

# Grade 3

## Third Prompt

### Personal Letter Writing to a Pen Pal

**English/Language Arts Content Standards:**

- 1.0 Writing Strategies
- 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)
- 2.3 Write personal and formal letters, thank-you notes, and invitations.
  - a. Show awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establish a purpose and context.
  - b. Include the date, proper salutation, body, closing, and signature.

**Writing Situation**

A pen pal is a person you write to in another town, state, or country. Writing to your new pal can be great fun. Pen pals may live in different geographical areas, eat different foods, and participate in different after-school activities. Through letters you can learn how you and your new friend have many things in common. (Allow an opportunity for discussion.)

**Directions for Writing**

Pretend you are going to write a letter to a pen pal in another state and introduce yourself to him or her. Include information about your school and community that would interest another third grade student. When you are finished writing, be sure to check for all the elements of a friendly letter.

**Writing and Convention Standards**

For this writing task, students will write a personal letter that:

- a. shows awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establishes a purpose and context.
- b. includes the date, proper salutation, body, closing, and signature.
- c. uses fluid and legible cursive or jointed italic.
- d. demonstrates grade level appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

**Resources:**

*Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, pp. 93-94

*Write On Track Handbook*, pp. 92-95

*Write On Track: Lesson Plans and Assessments*, pp.42-45, 50-53

*Write On Track Program Guide: The Forms of Writing*, pp. 21-26

# Grade 3

## Third Prompt Rubric

### Personal Letter

#### Writing to a Pen Pal

<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fully addresses the prompt.</li><li>▪ Is clearly organized in a logical sequence with all the elements of a friendly letter, in correct letter format.</li><li>▪ Is a single paragraph with a topic sentence, sentences that support a central idea with interesting facts and details, and a concluding sentence.</li><li>▪ Has complete, coherent sentences that use a variety of patterns and lengths.</li><li>▪ Has effectiveness and variety of word choice.</li><li>▪ Has vivid, interesting language with well-chosen sensory images that are relevant for the proposed audience.</li><li>▪ Has grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation; contains few, if any, errors that do not interfere with understanding the writing.</li><li>▪ Has legible handwriting using cursive or joined italic.</li></ul>
<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Responds to the prompt.</li><li>▪ Is organized in a logical sequence with most of the elements of a friendly letter, in correct letter format.</li><li>▪ Is a single paragraph with a topic sentence, simple supporting facts and details, and a concluding sentence.</li><li>▪ Has mainly complete sentences that use more than one pattern.</li><li>▪ Has some variety in word choice.</li><li>▪ Has some descriptive language and sensory images with details appropriate for the proposed audience.</li><li>▪ Has mainly grade-level appropriate spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation; contains some errors that do not interfere with understanding the writing.</li><li>▪ Has legible handwriting with appropriate spacing and most letters formed correctly.</li></ul>
<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attempts to respond to the prompt.</li><li>▪ May lack organization, the elements of a friendly letter, and/or correct letter format.</li><li>▪ May lack proper paragraphing and/or details.</li><li>▪ May have incomplete or incoherent sentences that may use only one pattern.</li><li>▪ Contains little descriptive language or few details and may not consider the proposed audience.</li><li>▪ May have little or no variety in word choice.</li><li>▪ May contain many errors in spelling, grammar, capitalization, and/or punctuation that may interfere with understanding the writing.</li><li>▪ Has handwriting that is mostly legible with errors that may interfere with meaning.</li></ul>

<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ May not respond to the prompt. (May be off topic.)</li><li>▪ Lacks organization, the elements of a friendly letter, and correct letter format.</li><li>▪ Lacks paragraphing, a central idea, and/or does not include details.</li><li>▪ Has mainly incomplete or incoherent sentences.</li><li>▪ May not consider the proposed audience.</li><li>▪ May contain frequent and numerous errors in spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation that interfere with the understanding of the writing.</li><li>▪ Handwriting may be mostly illegible.</li></ul>
<b>BP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Blank Paper</li></ul>

