

# Grade 1 ▶

## Unit Three

### PRE-INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

MECHANICS	ACQUAINTANCE & ANALYSIS
<input type="checkbox"/> capitalization: in a person's titles	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicative: Friendly Letter
<input type="checkbox"/> comma use: dates	WRITING ON DEMAND
	<input type="checkbox"/> ongoing, all disciplines

#### PATTERN STATEMENT

Adding structure makes things easier to understand.

#### NOTES

First grade students enjoy communicating with friends and family. Thus, creating an opportunity for the students to write a friendly letters generates excitement for the class. Make the project authentic by providing stamps, envelopes, and cards for students' final letters. This enables students to connect a class activity to a meaningful real-world application.

Teaching students the importance of a friendly letter's structural components is essential. Friendly letters contain: a date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature. Each component is placed in an exact location on the page, which helps the reader understand for whom and at what time the letter was written in relation to the time it is being read. First grade students will struggle to understand the importance of the letter structure and extra time must be allocated for student comprehension.

Finally, friendly letters are friendly; a casual tone is one of its defining characteristics. In creating an appropriate tone, encourage students to pick one exciting or interesting topic to convey to their reader. The final message should be concise and engaging to the reader.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES

The pattern, *Adding structure can make things easier to understand*, can be illustrated by giving each student two balls of clay. Explain that the clay will take on a specific structure that they will easily recognize, and ask them to imagine what the play dough will be. Record several answers on the board. Next, have the students flatten one ball out on the table using the palm of their hand. Once all students have achieved a relatively flat form, show the students how to create a square out of the clay. Allow a few moments for the students to discuss with their neighbor what they could do with the other ball of clay. After a brief discussion, instruct the students to flatten the second ball and form it into a triangle. Finally, demonstrate how to combine the two shapes to form a house. Allow students to form and share their houses with a few neighbors (EX-ex).

As a whole group, discuss the answers to the following questions (EX-co):

- At the beginning of our activity, how many different ideas did the class imagine for the structure of the clay? Why can't we form all the ideas with the shapes we have?
- When did the clay start taking on form?
- What two shapes did you need to see the structure of the house?

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- If we placed the triangle on the bottom of the square, would the results still look like a house? Why or why not?
- If we want to form a house, does it matter where the square and triangle are placed? Would someone know we wanted them to see a house if we put the shapes in strange positions? Why not?

Introduce the pattern, adding structure can make things easier to understand, to the class, and ask students how

the pattern is illustrated through their clay houses (EX-el). Guide students in discovering the pattern in other aspects of their life. Examples may include jigsaw puzzles, gas stations, grocery stores—anything where structural objects convey meaning without any explanation necessary (EX-ap). As students grasp the importance of structure in conveying meaning, introduce the friendly letter and discuss the structural details such as date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature that add meaning to the reader.

**GENRE**

Communicative: Friendly Letter	
Definition	Objective
<p>Letter written to a friend or family member—an individual the writer knows well—characterized by a casual tone. Common components include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Date in upper right hand corner of first page. Optional: writer's address included above date.</li> <li>2. Salutation: Casual, addressing the receiver in the name commonly used by the writer, e.g., Dear Mom, Dear Joe, Dear Aunt Freida</li> <li>3. Body: Casual communication, often recounting recent experiences, may comprise as many paragraphs as desired</li> <li>4. Valediction: Closing line before signature, e.g., Yours truly, Love, Sincerely</li> <li>5. Signature</li> </ol>	<p>With teacher prompting and support, student writes a friendly letter, such as a thank you note to a recent guest or to an organization that hosted a recent field trip, or a paragraph-length letter to a family member or friend (e.g., to a cousin who lives in another town).</p>

Communicative: Friendly Letter			
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Writing presents a friendly letter of at least one paragraph in length.</li> <li>▶ Letter contains all components (date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature) in their proper locations.</li> <li>▶ Letter focuses on one clear message and communicates with enough details to be interesting, but not so many that the reader loses the meaning. Transitions between ideas are clear.</li> <li>▶ Letter features a casual tone.</li> <li>▶ Letter communicates an interest in the reader's life and experiences.</li> <li>▶ Additional revisions may minimally improve text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Writing presents a friendly letter of at least one paragraph in length.</li> <li>▶ Letter contains all components (date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature) in their proper locations.</li> <li>▶ Letter focuses on one clear message and communicates with enough details to be interesting, but not so many that the reader loses the meaning. Transitions between ideas are clear.</li> <li>▶ Letter focuses on the writer's life/ experiences but does not convey an interest in the reader's.</li> <li>▶ Letter features a casual tone.</li> <li>▶ Additional development or revisions may help the reader understand the message more clearly by adding or subtracting detail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Writing presents a friendly letter of at least one paragraph in length.</li> <li>▶ Letter contains most components (date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature) in their proper locations. Only one component is missing or out of place.</li> <li>▶ Letter features a casual tone.</li> <li>▶ Letter is difficult to understand in a few places. Additional development or revisions may add or edit details and/or transitions to help the reader understand the message more clearly.</li> <li>▶ Additional revisions will complete the letter's essential components and/ or clarify the writer's intended meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Writing fails to present a friendly letter of at least one paragraph in length</li> </ul> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>fails to contain most components (date, salutation, body, valediction, and signature) in their correct locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Additional development or revisions could significantly improve the structure and/or content of the letter.</li> </ul>

## PRACTICE TEXT

## COMMUNICATIVE: Friendly Letter

510 Lamp Lake Road

West Colesville, NY 13409

Uncle Jim!

How are you? Have you been rock climbing? I remember the time you took me. It was fun! Have you climbed any new rocks since then?

Yesterday was field day at our school. I ran the obstacle course. I had to zigzag through the swings, climb over the monkey bars, and run through some tires. I made it through the swings easily. I ran into trouble on the monkey bars. My foot got stuck between two bars. I couldn't get it out. All the other racers finished while I was stuck.

Finally, my gym teacher mr. Reese came over and helped. He had to take my sneaker off and turn my foot. It finally came out! mr. Reese told me to finish the race, so I did. I forgot to get my sneaker from him first, and my left sock showed it!

I wish you had been there. I know you have gotten stuck when climbing rocks. You could have told me how to get out. Maybe when I see you next month you can give me some advice.

Until then, I hope you are well.

October 20 2009

## A POSSIBLE REVISION

This is not THE correct revision, but one possibility. Accept any justifiable revisions.

510 Lamp Lake Road  
West Colesville, NY 13409  
October 20 2009

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Until then, I hope you are well.

Love,

Jan

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**THREE**

GENRE  
Communicative:  
Friendly Letter

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