

WRITE AN ISSUE LETTER (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?
Total Time Required	45-60 min/day over 4 days
Supplies Required	Paper, writing utensils
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The learner will be able to: ● 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.
Previous Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to write at a moderate level. - Basic addition and multiplication.

DAY 1

Today you will brainstorm issues that you are passionate about, concerned with, and that you would like to change.

Suggested Duration	Activity and Description
15 minutes	Activity 1: Brainstorming issues

-
- Brainstorm a list of 5-8 issues that matter to you and that you would like to see changed. This can be an issue that you see in your local community or your country.
 - Ideas to get you started:
 - *Theme: Education*
 - *Suggestions to strengthen a sense of community at school*
 - *Lengthening or shortening the school day, school year, recess period, etc.*
 - *Improving the local or school library*
 - *Why students should volunteer more of their time (and to what causes)*
 - *Theme: Sports*
 - *Starting an annual local tournament of a certain sport*
 - *Improving recreational spaces e.g. local football field, basketball court, etc.*
 - *Theme: Culture*
 - *Hosting a free community art exhibition or concert*
 - *Raising funds to create e.g. a local dance group or choir*
 - *Providing free music lessons to children*
 - *Theme: Environment*
 - *Reducing the use of plastic bags or other disposables*
 - *Cleaning up an area in your community*
 - *Theme: Technology*
 - *Increasing access to the internet*
 - *Making smartphones or computers more affordable*
 - *Theme: Social challenges*
 - *Drug abuse*
 - *Teenage unwanted pregnancy*
 - *Identity crisis*
 - *Forced early marriage*
 - *Negative peer pressure*
 - *Lockdowns due to COVID-19*

60 minutes

- Pick 3-4 issues and, for each one, draft in bullet points your target audience, the arguments for the change you would like to advocate for, as well as concerns others might have (and how you might address these concerns). For example, perhaps you would like your community to come together and build, grow, or renovate a local library. Write down:
 - A. 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.
-

- B. 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?
- C. 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?

Complete a table similar to the one below:

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	

10 minutes

- 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?

DAY 2

Today you will deeply analyze one of the issues and write the first draft of the formal letter about the issue.

Suggested Duration

Activity and Description

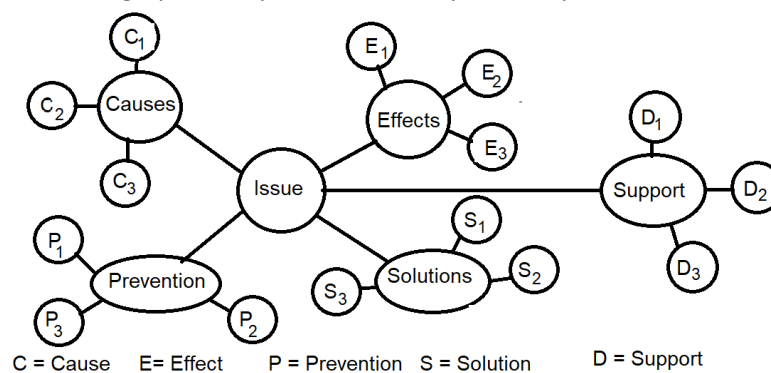
5 minutes

Activity 2: Deep Analysis

- Review your drafts from the day before. Pick one issue to write a persuasive formal letter about. If you are in a classroom setting, work with a peer in order to make your decision.

60 minutes

- Deeply analyze the issue and come up with:
 - Three possible causes of the issue (C_1 , C_2 and C_3)
 - Three possible effects (E_1 , E_2 , E_3)
 - Three possible ways of preventing the issue (P_1 , P_2 and P_3)
 - Three possible ways of solving the issue (S_1 , S_2 and S_3)
 - Three possible ways of supporting people already affected by the issue (D_1 , D_2 , D_3)
- Make a graphical representation of your analysis.



Activity 3: Understanding formal letters and their format

- In this activity, you will get a deep understanding of the format of a formal letter.
- A good letter should consist of:
 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
- Formal letters are sometimes known as business letters. They are written in a strictly formal style (serious and respectful tone, and technical vocabulary).
- 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:

Formal letter format

A typical formal letter format is

- **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

- **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

- **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.

Activity 4: Writing the Formal Issue Letter

- In this activity, you will write your 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.

- **STRUCTURE:**

[your name]

[address]

[other contact information, if available e.g. email address]

[date]

[recipient's or organization's name]
[recipient's or organization's address]

[Subject of the letter E.g. Subject: XXXXX]

[greeting E.g. Dear Sir/Madam/Mr./Mrs./etc.],

[your message, 3-4 paragraphs long:
Paragraph 1: Introduction and purpose
Paragraphs 2-3: Details
Paragraph 4: Conclusion and what you are expecting]

[complimentary close E.g. Yours sincerely/Best regards/etc.],
[Your signature]
[Your name]

DAY 3

Today you will get additional input for your issue letter from family members through a debate

Suggested Duration	Activity and Description
30 minutes	Activity 5: Debate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate format:

- Beginning with you, state and explain your first reason for why you believe your proposal is important and feasible.
 - 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
 - You will try to address their concern.
- Repeat this format for a total of 3-5 times.

Reflection

- At the end of the debate, reflect on the debate with your family member(s).
 - Were you persuaded by any of their arguments?
 - Were they persuaded by any of yours?
 - What characteristics did the most persuasive arguments have?
 - Are there any points from today's debate that you might add to your letter to strengthen its pervasiveness? Write those down.

10 minutes

- Numeracy extension:
 - Imagine that you have figured out that in order to reduce pollution, your city must reduce plastic bag use to 256 plastic bags per day:
 - If the current daily rate is 455 times this number, and your city also uses 550 other plastic items, what is the current rate of total plastic consumption (plastic bags + other plastic items)?
 - How many plastic bags can a population of 3000 people use per day if your city enforces a ban that allows a total of 256 for the entire city?

Day 4

Today you will review and edit your formal letter.

Suggested Duration

Activity and Description

20 minutes

- Review and edit the formal letter you wrote in activity 4. When writing anything, the editing process is very important. Stepping away and then returning to your writing is a good way to view your work with fresh eyes and make improvements to it.

- As best as you can, check that your argument flows well (the points follow each other in a way that makes sense), that grammatical or spelling/writing errors are corrected, and that your tone is appropriate (remember, this is a formal letter you are writing; it should “sound” different and more formal from a letter you are writing to a family member or friend).
- Include information from the debate if you believe it will strengthen your letter. For example, you might include a point you had not thought of or proactively address a concern.

20 minutes

Feedback and Revision

- Show your letter to an adult or older sibling in your home. Have them read it and give you their feedback.
 - 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?

30 minutes

- Based on the feedback you received, make final edits to your letter.

5 minutes

- Numeracy extension: 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?

DAY 5

Today you will create a plan for putting into action the changes needed to address the issue you are concerned with.

**Suggested
Duration**

Activity and Description

50 minutes

- 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.

Activity 6: Developing and implementation plan

In this activity, you will develop an implementation plan.

- Draft a plan that includes the following information, as appropriate:
 - 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?
- Try to be as specific as possible.

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.

50 minutes

Activity 7: Creating a commercial

- 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.
- 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.

10 minutes

- Perform your commercial for family and/or friends!

10 minutes

Reflect on your overall learning and experience in doing the project.

- 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

- 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

- 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	Convolutud	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