# Grade 3

## Third Prompt - Student Page

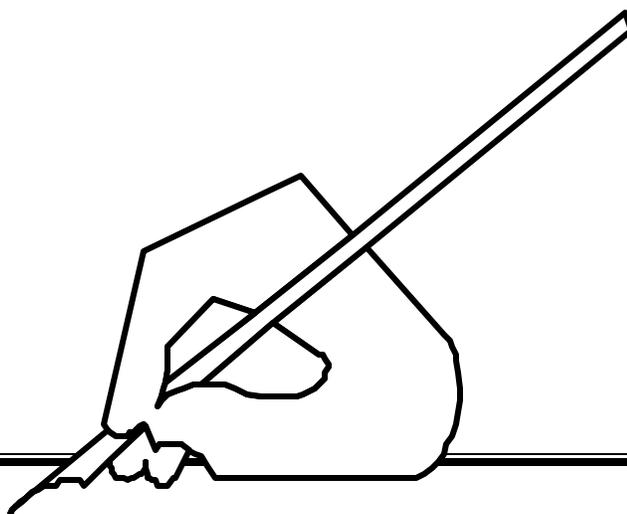
### Personal Letter Writing to a Pen Pal

#### **Writing Situation**

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#### **Directions for Writing**

Pretend you are going to write a letter to a pen pal in another state and introduce yourself to him or her. Include information about your school and community that would interest another third grade student. When you are finished writing, be sure to check for all the elements of a friendly letter.



#### **Writing and Convention Standards**

For this writing task, you will write a personal letter that:

- a. shows awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establishes a purpose and context.
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# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 4 high

## **Characteristics that make the paper a high 4:**

- a. Contains complete coherent sentences with some details that engage audience.
- b. Includes grade-level appropriate grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- c. Is clearly organized in a logical sequence with all the elements of a friendly letter.
- d. Has errors with apostrophe usage.
- e. Includes errors with syllabication.
- f. Lacks proper paragraphing.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Reviewing the rules for using an apostrophe in a contraction.
- b. Teaching the student the rules for hyphenating words.
- c. Instructing the student on the elements and structure of a paragraph.

**Teacher Notes:**

January 1955

Dear Tempal,

My name Amanda, I live in  
Berkeley, California. I'm in drama  
at my school.

My school is Evergreen. We  
have two playgrounds. There  
is a lot of trees. There's a  
track with a field in the  
middle. We have a second  
field with a basketball court  
next to it. We have a  
stage in the cafeteria. My  
school has after school  
program. There's drama, basketba  
ll, and other after school  
programs.

Yakimafield is located in  
the southern part of the S.W.  
again Valley. It's hot in  
the summer and cool in  
the spring and fall. Hope  
we can meet soon.

4 Your Pen<sup>11</sup>



Dear Jennifer,

Hi Lisa Bruce. In 9 years old, and in the third grade. My birthday was January 3rd. I have a family of four. That means sister, my mom, and dad.

My school is downtown. I love to read. My favorite book is *White Fences*. I read it. I have lots of friends. At P.E., we run the track or play on the track top.

The weather in Bakerfield is almost always sunny. But for the last three days, in the morning it has rained. I wonder

if it ever rains there.

See you soon,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 4 low

## **Characteristics that make the paper a low 4:**

- a. Fully addresses the prompt.
- b. Has complete, coherent sentences.
- c. Has grade-level appropriate grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- d. Has discernible paragraphs with most of the elements of a friendly letter.
- e. Lacks cursive handwriting.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Practicing cursive writing and encouraging the student to use it when writing his/her essay.
- b. Reviewing the elements of a friendly letter.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear friend

I am 8 years old. I am going to be 9 in February. My eyes are brown, my hair is brown and black and my skin color is brown. I have two sisters and their names are Marissa and Krystal. My mom and dad's name is Patrick and Juanita. I have a bird named Pookie. She lays eggs a lot of times.

