

## CONSUMER LETTER WRITING

### Performance Standard 3C.I

Each student will write two letters, one an informal letter to a friend and one a business letter to complain about a problem he/she has encountered. The two letters will be evaluated for format and content accordingly:

#### Business Letter

- *Formatting the letter:* include the components of the business letter (i.e., return address, date, inside address, salutation, body, closing, signature); place components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) on the page; punctuate components.
- *Organizing content – Message and Tone:* include five required parts of the message (i.e., person addressed, nature of the problem, how it was discovered, what will satisfy the writer, how to reach writer) in the body; use formal tone; use appropriate language.

#### Informal (Friendly) Letter

1. *Formatting the letter:* include components of the friendly letter (i.e., date, salutation, body, closing, signature); place components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) on the page; punctuate components.
2. *Organizing content – Message and Tone:* include in the body the parts of the message recorded in the business letter; use informal tone.

#### Procedures

1. *In order to communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes (3C)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following:
  - Compose informational writing (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, argumentative) that supports a topic or thesis statement with well-articulated evidence.
  - Adjust voice, tone, vocabulary and grammatical conventions according to both purpose and audience.
  - Demonstrate the proper format/conventions for business letters.
  - Convert a formal letter into an informal one (or vice versa).
  - Use available technology to draft, design, produce, revise and present compositions and multimedia works for specified audiences.

Through the letter writing process, students will practice one aspect of being a responsible consumer. This assessment addresses the National Family and Consumer Sciences Standard 2.5 (Analyze interrelationship between the economic system and consumer actions). It also addresses the Illinois Workplace Skills D4 (Communicating on the Job/Prepare written communications), K1 (Demonstrating Technological Literacy/Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills) and K2 (Demonstrating Technological Literacy/Demonstrate basic knowledge of computing).

2. Have Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Students will be familiar with the elements (format, language, style) of an informal (friendly) and a formal (business) letter.
4. Students will have written several informal and formal letters prior to the assessment.
5. Each student will complete the “Letter of Complaint Planning Sheet.”
6. Each FCS student will write a letter of complaint to a company regarding a specific consumer complaint, using a standard business letter format. The letter should include the description of the problem, how the writer became aware of the problem and the action which the writer wants the company to take to solve the problem. Possible topics for the letter could include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. No satisfaction from the local car dealership for unsatisfactory repairs.
  - b. Poor service from an insurance claims representative on an auto accident claim.
  - c. Writing to a bank about their overdraft policies and charges.
  - d. Writing to a grocery store chain about out-of-date products on their shelves.
7. Each student then writes an informal (friendly) letter to a friend, telling the friend about the same problem with the company and explaining what he/she expects the company to do to fix it.
8. Evaluate both letters for proper formatting (i.e., formal (business) style and informal (friendly) style) and for content appropriate to the perceived audiences.

9. Evaluate each student's performance using the rubric. Add each student's scores to determine the performance level.

**Examples of Student Work**

- [Meets](#)
- [Exceeds](#)

**Time Requirements**

- One to two class periods

**Resources**

- Writing materials, including available technology
- Letter of Complaint Planning Sheet
- Letter Writing Rubric

## LETTER OF COMPLAINT PLANNING SHEET

Your task is to complete a letter of complaint to a business in your hometown. To decide what to include in your letter, answer the following questions before you begin:

1. Who is the person who can help you with your problem? What is the address that will reach him/her?
2. What exactly is the problem that you have with the business? Be specific about the details of the problem.
3. How did this problem come to your attention?
4. What do you want the company to do to correct the problem? If you can give the person some specific guidance about the solution to the problem, which would satisfy you, then he/she can work with you more easily to see that the problem is solved.
5. How can the person reach you to tell you what the company will do to satisfy you? After all, if the company representative cannot reach you, your problem will not be solved.

Now that you have the essential information, complete the letter using the proper business letter format that your teacher has taught you.

## LETTER WRITING

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- Exceeds standard (must receive 15 - 16 total points)       Approaches standard (must receive 7 -10 total points)  
 Meets standard (must receive 11 - 14 total points)       Begins standard or absent (must receive 4 - 6 total points)

	<b>BUSINESS LETTER</b>		<b>INFORMAL (FRIENDLY) LETTER</b>	
	<b>Format</b>	<b>Content – Message and Tone</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Content – Message and Tone</b>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All components of the business letter are present (i.e., return address, date, inside address, salutation, body, closing, signature).</li> <li>All components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>All components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All five required parts of the message (i.e., person addressed, nature of the problem, how it was discovered, what will satisfy the writer, how to reach writer) are present in the body.</li> <li>Consistently uses formal tone.</li> <li>Consistently uses appropriate language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All components of the friendly letter are present (i.e., date, salutation, body, closing, signature).</li> <li>All components (e.g., margins, spacing, paragraphing, sequence of components) are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>All components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All parts of the message recorded in the business letter are present in the body paragraphs.</li> <li>Consistently uses informal tone.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most components of the business letter are present.</li> <li>Most components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Most components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All five required parts of the message are present in the body.</li> <li>Usually uses formal tone.</li> <li>Usually uses appropriate language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most components of the friendly letter are present.</li> <li>Most components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Most components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most parts of the message recorded in the business letter are present in the body paragraphs.</li> <li>Usually uses informal tone.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some components of the business letter are present.</li> <li>Some components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Some components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 - 4 of the required parts of the message are present in the body.</li> <li>Sometimes uses formal tone.</li> <li>Sometimes uses slang or jargon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some components of the friendly letter are present.</li> <li>Some components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Some components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parts of the message recorded in the business letter are present in the body paragraphs.</li> <li>Sometimes uses informal tone.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few or no components of the business letter are present.</li> <li>Few or no components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Few or no components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 - 2 of the required parts of the message are present in the body.</li> <li>Seldom or never uses formal tone.</li> <li>Overuses slang or jargon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few or no components of the friendly letter are present.</li> <li>Few or no components are properly placed on the page.</li> <li>Few or no components are properly punctuated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few or no parts of the message recorded in the business letter are present in the body paragraphs.</li> <li>Seldom or never uses informal tone.</li> </ul>
<b>Score</b>				