

## PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin this unit by writing a letter in response to a prompt. This writing sample can be used as the placement test as well as the pretest. You score the samples with the rubric provided for a friendly letter that considers the following elements: organization, content, style, and mechanics.

A perfect score is 100 points. If your students score 20-95 points, they have the necessary preskills to participate in the unit.

### Guidelines for placement:

- 0-19 points: The student may not function well at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level they will require accommodation and assistance.
- 20-95 points: The student is properly placed and will benefit from instruction at the level tested.
- 96-100 points: The student may have skills exceeding those taught at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level, they can still benefit from participation in this level of the program. Additional challenges can be added by making adjustments on the rubric for what is required of this student. For example, if the rubric requires students to share recent experiences or activities, the higher performing students can be required to share more, thus writing a longer letter.

After students have completed the placement test and you know they're appropriately placed, you are ready to begin the lessons.

## GETTING READY TO START

Note: The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the Beginning Level 3 of Letter Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

### Introducing Letter Writing

**We are going to have fun together as you learn to be authors in many different forms of writing. Sometimes authors work with others to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing is called a collaborative writing project. The people who work together enjoy sharing their ideas.**

**Sometimes we will work as a collaborative group to write letters. When we write a letter as a group, I'll write our ideas and the letter on chart paper or type it on the Smart Board. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class letter.** (Note: Writing can be word processed using a computer and a Smart Board.)

**Sometimes authors work alone. After we work collaboratively, you'll produce a letter of your own.**

**For the next several days, you'll be learning about letter writing. When we write letters, we are exchanging handwritten or word-processed messages with another person or group of people. We will be learning about writing three specific kinds of letters: a letter of invitation, a thank-you letter, and a friendly letter.**

## **OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST**

**PREPARATION:** Display the following writing prompt on the board or on a Smart Board: Imagine that it is the middle of your summer vacation from school. Write a letter to a cousin, grandparent, or friend telling what you have been doing so far and what you plan to do the rest of the summer.

### **Administering the Pretest**

(Explain to students that before they start the Letter Writing unit, you would like to collect a sample of their writing. Mention that you will save this sample so you and they can see how their writing develops as they learn more about writing letters.

Read aloud the prompt to the students. Ask them to write their friendly letter on lined paper or word process it. Allow them sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the letter. Use the rubric and scoring guide found on the following page to evaluate each student's writing. Staple the rubric to each student's piece of writing. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.)

### **Scoring the Pretest**

(For each element:

Give a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.

Give a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.

Give the student a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.

Give the student a score of 4 for each element at the proficient level based on the state curriculum or Common Core State Standards.

Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Total the scores for each individual element.

Place students according to the guidelines for placement found on page 10.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**RUBRIC**

**Pretest**

**Posttest**

**Scoring the Sample**

- Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.
- Give the student a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.
- Give the student a score of 4 for each element at proficient level.
- Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

<b>Evaluating the Elements of a Friendly Letter</b>	
<b>The author of this friendly letter.....</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<b>Organization</b>	
Includes the writer's complete address and the date.	
Uses an appropriate greeting.	
Uses an appropriate closing.	
Concludes the friendly letter with a signature.	
Places letter elements correctly on the page.	
<b>Content</b>	
Begins the letter with a friendly question.	
Shares personal information.	
Shares recent experiences or activities.	
Asks questions that will generate responses from the reader.	
Ends the letter with a closing statement that anticipates a response.	
<b>Style</b>	
Uses a variety of sentence beginnings.	
Uses adjectives that tell what kind, which one, and how many.	
Uses adverbs that tell how, when, and where.	
Uses both declarative and interrogative sentences.	
Shows their personal voice.	
<b>Mechanics</b>	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Capitalizes I, first and last names, and the first word of sentences.	
Uses appropriate end punctuation.	
Uses commas correctly in the elements of the letter (date, city and state, greeting, closing).	
Correctly uses common verbs.	
<b>Total Points</b>	