

The North Pole Express: Crafting the Perfect Letter to Santa

Materials Needed

- Paper (plain, lined, or festive holiday stationery)
- Pencil and eraser
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons, or stickers for decorating
- An envelope and a stamp (optional, for mailing)
- A visual aid or handout showing the "5 Parts of a Friendly Letter" (can be pre-made or drawn during the lesson)
- A simple sample friendly letter (to a friend, family member, or a previous year's Santa letter)

Lesson Plan

I. Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Hook: "Hi Monica! The holiday season is getting closer, and I was just thinking... if you could send a message directly to Santa's workshop right now, what's the first thing you would tell him? What would you ask about the reindeer or the elves?"

Learning Objectives: "That's a great question for him! Today, we're going to turn those wonderful ideas into a real letter. By the end of our lesson, you will be able to:

- Name the five main parts of a friendly letter.
- Write your own complete and polite letter to Santa.
- Decorate your letter to make it extra special for its long journey to the North Pole!

II. Body: Building Our Letter (20-30 minutes)

Part 1: The Secret Formula for a Great Letter (I Do)

Every great letter, whether it's going to the North Pole or just next door, has a secret formula with five parts. Let's look at them together.

(Show the "5 Parts of a Friendly Letter" visual aid or draw it out. Point to each part on the sample letter as you explain.)

1. **The Date:** "This goes in the top right corner. It tells Santa exactly *when* you wrote to him. For example, 'December 5, 2023'."
2. **The Greeting:** "This is your friendly 'hello!' It starts on the left side with a capital letter, like 'Dear Santa,' and always ends with a comma."
3. **The Body:** "This is the main event! It's where you share all your thoughts. You can ask Santa how he is, tell him something nice about your year, and politely mention what you are hoping for."
4. **The Closing:** "This is your polite 'goodbye.' It goes on the right side, just above your name. You can use phrases like 'Sincerely,', 'Your friend,', or 'Love,.'. Just like the greeting, the first word is capitalized and it ends with a comma."

5. **The Signature:** "This is your name! You sign it right below the closing so Santa knows exactly who sent this wonderful letter."

Formative Check: "Can you point to the body on this sample letter? Where is the closing?"

Part 2: Planning Our Message to Santa (We Do)

"Great! Now, let's plan *your* letter together, Monica. The body is the most important part, so let's brainstorm what you want to say. A really thoughtful letter has a few different parts."

- **First, let's be friendly:** "What question could you ask Santa? Maybe about Mrs. Claus, the elves, or his favorite reindeer?"
- **Next, share something good:** "Think about this year. What is something you are proud of? Maybe you helped someone, learned a new skill, or were extra kind."
- **Then, the wish list:** "Let's think of one or two special things you're hoping for. How can we ask for them politely? Instead of 'I want,' we could say, 'I would be so grateful for...'" or 'I have been hoping for...'"
- **Finally, a kind wish:** "What can we say at the end to wish him well? Something like, 'I hope you have a safe trip!' or 'Thank you for all you do!'"

(Jot these ideas down on a piece of paper to serve as a guide for her writing.)

Part 3: Writing the Letter! (You Do)

"Okay, author, it's your turn! You have your plan and you know the five parts of a letter. Take your special paper and let's put it all together. I'll be right here if you have any questions about spelling or where a part should go."

(Provide Monica with the paper and writing tools. Allow her to write her letter independently. This is where she applies what she has learned.)

Success Criteria: "As you write, remember our goal is to make sure your wonderful letter includes:

- All 5 parts in the right places.
- Commas after the greeting and closing.
- At least one friendly question and one polite request.

III. Conclusion (10-15 minutes)

Recap and Share

"Your letter looks fantastic, Monica! I would be honored to hear it if you'd like to read it out loud."

(After she shares, offer specific praise: "I love the descriptive words you used," or "It was so thoughtful of you to ask about the elves.")

"You did it! You are now an expert letter writer. Can you quickly tell me the five parts of a friendly letter one more time?" *(Listen for Date, Greeting, Body, Closing, Signature.)*

Final Fun: Decorate and Prepare for Mailing

"The writing is done, and now for the final creative touch. Let's use the markers and stickers to decorate your letter and the envelope. A cheerful letter is the best kind to receive!"

(This serves as a fun reward and a kinesthetic conclusion to the lesson. If mailing, you can address the envelope together to "Santa Claus, 123 Elf Road, North Pole, 88888".)

Differentiation & Extension

- **For Support:** Provide a pre-written template with faint lines and labels for each part of the letter. Use sentence starters like: "Dear Santa,", "This year, I was proud when I...", "For Christmas, I would be happy to receive...".
- **For a Challenge:** Encourage Monica to add a "P.S." (a postscript for one last thought) at the end of her letter. She could also write a short story from the perspective of an elf who reads her letter or draw a detailed map showing Santa the way to your house.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Your observation of Monica's participation in the "We Do" brainstorming and her ability to identify the parts of the sample letter.
- **Summative:** The final, completed letter to Santa. Check it against the success criteria to ensure all five parts are present and correctly placed, and that the tone is polite.