

Adult Literacy Lesson Level 3: Writing a Complaint Letter

Lesson Topic: Writing a Complaint Letter

Time: 100 minutes

Overview of Lesson

Instructors can use this lesson for adult literacy learners who want to learn how to write a complaint letter. This lesson can be used for learners who are at literacy level 3 according to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

Students would be pre-assessed by a literacy instructor to determine literacy levels prior to participating in this lesson. Level 3 students will be encouraged to participate. However, students below level 3 will be encouraged to upgrade their literacy levels before participating in this lesson. Learners at this level can identify elements of a letter, use research skills, make judgements about information found, produce a complaint letter, seek feedback from others, and revises letters (Ministry, 1998, p.48).

This lesson is designed for 6 to 20 students who will work online to complete small group activities. There are six activities in this lesson. First, the instructor will provide a short overview of letters and encourage students to participate in a class discussion to discover previous knowledge using the course forum. Second, students will be put into small groups of 3 or 4 to discuss the elements and purpose of complaint letters. Third, using the jigsaw method, students will be asked to discover something about complaint letters that they will later share with their small group. The instructor will provide topics, articles, links and sample letters. Students will decide who will investigate each area. Fourth, students will bring their knowledge back to the small group. Based on this new knowledge, students will decide how to write a complaint letter. Fifth, students will be given a choice of two activities. Their group can write a short complaint letter or they create a concept map that includes the elements of a complaint letter. Finally, students will share their products with the class which will lead to a final class discussion. Students are asked to comment on each group's project. After the lesson, students will be asked to reflect on their experience and assess themselves and their peers.

Lesson Objectives

Literacy students will do the following:

- learn the components of a letter
- write a complaint letter or create a concept map
- communicate with other students
- collaborate in a small group
- develop critical thinking skills
- research the parts of a letter
- participate in product and process based activities

Materials Needed

- a computer with Internet access
- access to the learning management system Moodle (including a password)

Students will use Moodle's forum and email tools to complete activities. Students will be instructed to create a letter using Google Docs or a concept map using Mindmeister.

Instructor's Role

The instructor will introduce the complaint letter in a class discussion, divide students into small groups for collaboration, and devise research questions regarding the parts of a complaint letter, its purpose and structure. Next, the instructor will guide students to further information, lead some discussions and provide the assessment rubric and expectations.

Students' Role

Students will communicate with their group members, make group decisions, predict outcomes, research for information, share knowledge with group members, create a final project, self reflect, asses, and review assessment rubrics.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Preparation

The instructor will give a brief overview of complaint letters including its purpose and use in real life. Students will be shown how to create a concept map using webspiration and create a document using Google doc before this lesson.

Activities

1. Class Discussion 10 minutes

The instructor will guide the students toward a group discussion by providing some information about complaint letters but not all the information needed.

2. Small Group Discussion 10 minutes

Students will be put into small groups of three or four and asked to discuss what they would use a complaint letter for, how it might look and what would go into it.

3. Jigsaw 20 minutes

Using the jigsaw method, each member of the small group will be asked to discover something about complaint letter and bring their knowledge back to the small group. One member will investigate the letter format; another will determine the tone; a third and fourth will investigate the parts needed. The instructor will provide links to articles, videos and samples of complaint letters.

4. Second Small Group Discussion 10 minutes

Each member will return to the group with their newly acquired knowledge and share this knowledge with their small group members. Based on this knowledge, the group will decide how to write a complaint letter.

5. Project 30 minutes

Students will then be given a choice of two activities.

A) Students will be asked to write a letter together using their combined knowledge. They will then share this letter with the class. At this time, the instructor will provide an exemplar demonstrating a formal letter which will include an introduction, body and conclusion. Students can model their letter after this letter. They can use Google docs for this project.

B) Students will be asked to create a concept map together using their combined knowledge. They will then share this letter with the class. The map will include all the basic parts of a complaint letter and include links showing how the pieces relate. The instructor will provide an exemplar demonstrating a personal letter to show students how a concept map might look. Students can use Webspiration for this project.

6. Sharing and Class Discussion 10 minutes

These activities will be posted in the discussion forum called My Final Project. Students will be encouraged to view each group's project and comment on each one. The instructor will provide two leading questions:

- A) For the Letter: How did this complaint letter make you feel? Please explain why. What would you add or take out of this letter? Please explain.
- B) For the Concept Map: Do you see how these ideas fit together? Please explain why. What would you add or take out of this letter? Please explain.

A final group discussion will be optional. The instructor will coach this discussion by asking leading questions about issues such as how do culture, politeness, and diversity change your letter. What would happen if you left part of the letter out? Predict what would happen if you were rude.

7. Reflection and Assessment 10 minutes

Students will be asked to reflect on their experience with this lesson. Students are asked to assess and comment on peer group projects. The instructor will make a summative assessment using the following rubric.

Variations of this Lesson

- Students could write a cover letter
- Students could write a personal letter
- The whole class could work together instead of being divided into groups
- The instructor could provide audio instruction

Assessment and Learning Activities

Students will be evaluated during and after the lesson. Formative assessment includes self and peer assessment. (see appendix A) Students will assess peer contributions and provide feedback on an ongoing basis. They will also provide a peer assessment at the end of the lesson. Students will self-assess at the end of the lesson by writing a reflection. Instructors will assess at the end of the lesson for participation, content and skills achieved using a rubric.

Evaluation Tool

Instructor: Please choose the box that best demonstrates the student's attainment of each criteria.

