

Planning and Drafting a Letter of Complaint

Writer's Warm-Up

Write the following items on the board.

Top of the Mountain Camping and Supplies
Seesaw Comics and Toys
Pacific Reef Travel and Resort
Waterford College of Design

Introduce the activity with an explanation like the following. During the past few lessons, you've been learning to write a type of business letter called a letter of complaint. When you write a business letter, you must know how to capitalize the names of schools, organizations, companies, and businesses.

You'll play a game called Capitalization Party, but first you'll learn more about capitalizing titles of schools, organizations, companies, and businesses.

All the important words in the names of schools, organizations, companies, and businesses are capitalized. Read the first item on the board aloud. What are the important words in the name *Top of the Mountain Camping and Supplies*? Ideas: *Top, Mountain, Camping, Supplies*. Mention that the little words *of, the, and* are not capitalized because they're not important words.

Read the second item aloud. What are the important words in the name *Seesaw Comics and Toys*? Ideas: *Seesaw, Comics, Toys*. Point out that the word *and* is not capitalized. Repeat this procedure with the remaining items.

PREPARATION Each student will need a copy of BLM 7A.

Introduce the students to the rules of the game with an explanation like the following. Now we're ready to play Capitalization Party. Imagine you're giving a black-tie party for capitalized words only. At a black-tie party, the men wear tuxedos or suits, and the women wear formal

gowns. You must read the guest list to make sure only the important parts of each name are allowed into the Capitalization Party.

Give each student a copy of BLM 7A. Tell the students to read each guest's name. Tell them to decide which words in the name are important and should be capitalized. Then have them draw three lines under each letter that should be a capital. Finally ask them to write each word in the correct column of the Capitalization Party Guest List. You may wish to do the first item as a guided task.

Writer's Workshop

Remind the students that they've analyzed a sample of a letter of complaint with you and that they've also practiced planning, drafting, and editing a letter of complaint with the class. Tell them it's their turn to plan, draft, and edit a letter of complaint independently.

Read the students the following starter: Let's imagine that *Mighty Munch Sugar-Free* cereal advertised a free package of sports superstars stickers in each box. However, when you opened your box, there was no package of stickers. Write to the company that makes *Mighty Munch Sugar-Free* cereal, *Health Foods and Products*, and explain your problem.

You're going to write a letter of complaint to *Health Foods and Products*. The letter will tell what your complaint is and what you'd like the company to do to solve the problem. Most writers make a plan before they begin to write, so you'll make a plan to help you get ideas before you start writing.

Review the following concepts with the students:

- A letter of complaint begins with a heading written at the left margin.
- A letter of complaint includes an inside address.
- The *Re:* line tells the subject of the letter.
- A letter of complaint has a salutation followed by a colon.

- Each paragraph in the body of a letter of complaint is indented.
- A letter of complaint ends with a closing followed by a comma and a legible signature followed by a name typed or printed in full.
- The *cc:* line names other people who will receive a copy of the letter.

Brainstorming

PREPARATION Each student will need a blank copy of BLM 6A.

Ask the students to think of ways to describe their complaint about the missing sticker package and to record them on the organizer in the column headed “Identification of Complaint.”

What reasons do you have for being upset?

Ideas: *I bought this box of cereal just to get the stickers. I trusted the company to provide the promised stickers. How does the missing sticker packet affect you personally?* Ideas: *I was looking forward to starting a sticker collection. I have started a collection and needed these stickers to add to it. Why is this situation unfair?* Idea: *If stickers are advertised as being in the box, they should be there.* Have the students record their ideas on the graphic organizer under “Supporting Reasons.”

Ask the students to list on the organizer a variety of supporting facts and examples about the missing sports superstars sticker package. **How did you feel when you bought the cereal?** Ideas: *I felt excited. I was eager to see the new stickers. How did you feel when you opened the cereal box and found no stickers?* Idea: *I felt disappointed. Why might the stickers be missing?* Idea: *The machine that packages the cereal might not have been working properly.* Have the students record their ideas on the graphic organizer under “Supporting Facts and Examples.”

