

The Thank You Letter

Teacher: Joyce Gardella

Subject: Writing

Grade Levels: 3rd-9th

Dates: 2 days

Overview: The Ski Challenge unit provided a plethora of writing opportunities. Five of them are described, four formal and one informal. (See Ski and Write: Notes and Reflections for Teacher). There are lesson plans for each of the formal assignments. The writing process is emphasized, especially polishing the final draft since they were destined for a public audience. The formal assignments were scored on a 6-traits rubric. The informal journaling was scored on completion.

Activities

Day 1: Introduce the idea of writing a friendly thank you letter through a whole group discussion. Review the Activity Page with students and have them complete the assignment. (**Note:** *The trip aroused a lot of media interest. A reporter emailed the students questions. I rearranged the questions into an outline form and had the students respond in a friendly letter format. They filled out the outline as a rough draft, typed it into Google docs, self-edited it, and finally, we did a final edit together. The outline and examples are included in Activity Pages for this lesson.*)

Day 2: Students will type their final copies in a friendly letter format. Emphasize including the date, greeting, body, and closing.

Extended Activity: Have students write an end of the year letter to their parents about their school experience. Parents love getting the letters!

Curriculum Materials

Activity Page, student examples, pencils, pen, paper, laptop or computer, printer

Assessment and Evaluation

Completion of letter

Curriculum Goals

Language Arts: A student who meets the content standard should:

A.1. apply elements of effective writing and speaking; these elements include ideas, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and personal style;

A.2. in writing, demonstrate skills in sentence and paragraph structure, including grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Paragraph 3: In this paragraph, Terrie wants to know how long it will take to get to McGrath. What is the schedule for the trip? Who will carry your gear? Have you practiced camping?

Paragraph 4: In this paragraph, Terrie wants to know what you think will be the hardest part of the adventure? Why? When you get cold, tired, or hungry, what will inspire you to keep going?

Paragraph 5: The conclusion- Terry wants to know what you will do when you get to McGrath. What will be next, will there be another big adventure? Like what? Oh, please tell her thanks for the long johns and socks.

Closing: _____

Signature: _____



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Student Examples of Thank You Letters

Dear Terrie,

The idea to ski to McGrath came from our teachers. I think it would be in between hard and easy. I think that because when I ski it will be hard, and when I don't it'll be easy. I want to ski for the excitement and adventure.

We train by going to the Cat Trail or Four Mile Lake. The biggest and oldest student is Greg, who is in 9th grade, Corbin is in 8th grade, I am in 7th grade, Tim is in 7th grade, Katy is in 6th grade, Courtney is in 6th grade, Kaleb is in 4th grade, and Josh is in 3rd grade. We are getting in shape by skiing around Nikolai and around the Cat Trail. The farthest we skied is to Four Mile Lake. Our teachers got our skis at Barney's Ski Shop in Anchorage. We skied with our teacher for a year. I like it because you exercise and build muscle.

It will take four days to the max to reach McGrath. The first day we ski ten miles. The second day we ski twelve miles, which we end up in Black Water. The third day we ski fifteen miles to Stuart's cabin. We reach McGrath the fourth day.

I think the hardest part would have to be going to the bathroom. I will face it though. What inspires me is the teachers, donators, and Sanka. The most inspiring thing would have to be Sanka. Sanka inspires me is because she believes in us.

When I reach McGrath I will shower, hangout, shop, and rest. I hope the next the adventure is biking from Anchorage to Fairbanks. Terrie, thank you so much for buying us long johns and wool socks. Oh yeah thanks for the bookmark of Sanka.

Sincerely,
(7th Grader)

Dear Terrie,

Skiing to McGrath sounds fun. Mr. and Mrs. G thought of the idea to ski to McGrath. I think it will be hard and fun to ski to McGrath. I want to go because it will be a fun adventure. It will be an adventure because I will have to go winter camping. I am very excited to go.

Training for a trip can be hard and sometimes fun. For the trip I am skiing, doing N.Y.O, and trying to go camping outside, but it is too cold. Josh is in 3rd grade, Greg is in 9th grade, Kaleb is in 4th grade, Thomas is in 7th grade, Corbin is in 8th grade, Courtney is in 7th grade, Tim is in 7th grade, Mrs. G is a teacher even though that is not a grade, Mr. G is a teacher too and is also not a grade, and I am in the 6th grade. The farthest I've skied is to 4 Mile Lake which is 3 miles to get there. I got my skis from Barney's Ski Shop in Anchorage, Alaska. We have been skiing since October. I like skiing because you go fast if your skies are waxed, and it is an outside activity.

If you are going on about a 50 mile trip, you are going to need things like sleeping bags. You will need to do other things like practice camp. To get to

McGrath it will take about 4 days. The schedule is to leave on Friday, March 9th, and go 10 miles. On Saturday, I will go 12 miles, and I will be at Black Water. On Sunday, I will go 15 miles, and I will be at Stewart's Cabin. On Monday, I will go 15 miles, and I'm in McGrath. I will stay there for 1 night. John Runkle, Miranda, and Shane will carry every one's things for people who are going. Everyone who was going was going to practice camp on the 28th, but it was too cold. The most important thing that has to come on the trip is food.

I think the hardest part of the adventure is that I have to sleep outside in a tent. I think that is the hardest part because we might get cold. I will keep going because all the donations people made and how much money they spent for the trip.

When I get to McGrath, I'm going to eat and take a shower. After that I will go to the stores. The next day I will ride back home on an airplane. The next adventure will be biking in the lower 48 or walking to McGrath. The 1st one I want to do is walk to McGrath. Thank you Terrie for donating socks and long johns.

Sincerely,
(6th grade student)

Dear Terrie,

The ski trip to McGrath might be fun to me. It might be fun because I get to go to McGrath. I want to ski to McGrath because that's the longest I skied. The teachers thought of the idea of skiing to McGrath. I don't know how they got the idea of skiing to McGrath.

I train for the ski trip by practice skiing and NYO. Do you want know what grade my classmates are in? Joshua is in 3rd grade, Katy is in 6th grade, Courtney is in 7th grade, Tim is in 7th grade, Thomas is in 7th grade, Corbin is in 8th grade, Greg is in 9th grade, and I'm in 4th grade. We got are skis from Barney's Ski Shop in Anchorage. I have been skiing for two years.

It might take four days by skiing to McGrath. We ski to McGrath on March 9th. We leave at 10:00. The people who carry our gear is Mr. Runkle. The other people who are carrying our gear is Miranda and Shane. First we're going to camp in the snow. Next we're going to camp at Black Water. Then we're probably going to stay in McGrath.

The hardest part of skiing to McGrath has to be camping in the deep snow. The second hardest part to ski to McGrath has to be getting up and skiing in the morning. It might be hard skiing in the morning because I might be grumpy. It might be hard camping in the snow because I might be cold. People who help us inspire me.

When I get to McGrath, I might rest. After I rest, I will probably go to the to the store in McGrath. After I'm done buying stuff at the store, I will probably stay at McGrath for a day. Thanks for the long johns and socks.

Sincerely,
(4th grade student)

