

Pen Pal Club X Stamp Collecting Month

Letter Writing Activities



Overview

This teacher guide contains letter writing activities for Stage 1, 2 and 3 teachers and their students. It is to be used in conjunction with Australia Post's 2021 Stamp Collecting Month [Interactive Slideshows](#), which focus on STEAM themes such as space exploration, green energy, sustainable food production, future cities, robots, artificial intelligence, and more.

Teachers should select one of the Stamp Collecting Month *Interactive Slideshows* to use as inspiration for their students' pen pal letters. These read-aloud, easy-to-use resources are free and easily downloadable from the Stamp Collecting Month website at www.auspost.com.au/scm.

Teachers work through their chosen *Interactive Slideshow* with their class. Students will demonstrate their learning by including detail from the slideshows in their letters to their pen pals.

If you haven't already done so, register for The Pen Pal Club at www.auspost.com.au/penpalclub to arrange pen pals for your class!

Resources

- Envelopes, pens, writing paper
- Stamps
- 2021 Stamp Collecting Month *Interactive Slideshows* x3

Differentiation

Teachers are encouraged to modify all activities to support the capabilities and interests of their class.



Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2

Learning Intentions

Students will:

- learn what a pen pal is and the basic structure of a letter
- learn that sentences need a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end
- develop their understanding of STEAM

Activities

Write a letter to your pen pal about space exploration, sustainability or robots.

1. Read and discuss your chosen Stamp Collecting Month *Interactive Slideshow* with your class. Brainstorm what the students find interesting or challenging about the slideshow. Explain that they will be using detail from the slideshows to write sentences for their letters to their pen pals.
2. Explain that letters include a *greeting* ("Dear..."), a *body* or main section, and a *closing* and *signature* ("From..."). Students should include all these components in their letters.
3. Model sentences for the body of the letter on the board. Examples might include:
 - (i) "Today, we learned about... "
 - (ii) "I thought... was really interesting."
 - (iii) "I learned that... "
 - (iv) "I still want to know why/how... "
4. Students start composing sentences for their letters, working with the teacher or in groups if appropriate. Depending on the capabilities of your class, the students should write 2-4 basic sentences about what they found interesting. If applicable, some students might like to include a drawing.
5. Students self-assess and check each other's sentences, focusing on meaning, language conventions such as capital letters and full stops, and ensuring the letters include a *greeting*, *closing* and *signature*.

Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 Australian Curriculum Links

English

- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations (ACELY1646)
- Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams (ACELY1661)
- Re-read and edit text for spelling, sentence-boundary punctuation and text structure (ACELY1672)



Year 3 and Year 4

Learning Intentions

Students will:

- learn how to format an informal letter
- use detail, including content words, to add interest to their writing
- develop their understanding of STEAM
- consider different jobs in science, engineering, design and technology

Activities

Write a letter to your pen pal about space exploration, sustainability or robots.

1. Read and discuss your chosen Stamp Collecting Month *Interactive Slideshow* with your class.
2. Brainstorm what the students find interesting or challenging about the slideshow. Explain that they will be using detail from the slideshow in their letters to their pen pals. Write new and challenging *content words* and *specialist language* on the board.
3. Students start composing their letters, working with the teacher or in groups if appropriate. Teachers may wish to model sentences for the students' letters, depending on the capabilities of their class. Students should write about what they have learned, such as new or challenging themes covered by the slideshows or exciting jobs that have been referenced, such as scientists, engineers, designers, astronauts, and more.
4. Challenge the students to include as much specialist language in their letters as possible, developing their sentences until they are detailed and expressive.
5. Students self-assess and check each other's letters. Check for language conventions such as capital letters and full stops, and ensure the letters include a *greeting*, *closing* and *signature*. Check for clarity and the use of content words from the slideshow.