What are some suggestions you might give for getting the stickers that were promised on the outside of the box? Idea: *The cereal company could send the missing package of stickers in the mail. What suggestions could you give for preventing this problem from happening to other people?* Ideas: *Put the stickers at the top of the box. Have an inspector make sure the stickers are in each box. Provide a form on the box for*

people to mail if they want to get the stickers. Have the students record their ideas on the graphic organizer. What is a way you may be able to help solve the problem? Ideas: *I could put a self-addressed stamped envelope inside my letter to make it easier for the company to send me the stickers. I could visit the office of the company to pick up the stickers.*

Drafting a Letter of Complaint

Explain to the students that in this part of the lesson they’ll write their letter of complaint on lined paper. Remind them to leave every other line blank for editing.

Guide the students through the process of writing a letter of complaint. Remind them to begin each line of the heading at the left margin. You’re ready to begin writing. The heading will be your home address. Write your street address as the first line of your heading. What will you remember when you write a street name? Idea: *Start each word in the name of the street with a capital letter.* Write your city and state abbreviation as the second line of your heading. What should you remember to do when you write the name of a city and a state abbreviation? Idea: *The name of the city should be capitalized. Both letters of the state abbreviation should be capital letters. No periods should be used. What punctuation mark should you put between the name of the city and the state abbreviation?* A *comma*. Write your zip code after the state abbreviation. If the students don’t know the zip code, have them write the first three numbers of the school zip code and leave a space. They may ask someone for this information before they edit their letters.

What’s today’s date? Write today’s date as the third line of your heading. **How does the name of a month start?** *With a capital letter.* What punctuation mark is used to separate the day and the year? *A comma.* Skip two or three lines.

The inside address will begin with the name of the business to which you’re writing your letter of complaint. You’ll send your letter to Health Foods and Products. Write *Health Foods and Products* as the first line of the inside address. Write the name on the board to assist the students with spelling. **What important words need capital letters?** Ideas: *Health, Foods,*

Products. Yes, the word *and* doesn't need a capital letter. The street address will be 2632 Terrence Street. Write the address on the board. Write the street address as the second line of the inside address. What will you remember when you write a street name? Idea: *Start each word in the street name with a capital letter.* The company is located in (your city, your state). Write the city and state as your third line. What should you remember when you write the name of a city and a state abbreviation? *The name of the city should be capitalized. Both letters of the state abbreviation should be capital letters. No periods are used.* What punctuation mark should you put between the name of the city and the state abbreviation? *A comma.* Write the zip code after the state. Skip one line.

Remind the students that a business letter often uses an abbreviation for the word *regarding* to state the subject of the letter. *What's the abbreviation for the word regarding? Capital R-e-colon.* What's the subject of your letter? Write it on the *Re:* line. The subject should not be a complete sentence. Skip one line.

What is the salutation a writer uses if he or she does not know the name of a specific person to whom to send a letter? *Dear Sir or Madam.* What words are capitalized when we write this salutation? Ideas: *Dear, Sir, Madam.* What punctuation mark follows this salutation? *A colon.* Write the salutation with correct capitalization and punctuation. Skip one line.

Now you're ready to write the body of your letter of complaint. Remember to indent each paragraph. For your opening sentence, you'll tell the person receiving your letter at Health Foods and Products how much you appreciate and enjoy the products the company makes. Write the opening sentence of your letter.

The next sentence of your first paragraph will tell Health Foods and Products about your complaint and the reasons for it. Look at the first column on your graphic organizer for help in writing one or two sentences that tell Health Foods and Products what your complaint is. Look at the second column for help in writing two or more sentences giving the reasons for your complaint. Allow time for the students to write. Circulate among them, offering encouragement and assistance. Skip one line.

Your second paragraph will give Health Foods and Products some supporting facts and examples about the missing sports superstars stickers that were advertised on the outside of the Mighty Munch cereal package. Look at your graphic organizer for help in writing two or three sentences that give supporting facts and examples about the missing stickers. Allow time for the students to write. Circulate among them, offering encouragement and assistance. Skip one line.

