

Grade 8 ▶

Unit Five

PRE-INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

MECHANICS	ACQUAINTANCE & ANALYSIS
<input type="checkbox"/> Review as necessary to enable revision skill use	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicative: Formal Letter
	WRITING ON DEMAND
	<input type="checkbox"/> ongoing, all disciplines

PATTERN STATEMENT

Respect before request.

NOTES

When making a request or recommending action, it is easy to repeat ideas. This is especially true in writing where varying word choice can make the same ideas seem different. Students may struggle with this in their formal letter writing. Encourage them to construct a concise argument for granting their request or taking the recommended action rather than merely repeating a petition.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The pattern, *Respect before request*, can be illustrated by having the students create role plays or comic strips that show the same request being made in two different ways. Do not explain the task beyond that. Even if the element of respect (or lack of it) is not overt, it will likely influence the differences that students portray (EX-ex). Have the students consider the examples and respond to the following questions:

- What differences were evident between each pair of illustrations?
- When considering all the illustrations, what general differences exist between them?
- Were any elements of tone or feel generally different?

Using the students' responses as a reference, suggest that a major idea seem to relate to making a request: respect (EX-co). Use questioning to guide students to the pattern statement, *Respect before request* (EX-el). Engage

the students in identifying other illustrations of the pattern, especially examples from their own experiences. Broaden the discussion to include ways we show genuine respect to individuals to whom we may requests (EX-ap). Suggest that in writing, tone and structure are ways we demonstrate respect. Continue to the COMprehension Strand.

Note: the pattern statement relates more obviously to the genre than the revision skill focus. However, one way writer's show respect is by not wasting a reader's time or questioning their intelligence by stating an idea more than once.

REVISION SKILLS

IDEA REDUNDANCY			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>With teacher prompting and support, student identifies scattered occurrences of the same idea throughout a draft and revises the piece so the ideas to appear together or so that repeated ideas are deleted.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify every adjective and adverb in the draft, including prepositional phrases acting as adjectives or adverbs. <input type="checkbox"/> Look for redundancy created by modifiers (e.g., She smiled happily.) Eliminate redundancy. <input type="checkbox"/> Read each sentence, paragraph, and section to identify ideas communicated more than once. Revise to eliminate the redundancy. 	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features no examples of redundant modifiers or redundant ideas. ▶ Writing features fresh (not common or overused) modifiers that are appropriate for the content and sentences that clearly advance the writer's intended meaning. ▶ Additional revisions may minimally improve the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features no examples of redundant modifiers or ideas. ▶ Some modifiers, while not creating redundancy, are common and overused. These give some sections a "heard-this-before" feel. ▶ Additional revisions could improve the text by choosing modifiers that are not overused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features no examples of redundant modifiers or ideas. ▶ Some sentences vary minimally in meaning. These give some sections a monotonous feel. ▶ Additional revisions could improve the text by reworking sections that sound overfamiliar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features multiple examples of redundant modifiers or redundant ideas. ▶ Eliminating redundant modifiers (e.g., Sam was happy and glad.) and/or redundant ideas would significantly improve the text.