I go to Thorne School. At school I do multiplication and division. At recess I play 5 steps. My teacher Mrs. Charpentier is very nice to me. Over Christmas vacation we got new phones and new bells.

Bakerstreet looks pretty and it looks like it will

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 3 high

## **Characteristics that make the paper a high 3:**

- a. Responds to the prompt.
- b. Has mainly complete sentences.
- c. Has some descriptive language.
- d. Has legible handwriting using cursive.
- e. Has mainly grade-level appropriate grammar, capitalization, and spelling.
- f. Has almost all components of a friendly letter.
- g. Needs more descriptive language.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Reviewing the elements of the friendly letter format.
- b. Modeling how to improve descriptive language.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear Tim,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am in the  
third grade and I go to Roosevelt school.

Roosevelt School is a nice school  
to go to. It has a big playground  
and a big field.

Bakersfield is a good place to live.  
In Bakersfield we have two malls  
we also had snow in Bakersfield  
just about two years ago.

Write soon!

Your new pen pal,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 3 anchor

## **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 3:**

- a. Has some variety in word choice and descriptive language.
- b. Has descriptive paragraphs.
- c. Is organized in correct letter form.
- d. Has mainly grade-level appropriate grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- e. Lacks consistent subject-verb agreement.
- f. Fails to address all elements of the prompt.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Teaching the student to use the same subject-verb agreement throughout the entire essay.
- b. Reviewing the writing prompt and teaching the student to return to it to be sure that all elements are addressed in his/her essay.
- c. Teaching the student some prewriting techniques and structures.

**Teacher Notes:**

January 11, 2001

Dear friends

My name is I go  
to Hart school in Bakersfield  
CA. I'm in third grade. I'm Mexican  
American. I have black hair.

My school has a lot of  
classes. There is five nice teachers.  
There are brothers and sister that  
come to this school. Some  
times we play the fluteophone.

My community has a lot of  
cars. There are mountains west, south  
and east

Your friends

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 3 low

## **Characteristics that make the paper a low 3:**

- a. Responds to the prompt.
- b. Contains discernible paragraphs.
- c. Has grade-level appropriate grammar and capitalization.
- d. Has several misspelled words (i.e., football, science, our).
- e. Includes run-on sentences.
- f. Leaves main idea when describing Bakersfield and reverts back to self (favorite sports) in final paragraph.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Practicing correct spelling and punctuation usage by completing DOL daily.
- b. Instructing the student on the rules for using a period and then modeling how to apply those rules when writing.
- c. Modeling how to write a topic sentence with supporting details.

**Teacher Notes:**

January 10, 200

Dear Sara,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am 9 years old.  
I have 2 brothers and 1 sister. Their  
names are Sabrina, Joseph, Micheal.  
Their ages are 7, 5, 4.

My school's name is Cesar Chavez  
Manet School, we have class after regular  
school and these are my classes: French,  
team sports and science. And our teachers  
are the best teachers.

I live in Baker's Field, Central  
California. My favorite sports  
are soccer, football, kickball that  
and those are my favorite sports  
all.

Your Friend,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 2 high

## **Characteristics that make the paper a high 2:**

- a. Responds to the prompt in correct letter form.
- b. Contains discernible paragraphs.
- c. Has mostly legible writing with few errors that interfere with meaning.
- d. Has little variety in word choice.
- e. Lacks a variety of sentence patterns.
- f. Some proper nouns lack capitalization.
- g. Has frequent errors in spelling.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Modeling how to improve word choice variety.
- b. Demonstrating a variety of ways to begin sentences.
- c. Teaching the student basic spelling rules and patterns to increase his/her personal dictionary.

**Teacher Notes:**

January 9, 6

Dear Billy,

My name is  
I am 8 years old. I have  
2 sister and 1 brother.  
I have a dog. Her name  
is star. My favorite food is pizza.

I am in 5th grade.  
My school name is Wavyside  
School. I have a teacher  
her name is Mrs. Noblitt.  
I like math.