Your third paragraph will suggest to Health Foods and Products how it could help solve the problem of the missing stickers. Look at your graphic organizer for help in writing two or three sentences that suggest how Health Foods and Products could be part of the solution and how you could help solve the problem. Allow time for the students to write. Circulate among them, offering encouragement and assistance. Skip one line.

Your last paragraph will be a sentence that tells Health Foods and Products you appreciate the time the staff will take to read your letter and to address your complaint. Include a sentence telling how the company can reach you. Allow time for the students to write. Circulate among them, offering encouragement and assistance. Skip one line.

You're ready to write the closing for your letter of complaint. What closing could you use? Ideas: *Yours truly, Sincerely, Sincerely yours.* Ask the students to choose a closing and add it to the letter. Remind them to use correct capitalization and punctuation. Skip one line.

Now you're ready to sign your name. Write your signature under the closing of your letter. Because a letter of complaint is a type of business letter, it's important to print your full name neatly under your signature.

Sometimes a business letter will be copied and given to appropriate people. The letters *c-c* with a colon are sometimes used at the end of a business letter followed by a list of names to tell the reader who else will be reading the letter. You're going to send a copy of this letter to the Customer Service Department. This is the title of a department, so each word will start with a capital letter. The Customer Service Department of a company is the department that makes sure

the customers are happy. Write *c-c-colon* and *Customer Service Department* on the last line of your letter. Allow time for the students to write.

Explain to the students that next they'll review some things authors do to make their letters of complaint more effective. The students will need the draft of the letter of complaint for use in the next lesson. Remind them to put their drafts in their writing portfolios.

Writer's Workout

PREPARATION Each student will need a copy of BLM 7B.

Explain to the students that the Writer's Workout will help them practice various writing skills. Have each student complete BLM 7B to reinforce the concept of capitalizing names of schools, organizations, and businesses.

Ask a student to read the instructions aloud. Explain any unfamiliar terms or vocabulary. If this task seems particularly difficult for your students, read the instructions to them as they follow along, and complete the first item as a guided task.

After the students have completed the Writer's Workout, review and discuss the answers with them.

Name _____ Date _____

Capitalization Party Guest List

BLM 7A

Guest Name	Yes, these words may join the Capitalization Party.	Sorry, these words are <i>not</i> invited to the Capitalization Party.
nelia's beauty salon	Nelia's, Beauty, Salon	
seifert's school of business	Seifert's, School, Business	of
coast emergency medical services center	Coast, Emergency, Medical, Services, Center	
castle security and alarm services	Castle, Security, Alarm, Services	and
the dove and olive restaurant	Dove, Olive, Restaurant	the, and
dogs and cats pet supplies and doggie wash	Dogs, Cats, Pet, Supplies, Doggie, Wash	and, and
united nations educational, scientific, and cultural organization	United, Nations, Educational, Scientific, Cultural, Organization	and

Program Guide

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Name _____ Date _____

Writer's Workout

BLM 7B

Part 1 Read each item. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors. Write each sentence correctly on the lines.

1. Ty took his bad-mannered dog to mulligan's dog obedience and training school.

Ty took his bad-mannered dog to Mulligan's Dog Obedience and Training School.

2. Mr. Monroe took his phone to linda's advice video and cellular for repairs.

Mr. Monroe took his phone to Linda's Advice Video and Cellular for repairs.

3. Sarah takes piano lessons at vivo and allegro studio of music.

Sarah takes piano lessons at Vivo and Allegro Studio of Music.

4. The south shore college of the arts is holding classes in watercolor painting.

The South Shore College of the Arts is holding classes in watercolor painting.

5. The wilderness committee of western north america wants to save our forests.

The Wilderness Committee of Western North America wants to save our forests.

Part 2 Read each item. Check the box if the item is correctly capitalized.

