerns		Target audience		Change needed		Ways to address the issue		Issue 2:		Concerns		Target audience		Change needed		Ways to address the issue		Issue 3:		Concerns		Target audience		Change needed		Ways to address the issue	
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		<p>Numeracy extension: Imagine that you decided to write a letter to persuade the authorities to refurbish an old pet rescue center. If you want to replace the carpet of the center’s floor, which has the following dimensions length: 10 meters, width: 12 meters. The new carpet will be made of a special resistant material which costs \$50 per meter. What will be the area and cost of the new carpet?</p>
2	<p>5 minutes</p> <p>10 minutes</p> <p>1 hour</p>	<p>Learners will deeply analyze one of the issues and write the first draft of the formal letter about the issue</p> <p>Activity 2: Deep Analysis</p> <p>In this activity, learners will review their drafts from the day before and pick one of the (5-8) issues they brainstormed in Activity 1. The issue they are passionate about, most concerned with and for which they want change made. If learners are in a classroom setting, they could work with a peer in order to make their decision.</p> <p>Learners will deeply analyze the issue and come up with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three possible causes of the issue (C₁, C₂ and C₃) • Three possible effects (E₁, E₂, E₃) • Three possible ways of preventing the issue (P₁, P₂ and P₃) • Three possible ways of solving the issue (S₁, S₂ and S₃) • Three possible ways of supporting people already affected by the issue (D₁, D₂, D₃) <p>Learners will make a graphical representation of their analysis.</p> <p>C = Cause E = Effect P = Prevention S = Solution D = Support</p>

		<p>Activity 3: Understanding formal letters and their format</p> <p>In this activity, learners will get a deep understanding of the format of a formal letter.</p> <p>A good letter should consist of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An appropriate greeting 2. An introduction clearly stating the reason why you are writing 3. A main body in which the subject is developed. Begin a new paragraph for each main point 4. A final paragraph in which you express your wish for something to be done 5. An appropriate ending <p>Formal letters are sometimes known as business letters. They are written in a strictly formal style (serious and respectful tone, and technical vocabulary).</p> <p>Learners will find an example of a letter (at home or in the news) and try to identify words that exemplify the tone of the letter (See Appendix 1 for a contrast between formal and informal words) and the following aspects:</p> <p>Formal letter format</p> <p>A typical formal letter format is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sender's address The sender's address is written on the right-hand side corner of the letter ● Date The date is written on the right-hand side corner of the letter below the Sender's address ● Name/Designation of Addressee It includes the name, address and job title of the recipient. This is written on the left-hand side of the letter ● Subject It is a brief statement mentioning the reason for writing the letter. It should be clear, eye catchy, short, simple and easily understandable ● Salutation (Greeting) It contains the words to greet the recipient. Words like Dear Sir/Madam
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Body This is the main part of the letter. It contains the actual message of the sender. The message in the letter must be clear and simple to understand. The body is divided into three main parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening part: This part of the letter must state the introduction of the writer. It also contains previous correspondence if any. ○ Main part: This part states the main idea or reason for writing. It must be clear, concise, complete and to the point. ○ Concluding part: It is the conclusion of the formal letter. It shows the suggestions or the need for action. It shows the expectation of the sender from the recipient. ● Complimentary close: This is a humble way of ending a letter. The most generally used complimentary close are Yours faithfully and Yours sincerely ● Signature and sender's identification It includes the signature, full name and designation of the sender. It can also include other details like contact number, address etc ● Enclosures Enclosures show the documents attached to the letter. It is listed one by one. Review the following format of a formal letter so that you are familiar with its components: ● Copy circulation It is needed when the copies of the letter are sent to other persons. It is denoted as C.C. <p>Activity 4: Writing the formal issue letter</p> <p>In this activity, learners will write their formal issue letter. Using the letter format below and the bullet points you drafted in Activity 2, write a formal, persuasive letter to a suitable audience about the topic you chose. Keep in mind that your tone would be formal and respectful</p> <p><u>STRUCTURE:</u></p> <p>[your name] [address] [other contact information, if available e.g. email address] [date]</p>
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		<p>[recipient's or organization's name] [recipient's or organization's address]</p> <p>[Subject of the letter E.g. Subject: XXXXX]</p> <p>[greeting E.g. Dear Sir/Madam/Mr./Mrs./etc.],</p> <p>[your message, 3-4 paragraphs long: <i>Paragraph 1: Introduction and purpose</i> <i>Paragraphs 2-3: Details</i> <i>Paragraph 4: Conclusion and what you are expecting</i>]</p> <p>[complimentary close E.g. Yours sincerely/Best regards/etc.], [Your signature] [Your name]</p>
3	<p>30 minutes</p> <p>30 minutes</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Learners will get additional input for their issue letter from family members through a debate</p> <p>Activity 5: Debate</p> <p>When thinking through a proposal, it can be helpful to ask others to provide different points of view. This can help us improve our suggestions or might raise points we had not previously considered.</p> <p>Show your letter to 1 or more family members and have them read it. To prepare for the debate, ask them to think of 3-5 reasons <i>against</i> your proposal. While that is happening, prepare for the debate by coming up with your own reasons someone might be against your proposal and how you might address their concerns.</p> <p>Debate format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning with you, state and explain your first reason for why you believe your proposal is important and feasible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Your family member(s) will try and counter/argue against the point you just made. - Your family member will state and explain their first reason for why they are against your proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o You will try to address their concern. <p>Repeat this format for a total of 3-5 times.</p>