I live by Lumber  
Jack. It is a star. My  
family go to Vally plaza  
to eat.

Scotland is my favorite  
place to go.

Your friends

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 2 anchor

## **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 2:**

- a. Attempts to respond to the prompt.
- b. Has writing that is legible with errors that may interfere with meaning.
- c. Contains few elements of a personal letter, not organized in correct letter form.
- d. Contains random spelling errors.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Reviewing the correct friendly letter format.
- b. Reviewing the writing prompt and teaching the student to return to it to be sure that all elements are addressed in his/her essay.
- c. Teaching the student some techniques for proofreading.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear Jaime,

How are things in Yuma? My name is  
I am 8 year old. How old are you. I go  
to Casa Loma. I read a book every day  
and I do my homework. There are 600  
kids at my school. How mine are at your  
school?

Sincerely,  
Elye

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 2 low

## **Characteristics that make the paper a low 2**

- a. Attempts to respond to the prompt.
- b. Includes the elements of a friendly letter.
- c. Has mostly legible writing.
- d. Contains random capitalization.
- e. Lacks end marks.
- f. Has little variety in word choice.
- g. Confuses “in” for “and”.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer’s growth would include:**

- a. Reviewing the capitalization rules for proper nouns.
- b. Instructing the student on the elements and structure of a complete sentence.

**Teacher Notes:**

January 9, 200

Dear Mike,

My name is

My favorite color is blue My favorite food is Paizza I like Soccer I have 1 brother in 1 sister in I like school in I like tetherball in my favorite pet is a cat I like basketdall in I like the books in My cirthday is on Decemder 2, 1991 in I like Chocolate in my favorite Caney is Min BURGER

Your friend,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 1 high

## **Characteristics that make the paper a high 1:**

- a. Attempts to respond to the prompt.
- b. Written in correct letter form.
- c. Lacks end marks.
- d. Lacks proper capitalization.
- e. Contains mainly basic sight words with no descriptive language.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Instructing the student on the elements and structure of a complete sentence.
- b. Reviewing the capitalization rule for the proper pronoun, "I".

**Teacher Notes:**

January 8, 201

Dear Joe,

My name is  
and I live at Bakersfield,  
and I like soccer and I  
have two cousin and I  
like to play football I  
am Julian's friend I am  
in third grade I live  
with my family and I  
play jump rope

Your friend,

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 1 anchor

## **Characteristics that make the paper an anchor 1:**

- a. Does not respond to the prompt.
- b. Has mainly incomplete, incoherent sentences.
- c. Is not in correct letter form.
- d. Writing is mostly illegible.
- e. Contains an attempt at a friendly letter.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Practicing correct letter formation in cursive and manuscript.
- b. Teaching the student basic spelling rules and patterns to increase his/her personal dictionary.
- c. Instructing the student on the elements and structure of a complete sentence.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear Mom and Dad and Pally I really like  
the and all the rest of the stuff hope the year  
doin  
Fishes some sin yep FISHES down Amber.

# District Writing Sample Scoring Rationale

Third Prompt, Grade 3

Personal Letter

Writing to a Pen Pal

Rubric Score Point: 1 low

## **Characteristics that make the paper a low 1:**

- a. Does not respond to the prompt.
- b. Has mainly incomplete or incoherent sentences.
- c. Contains numerous misspelled words and inventive spellings that interfere with meaning.
- d. Writing is mostly illegible.
- e. Attempts correct letter form.
- f. Includes random capitalization and numerous grammatical errors.

## **Additional instructional steps for the writer's growth would include:**

- a. Practicing correct letter formation in cursive and manuscript.
- b. Teaching the student basic spelling rules and patterns to increase his/her personal dictionary.
- c. Instructing the student on the elements and structure of a complete sentence.

**Teacher Notes:**

Dear ~~Frank~~ Tuesday 10/2/01

I Like to play with people:

and I Like to chat with people

I'm not the FBI Guy

and I like to rib lubs.  
to people a I Like fabsu.

Fum