- May Street Film and Cartoon Agency
 Laroza And Rumsfeld Legal services
 Green Thumb gardening and lawn Company
 Red Cross Society
 Carlton College of art and design

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Program Guide

Capitalization Party Guest List

BLM 7A

Guest Name	Yes, these words may join the Capitalization Party.	Sorry, these words are <i>not</i> invited to the Capitalization Party.
nelia's beauty salon		
seifert's school of business		
coast emergency medical services center		
castle security and alarm services		
the dove and olive restaurant		
dogs and cats pet supplies and doggie wash		
united nations educational, scientific, and cultural organization		

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Writer's Workout

BLM 7B

Part 1 Read each item. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors. Write each sentence correctly on the lines.

1. Ty took his bad-mannered dog to mulligan's dog obedience and training school.

2. Mr. Monroe took his phone to linda's advice video and cellular for repairs.

3. Sarah takes piano lessons at vivo and allegro studio of music.

4. The south shore college of the arts is holding classes in watercolor painting.

5. The wilderness committee of western north america wants to save our forests.

Part 2 Read each item. Check the box if the item is correctly capitalized.

- May Street Film and Cartoon Agency
- Laroza And Rumsfeld Legal services
- Green Thumb gardening and lawn Company
- Red Cross Society
- Carlton College of art and design

Lesson 8

Individual Activity

Editing a Letter
of Complaint

Writer's Warm-Up

Write the following items on the board.

Spanish, Hawaiian, Punjabi
Ethiopian, Canadian, Swedish

Introduce the activity with an explanation like the following. During the last lesson, you learned to capitalize the names of schools, businesses, companies, and organizations. Names of languages, religions, ethnic groups, and nationalities are also capitalized. Nationalities are terms that refer to the countries people come from. If you come from the United States of America, you're American. If you come from Mexico, you're Mexican. If you come from China, you're Chinese.

Read the list of items on the board to the students. The words *Spanish*, *Hawaiian*, and *Punjabi* are the names of languages, so they're capitalized. The words *Ethiopian*, *Canadian*, and *Swedish* are nationalities, so they're capitalized.

Write the following sentences on the board.

The russian community center is holding a multicultural dinner with greek, moroccan, portuguese, and lebanese food.

Lucia is mexican american, but she is learning to speak japanese at school.

When Luis went to see his aunt, they spoke in spanish.

Read the first sentence to the students. What are the words that should be capitalized in this sentence? *Russian*, *Greek*, *Moroccan*, *Portuguese*, *Lebanese*. Why should these words be capitalized? Idea: *They are the names of nationalities*. Repeat for the remaining sentences. (*Mexican American* refers to an ethnic group; *Japanese* and *Spanish* are languages.)

Writer's Workshop

PREPARATION The students will need the graphic organizer and the letter of complaint they wrote in Lesson 7, lined paper, and their writing portfolios.

Introduce the students to the editing process with an explanation like the following. We're going to talk about some ways to improve your letter of complaint. One way authors improve their writing is by editing. Read your letter of complaint to yourself. Now we'll think about some ways you can edit your letter of complaint to make it more effective. An effective piece of writing is a successful piece of writing. How would you know if your letter of complaint is effective? Idea: *The company would do something to solve the problem I wrote about.*

Using Precise and Compelling Language

When you're writing a letter of complaint, you want to encourage the reader to act quickly to solve the problem. Using compelling, precise language helps convince your reader that your complaint is important and that the reader should act to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Read the following paragraph to the students.

I am not happy that your restaurant served me food with a bug in it. I'm sure this was an accident, but I didn't have much of an appetite after looking at it.

Are you convinced someone should act fast to satisfy this complaint? *No*. Read the second version of the paragraph to the students.

I am disgusted that your restaurant served me food with a fried spider in it. I'm sure this was an accident, but looking at the crispy spider legs in my dinner took away my appetite.

The general ideas are the same, but the language in the second paragraph is descriptive, precise, and compelling.