Success Markers	Beginning	Developing	Successful

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Successful
Participation			
Student communicates with others			
Posts are clear and concise			
Posts are respectful			
Student posts original ideas or questions			
Reflections			
Student reflects on own learning			
Writing Skills			
Student uses clear sentences			
Student uses proper grammar and punctuation			
Problem Solving Skills			
Student defines a problem			
Student develops solutions			
Student evaluates solutions			
Student uses or modifies solutions			
Group Participation Skills			
Student participates in group discussion			
Student researches parts of a letter			
Student makes judgements on information found			

Student becomes an expert in an area			
Context			
Student writes a complaint letter or creates a concept map			
Construction of Knowledge			
Learner shares prior knowledge			
Learner uses new ideas to construct project			

Appendix A

Self-Assessment

Please write a personal reflection describing what you learned during this lesson. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. What did you know about complaint letters before you began this lesson?
2. Was there a part of this lesson that you found easy to complete?
3. Was there a part of this lesson that you found difficult? Why?
4. Do you feel that you learned something valuable in this lesson?
5. Do you believe you learned the lesson objectives?
6. What do you know about complaint letters now that you did not know before?

Please write 1 paragraph reflecting on this lesson. Create your reflection in a word processing program and then email it to the instructor inside of Moodle.

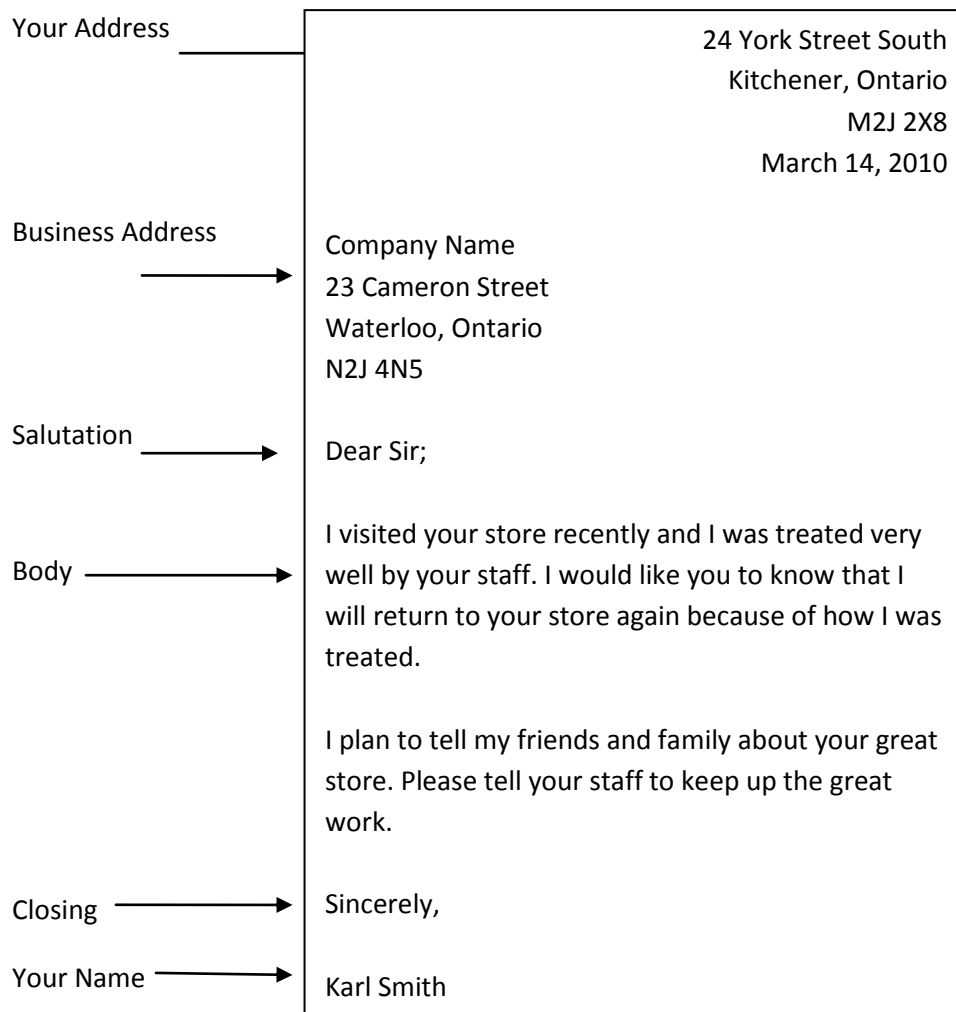
Peer Assessment

Please write a peer reflection describing how you contributed to the group complaint letter or concept map. Describe how each member contributed. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. Did everyone contribute equally?
2. Did one member do extra work?
3. Did one member contribute less?

Please write one paragraph describing what each group member did for the group project. Create your reflection in a word processing program and then email it to the instructor inside of Moodle.

Exemplar: Sample Letter



I have included this exemplar as a model for students to follow while completing their final project. Students will need to recognize that this is a congratulatory letter and adjust their letter or concept map accordingly.

My Design Assessment

Criteria	Present in Design	Not Present in Design
CIM		
Lesson encourages students to discover prior knowledge		
Opportunities are created for learners to explore ideas		
Students are encouraged to share their ideas		
Students are encouraged to develop new ideas or modify existing ones		
Students are given support in rethinking ideas		
Constructivist Elements, POE and CCM		
Collaboration is encouraged		
Activities are authentic or based on real life		
Activities are project based, problem based or case based		
Discussion and negotiation is encouraged		
Critical thinking is encouraged		
Prediction is included		
Prior knowledge is explored		
Reflection is encouraged		
Opportunities to assess self and peers exist		
Using new knowledge is encouraged		
Planning and investigating are encouraged		
Researching is encouraged		
Sharing ideas to gain multiple perspectives is encouraged		
Tasks are interesting and engaging		
Modeling through exemplar are present		
Coaching and facilitating exists		

Encouraging use of new concepts exists		
Sharing new ideas exists		