GENRE

COMMUNICATIVE: Formal Letter			
Definition		Objective	
<p>Letter written to an individual or organization, characterized by clarity, conciseness, formality, and a block format, and generally written to make an inquiry, a request, or a complaint. Common components and format include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Return address in upper right hand corner 2. Date on right, aligned with return address, beneath recipient address 3. Address of recipient on left side, beneath the return address 4. Salutation, should be formal: Dear Dr. _____, Dear Ms. _____, 5. Dear Mr. _____, etc. 6. Body: an introduction that explains who the writer is and the reason for writing; a middle section that provides details that support the requested action; a closing that requests action from the recipient 7. Valediction: line before signature: Faithfully yours or Sincerely 8. Signature and printed name 9. Enclosures: number and description—e.g., Enclosures (2): resume and business card 		<p>With teacher prompting and support, student writes a formal letter, such as letter to the editor of a periodical, presenting a point of view or opinion and reasoned, supporting argument(s), and an understanding of an alternate point of view.</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a correctly structured and appropriately worded business letter. ▶ Writing clearly presents the writer's intent or request and enables an appropriate response or action from the intended receiver. ▶ Writing makes a convincing, well-supported argument, expresses a well-supported opinion, or makes a request supported by logical reasoning. The letter's content reveals the writer's high quality thinking. ▶ Additional revisions may minimally improve the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a correctly structured and appropriately worded business letter. ▶ Writing clearly presents the writer's intent or request and enables an appropriate response or action from the intended receiver. ▶ Writer's opinion, request, or argument could be better supported. ▶ Additional revisions could improve the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a correctly structured and appropriately worded business letter. ▶ While appropriately worded, the letter obscures the writer's intent or request; the writer's meaning is somewhat vague, making the reader infer an appropriate reply or responsive action. ▶ Additional revisions could improve the text's clarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing fails to present a correctly structured and appropriately worded business letter. ▶ Additional revisions could significantly improve the text or its structure.

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Redundancy

GENRE

Communicative:
Formal Letter

PRACTICE TEXT

325 Sunset Drive
Unionville, PA 19832
August 23, 2011

Ms. Sheila Jones, Editor
The Gazette
Unionville, PA 19832

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am a faithful and loyal reader of *The Gazette*. I appreciate and thank you for the thorough research and accurate reporting its reporters provide. This is why I was disappointed with today's coverage of the student protest held outside of City Hall. The coverage of the protest did not meet my expectations.

The event was held to focus attention on a critical and vital issue: the city's new law that prohibits nonprofit agencies from addressing the needs of homeless individuals. As *The Gazette* previously reported, this issue caused lengthy debates among city council members and caused a letter-writing campaign by concerned residents. As the newspaper correctly stated, the focus of today's protest has "been a source of city-wide friction for several weeks."

However, rather than interviewing and reporting the views of concerned citizens exercising their right to peacefully protest this questionable law, *The Gazette* concentrated on two individuals who got into a fistfight and broke one of City Hall's historic stained glass windows. While this was "news that is fit to print," it was a minor incident that involved individuals who were not at City Hall for the protest. By focusing on this unfortunate and unfavorable incident, *The Gazette* made the protest seem like a gathering of ruffians determined to denounce the new law by damaging city property. The protestors were portrayed as violent people who wanted to hurt City Hall. This was clearly not the intent of the protestors, and none of them were engaged in activities that would harm city property. Although the newspaper's coverage of the unfortunate violence is accurate, it fails to correctly portray the nature of the protest.

Please consider amending today's report with additional coverage of the protest. It would be more in line with the newspaper's usual, thorough coverage to interview some of the protestors, who obviously oppose the new law, and some of the city council members who voted in favor of it. *The Gazette* has taken this approach for similar issues, such as last summer's controversy over closure of the public swimming pool. The swimming pool closure last summer got fair and balanced coverage. As a protestor, I am not requesting favorable coverage of one side over another. I simply request *The Gazette* stay true and honest to its usual quality by accurately, correctly, and thoroughly covering this important protest and the contentious controversy behind it.

I am eager to read the newspaper's continuing, ongoing coverage of this issue in the coming days. Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Rachael Sanders

A POSSIBLE REVISION

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

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However, rather than interviewing and reporting the views of concerned citizens exercising their right to peacefully protest this questionable law, *The Gazette* concentrated on two individuals who got into a fistfight and broke one of City Hall's historic stained glass windows. While this was worthy of newspaper coverage, it was a minor incident that involved individuals who were not at City Hall for the protest. By focusing on this unfortunate incident, *The Gazette* made the protest seem like a gathering of ruffians determined to denounce the new law by damaging city property. This was clearly not the intent of the protestors, and none of them were engaged in activities that would harm city property. Although the newspaper's coverage of the unfortunate violence is accurate, it fails to correctly portray the nature of the protest.

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Sincerely,

Rachael Sanders

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FIVE

REVISION
SKILLS

Idea
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GENRE

Communicative:
Formal Letter

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