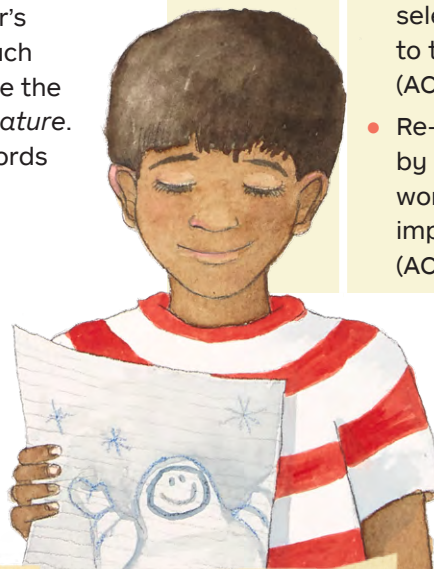
Create an eBook to show what you have learned.

Students create an informative pamphlet or animation to communicate what they have learned about STEAM from the Stamp Collecting Month resources. Challenge students to design and make these using paper, coloured pencils and their finest craft skills, or use digital tools such as Adobe Spark, ChatterPix Kids, Puppet Pals or Toontastic 3D.

Year 3 and 4 Australian Curriculum Links

English

- Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY1676)
- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features and selecting elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (ACELY1682)
- Re-read and edit for meaning by adding, deleting or moving words or word groups to improve content and structure (ACELY1695)



Year 5 and Year 6

Learning Intentions

Students will:

- learn how to format an informal letter
- use specialist language and description to add interest to their writing
- develop their understanding of STEAM
- consider different jobs in science, engineering, design and technology

Activities

Write a letter to your pen pal about space exploration, sustainability or robots.

1. Read and discuss your chosen Stamp Collecting Month *Interactive Slideshow* with your class.
2. Brainstorm what the students find interesting or challenging about the slideshow. Explain that they will be using detail from the slideshows in their letters to their pen pals. Write new and challenging *content words* and *specialist language* on the board.
3. Explain that students should try to include *quotations* in their letters. These might be direct quotations from the slideshows, quotations from class discussions about the slideshows, or quotations from a relevant specialist in the field you have been exploring. Explain that in a letter, quotation marks (“”) should enclose a quotation. Challenge the students to include as much specialist language in their letters as possible, developing their sentences until they are detailed and expressive.
4. Students start composing their letters. Students should write about what they have learned, such as new or challenging themes covered by the slideshow or exciting jobs that have been referenced, such as scientists, engineers, designers, astronauts, and more.
5. Students self-assess and check each other's letters. Check for language conventions such as capital letters and full stops, and ensure the letters include a *greeting*, a *closing* and a *signature*. Check for clarity, proper use of quotations, and the use of content words from the slideshow.

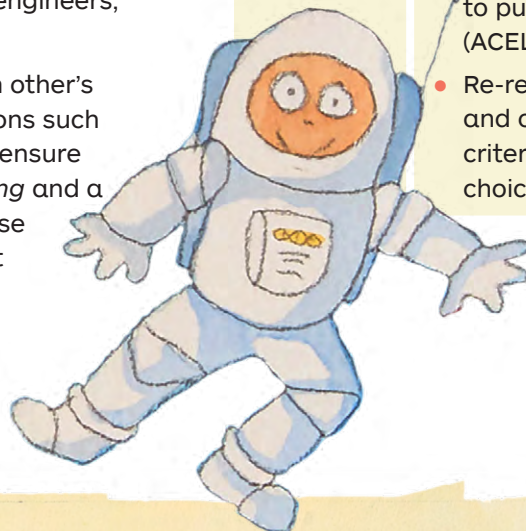
Create an awareness video to show what you have learned.

Students create an awareness video to communicate what they have learned about STEAM from the Stamp Collecting Month resources. Use a digital platform such as iMovie, Thinglink, or Puppet Pals. Students might like to interview other class members or develop a fictional play that showcases or extends their new STEAM knowledge.

Year 5 and 6 Australian Curriculum Links

English

- Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view (ACELY1699)
- Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704)
- Re-read and edit students' own and others' work using agreed criteria and explaining editing choices (ACELY1715)



Going further...

Taking inspiration from the Stamp Collecting Month resources, challenge students to write letters to their STEAM heroes to discover more about what they have learned or discover more about extraordinary STEAM careers.

Your students will need help finding the contact details for institutions and experts to whom they would like to write. These might include the Australian Space Agency, Questacon museum, the CSIRO, the Australian Academy of Science, Australian Geographic Magazine or the Australian Museum.