	<p>30 minutes</p> <p>5 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were they convinced by the content of your letter? Why or why not? How could you strengthen the arguments or persuasiveness of your letter? - How was the quality of your writing? Was the argument logical? Did it build on itself in a way that made sense and was easy to follow? <p>Based on the feedback you received, make final edits to your letter.</p> <p>Numeracy extension:</p> <p>Imagine that you have submitted a proposal to build a new stadium to promote local sports and tourism. The local government likes your proposal but tells you to draft a plan for a stadium that accommodates a maximum of 23% of your city's population of 50,000. What should the capacity of the stadium be?</p>
5	50 minutes	<p>Learners will create a plan for putting into action the changes needed to address the issue they are concerned with</p> <p>Congratulations on your well-written letter! You have persuaded the recipient of your letter to agree to your request. S/he wants you to create a plan so that the changes can be put into action.</p> <p>Activity 6: Developing an implementation plan</p> <p>In this activity, learners will develop an implementation plan.</p> <p>Draft a plan that includes the following information, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How long it will take - How many people will it take (and who), with what knowledge and skills? - Materials and equipment needed? - Cost ? - The action steps you are going to take (with details). What are the things that need to happen for your suggestions to take place? <p>Try to be as specific as possible.</p> <p><i>To use the example of a library, this could include raising money to buy new books, consulting with teachers and the community about the best books to buy, building more shelves or space in the library to house the new books, and then finding ways to tell the community about the new resources available in the library.</i></p>

	20 minutes	<p>Activity 7: Creating a commercial</p> <p>Turn your letter into a commercial! Now that the recipient of your letter has agreed to your plans, s/he wants you to tell the public (everyone!) about your new plans. S/he thinks the best way to reach the public is to create a persuasive and compelling radio or TV commercial or announcement.</p> <p>The commercial should be at least 30 seconds long. You can include music, dancing, poetry, rhyme, art, etc. to make your commercial interesting and memorable to an audience. At the end of the commercial, your audience should understand the main ideas of your plans.</p> <p>Perform your commercial for family and/or friends!</p> <p>Final project reflection</p> <p>Learners will reflect on their overall learning and experience in doing the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the three most important things you learned in the project? • What are the two things you loved most about this project? • What was the greatest challenge (if any) you encountered in this project and how did you overcome it? • What would you do differently next time?
Assessment Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The learner will be able to identify at least 1 issue in his/her community that needs change, and articulate the reasons for and against it, as well as any limitations to creating change. - The learner will be able to use the format of a formal letter. - The learner will be able to build a persuasive argument supporting his/her point of view on an issue that needs change. - The learner will be able to think systematically about the steps and cost involved in bringing about the desired change. - The learner will be able to compellingly convey his/her plans to a broader audience. 	
Additional enrichment activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add to your plan on Day 5. See if you can think through the financial costs and/or savings of putting your requests into action. - How much money it might cost (total + with details) and where this money might come from. For example, calculate the approximate cost of the new books (number of books multiplied by average cost of each book) or the cost of painting the library (number of hours to paint multiplied by the number of people painting, plus the cost of equipment and paint). You can also calculate the amount of money each person in your community might need to donate (total cost divided by number of people). 	

- How much money it might save (total + with details). For example, how much money might parents save on books if their children could borrow books from the library instead? What could they spend the money on instead?

Appendix 1: Formal and informal words

Formal and Informal Vocabulary Words			
Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal
Good for	Beneficial	Stubborn	Obstinate
By	By means of	Danger	Peril
Lead to	Cause	Put off	Postpone
Complex	Convoluted	Here	Present
Go out of	Exit	Keep	Preserve
Death	Demise	Go ahead	Proceed
Break off	Suspend/adjourn	Go after	Pursue
Also	In addition, additionally	Anyways	Nevertheless
Wood	Timber	Let	Permit
Describe	Depict	Sweat	Perspiration
Go on	Continue	Look at	Regard
In charge of	Responsible	Laid back	Relaxed
Enjoyment	Gratification	Take out	Remove
Dirty/ polluted	Contaminated	Rack up	Accumulate