Instruct the students to look at the language in each sentence in their letters of complaint. If a sentence does not use descriptive and precise language, tell them to think of different words or phrases that might compel the reader to act right away. Remind the students to use the proofreading mark for deleting a word to eliminate words that are vague and a caret to insert more specific replacement words.

Eliminating Slang Words and Using Formal Language

Explain that a business letter should not use slang. Slang words and expressions are the kinds of words you might use on the playground or when you're with your friends. When you write a business letter, you must use formal language. Formal language uses the kinds of words you use when you're speaking in the classroom, when you're giving a speech, or when you're writing a business letter. Read the following sentence to the students.

I will grab some eats after I run to the store.

What are some slang words or expressions in this sentence? Ideas: *grab some eats*, *run to the store*. Ask the students to listen to the second version of the sentence.

I will buy some food after I have finished shopping at the store.

This sentence uses more formal language. What formal language did the writer use to say *grab some eats*? *Buy some food*. What formal language did the writer use to say *run to the store*? *Have finished shopping at the store*.

Instruct the students to look at the language in each sentence in their letter of complaint. If a sentence does not use formal expressions and language, ask the students to think of different words or phrases that are more formal. Tell the students to use the proofreading mark for deleting words to eliminate words and expressions that use slang and a caret to insert replacement words or expressions. Circulate among the students, helping them find any slang words or phrases.

Turn to the Writer's Guide for instructions for leading the students through the proofreading, publishing, and presenting steps of the writing process. The Writer's Guide also gives suggestions for using technology in the writing process.

Writer's Workout

PREPARATION Each student will need a copy of BLM 8.

Explain to the students that the Writer's Workout will help them practice various writing skills. Have each student complete BLM 8 to reinforce the concept of capitalizing the names of languages, nationalities, ethnic groups, and religions.

Ask a student to read the instructions aloud. Explain any unfamiliar terms or vocabulary. If this task seems particularly difficult for your students, read the instructions to them as they follow along, and complete the first item as a guided task.

After the students have completed the Writer's Workout, review and discuss the answers with them.

Name _____ Date _____

Writer's Workout

BLM 8

Part 1 Read each sentence. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors. Write the sentence correctly on the lines.

1. When Uriah traveled, she met Inuit people from the Arctic.

When Uriah traveled, she met Inuit people from the Arctic.

2. Dominic's mother is portuguese; his father is chinese.

Dominic's mother is Portuguese; his father is Chinese.

3. Jerusalem is a holy city to muslims, christians, and jews.

Jerusalem is a holy city to Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

4. Tony's favorite restaurant serves ukrainian pierogies and russian goulash.

Tony's favorite restaurant serves Ukrainian pierogies and Russian goulash.

5. Lily can speak cantonese, mandarin, english, and french.

Lily can speak Cantonese, Mandarin, English, and French.

Part 2 Read the paragraph. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors.

My favorite mexican food is burritos, but I eat them with grated swiss cheese and fried italian salami. I also like indian curry with greek olives. When I add hungarian paprika to japanese sushi, my mother laughs at me, but it tastes so good! I think spanish tapas are delicious with italian pizza, and chinese dim sum tastes good with swedish meatballs. I like all combinations of food!

Writer's Workout

BLM 8

Part 1 Read each sentence. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors. Write the sentence correctly on the lines.

1. When Uriah traveled, she met inuit people from the Arctic.

2. Dominic's mother is portuguese; his father is chinese.

3. Jerusalem is a holy city to muslims, christians, and jews.

4. Tony's favorite restaurant serves ukrainian pierogies and russian goulash.

5. Lily can speak cantonese, mandarin, english, and french.

Part 2 Read the paragraph. Use proofreading marks to correct capitalization errors.

My favorite mexican food is burritos, but I eat them with grated swiss cheese and fried italian salami. I also like indian curry with greek olives. When I add hungarian paprika to japanese sushi, my mother laughs at me, but it tastes so good! I think spanish tapas are delicious with italian pizza, and chinese dim sum tastes good with swedish meatballs. I like all combinations of food!