

Letter writing activity - formal and informal language



Background and objectives

This is an activity that's evolved over time and I've used it with learners ranging from E3 to L2. It's always fun and can get the group talking and sharing thoughts. It's a good way to reinforce the importance of choosing the correct tone for a letter.

Method

Ask learners to think of a scenario, keeping it to themselves.

Make some suggestions but encourage them to come up with their own. For example,

- Letter of complaint for a mouldy meat pie
- Reply to an invitation
- Note to a close friend
- Job application

After each learner has written down his or her scenario they must pass this to the learner on their left. That learner must then decide if a formal or informal style is required and write the letter. Once the letter is written they can discuss with the class whether they've chosen the correct tone to convey meaning.

Curriculum links

Adult Literacy

Covers many aspects of the adult literacy curriculum including those listed below.

For related resources and further links visit the resource description page at www.skillsworkshop.org

Wt/L1.4 *Use language suitable for purpose and audience (a) understand that writers can select language at different levels of complexity, formality and specialism, and depending on context, audience and purpose (b) understand that some types of written communication have specific language associated e.g. invitations, estate agents' leaflets.*

Wt/L2.6 *Use different styles of writing for different purposes e.g. persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, technical vocabulary (a) understand that the style of writing involves choice of vocabulary, sentence length and structure, how the text is organised (b) understand that what is appropriate style depends on purpose, audience, context (c) use imagery such as simile and metaphor to enhance meaning.*

Functional English

For embedding the Level 1 and 2 Functional English criteria (see below) learners could, for example, be asked to come up with scenarios related to their specific vocational area.

Level 1 *Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience.*

Level 2 *Present information and ideas concisely, logically, and persuasively.*

Level 2 *Use a range of writing styles for different purposes.*