

# The Art of Writing a Letter

**Background:** In today's world, we can contact people in almost every country on the planet through telephone lines and the internet. But not long ago, writing letters was the only means of communicating across long distance. And in fact, if you're living in the highland kingdom of Lesotho in Southern Africa like our next penpals, internet is not widely available so a letter is a GREAT way to communicate across the globe! Your assignment for homework this week is to create a letter to your Lesotho penpal that is more than a simple letter, but is also a work of art that will be memorable and meaningful to both you and your penpal, and that will leave an impression for students on a continent on the other side of the world!



## Directions:

1. Take a few minutes to decide the format of your letter after you read these directions. Do you want to hand-write it or type it (remember if you type it you are responsible for printing it on your own)? Do you want to make a unique shape? Do you want to add art or photos or other items?
2. Your letter must include the following elements:
  - The date in upper right hand corner
  - Greeting (Dear Friend, Dear Fellow Student, or Dear Penpal are all greetings that work)
  - **One paragraph introducing yourself.** Include your name, age, year in school, where you live, who you live with, who is in your family, etc.
  - At least **one paragraph describing your average day.** When do you get up? What do you do at school? What do you usually eat for your meals? What responsibilities do you have? What after-school activities do you do? When do you go to sleep?
  - At least **one paragraph describing your favorite holiday.** What is celebrated on that holiday? What are the traditions about that holiday? What is eaten? What games are played? What is done at school for the holiday? What does your family do for the holiday?
  - Add questions for your penpal at the end. You should have at least 3 questions for them.
3. When you have finished your final draft, add creative elements to your letter. Your letter must include at **least 4 of the following creative elements** (you can add more or invent your own as well!):
  - Drawings around the writing related to your letter
  - 3-D items such as coins, your favorite candy wrappers, small tokens from the holiday you described (example: if your favorite holiday is Valentine's Day, you could include one of those little Valentine's school children here give each other)
  - Photographs of you, your friends, your family, places you've traveled to, and the holiday you described
  - Color images from the computer of things you described from your letter (example: if you described a trip to Hawaii, print a color picture of one of the things you saw there)
  - Small envelopes attached to your letter with some of the things above inside
  - A mini-dictionary of slang American terms (of course, no profanity), or a little booklet of

American pop culture (the hottest bands, movies, things to do, etc.)

- A newspaper clipping that relates to something important to you or something your penpal is interested in (example, if your penpal likes soccer/football, include an article about the Chicago Fire)
- Unique craft paper, cut outs (example: scrap book style letter)
- Any other creative ideas you have! Have fun making your letter original!!!

The final copy of the letter is **due next Wednesday**.

The letters are worth 30 points each.

### Map of Lesotho



Check out Peace Corps volunteer Travis' blog!



<http://blog.pcharpoon.com/>