

Lesson plan

A letter to 'Inside Time'

Level: Beginner – Entry 3 / National 4

Time: 90 minutes

Aims

- To give practice of reading and understanding a short letter to a newspaper about an aspect of life in prison.
- To develop learners' ability to write a short text about education in prison.
- To develop learners' vocabulary for giving an opinion.

Objectives

All learners will be able to

- Express likes and dislikes about education in prison
- Read a simple letter
- Construct simple sentences

Learners at Entry 2 / National 3 and above will be able to

- Construct complex sentences using common conjunctions
- Use a range of adjectives to express feelings politely
- State problems and wishes orally and in writing

Introduction

This lesson is about letters to the 'Inside Time'. It provides learners with language for expressing their opinion on education in prison. This lesson is designed to be done as a whole class, and learners at all levels should be given the opportunity to contribute at every stage.

You will need:

- **Resource 1**, letter, cut up, enough copies for each pair/individual learner
- **Resource 2a (lower level) and b (higher level)** one copy for each learner, at the appropriate level
- **Resource 3**, gapped text, a large copy to display or project.
- **Resource 4, word cards**, one or two class sets. .
- **Resource 5a/b** letter, one copy for each learner, at the appropriate level
- flipchart or large paper and pens for a group writing activity.
- organise the class so that learners are sitting in groups according to their level, to facilitate instruction and feedback.

Tip – Bring a copy of some letters from the 'Inside Time' or other prison newspaper.

Be aware that many prisoners may be dissatisfied with all kinds of aspects of prison life. You may wish to limit the discussion topics to facilities like food, health, education, the library, the gym.

Procedure

Warmer (10 minutes)

- Ask learners if they ever read / look at Inside Time or other newspapers. Have they ever thought of writing to a paper? Show them the letters you have brought.
- Tell them they are going to plan a letter about the prison library or education.
- Divide learners into groups. Tell them to think of three things about the library or education in prison that they think are good, and three things that could be better. Ask each group to feed back and compare what they feel most strongly about.

Activity 1 – reading a jumbled letter (10 minutes)

- Tell learners that they are going to read a letter from someone who likes their prison library.
- Put the learners into pairs at a similar ability level and hand out **resource 1**
- Demonstrate the activity by showing the complete letter and explaining that learners must reorder the cut ups to make the complete letter.
- Monitor the pairs during the activity. When the first few are finished, check the sequence by asking each pair to read out a few sentences.
- Hand out **resource 2a/b** and direct the learners to answer the comprehension questions.
- Ask individual learners for answers to the comprehension questions – they will be the same, regardless of level.

Differentiation

- E2 / N3 learners could work on the jumbled letter by themselves.
- E 3 / N4 learners could join some of the sentences in the letter, using linking words, such as **because, but, and, also**. They could also use their own ideas to add more details to the letter.

Activity 2 – completing a letter (20 minutes)

- Project or display **resource 3** onto and read the letter out as a class, or nominate individuals to read a sentence each, starting with the most confident.
- Elicit suggestions for what could go in the first one or two gaps.
- Hand out the word cards, so that each learner has one or two. Ask them to come up to the board and put their cards in the gaps. You could ask a volunteer to type the words if using an interactive whiteboard (IWB), or just ask them to hold up the card they think is correct.
- Next ask learners to think of different words to complete the gaps, as you would in a substitution drill. Learners take turns to suggest words and write them on the board or on a sticky note that can be stuck in the gap.

- Read the completed letter together as a class, pausing where appropriate and asking concept check questions to make sure the letter makes sense.

Differentiation

- Higher level learners could do the substitution without flashcards, from memory or using their own ideas.
- They might also try to lengthen sentences with the details they thought of in Activity 1.

Activity 3 – vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Focus learner attention on the vocabulary in **resource 2**.
- Drill the words and then model the matching activity. Give an example of 'opposite' – e.g. by showing a full/empty container, a clean/dirty object.
- Ask the learners to match the words on the left with the opposites on the right.
- Check the answers together as a whole class, modeling correct pronunciation and intonation for clarity.
- Focus learners' attention on the pictures. Tell them to look around the classroom. Can they see old/new, clean/dirty things? Elicit a suitable adjective to complete the sentences. They may use some words twice.

Differentiation

- E2/N3 learners write their own sentences about the classroom, using the adjectives.
- E3/N4 learners think of their own adjectives to describe the classroom environment and use them to write a brief descriptive paragraph.

Activity 4 - discussion about their education here (10 minutes)

- In pairs or mixed ability groups of 3 or 4, ask learners to talk about what they like in the class, what they don't like and why.
- Encourage them to use the vocabulary on the resource and write down their likes and dislikes.

Example:

I like the computers. They are fast.

I don't like the chairs. They are old.

- Open up the discussion so that the whole class can compare ideas, after talking with their partners.

Differentiation

- Learners could work in mixed ability pairs with the more advanced learner doing the writing.
- More advanced learners could list of things they think could be better and how.
- Consider- breaks, subjects, start/finish times, resources, anything else



Activity 5 – Complete a letter (20 minutes)

- Hand out **resource 5a** or **b**, the letter completion activity.
- Learners work in pairs, and choose if they are complaining or praising. They should read the sentences and underline their choices.
- Model the activity first, by eliciting the first two choices and underlining the words on the board.
- Remind them to say what they like and what could be better, in the final sentence.

Differentiation: (pairs or group work)

- Lower level learners complete the scaffolded letter (5b).
- Higher level learners use their ideas from the discussion and work in small groups to plan and draft a class letter about different issues in education or something else they would like to change. It should contain two or three paragraphs and make suggestions for improvements.

Cooler 10 minutes

- Learners read the letters they have composed. A member of the group could read their letter to the class or they could swap letters and read them to their own small group. They could choose one or two which they think could win the £25 for the star letter.

Extension activities / Homework

- If time allows, learners choose a different topic and write a class letter on the board. Learners take turns to add sentences. This provides a good opportunity for peer correction of punctuation and spelling.

Answers

1. Reading

1. James Preston; 2. happy; 3. They helped him to read; 4. He can read letters from home; 5. in the library

2. Vocabulary

1. new/old 2. fast/slow 3. tidy/a mess 4. clean/dirty 5. early/late



Resource 1 Letter



By **James Preston - HMP SNAPE**



Praise for the library

I am very happy with the library here at HMP Snape.

Before prison, I could not read or write very well. One year ago, I came here and got help from the library.

I am now at Entry 3 in English. I can write to my family and friends. I can read letters from home. I can read stories.

If you want help with reading and writing, ask your library. They will help you learn to read books. You just need to ask for help.

Thank you to the staff at HMP Snape library.



Resource 2 a

1. Reading

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Who is the letter from? | a. James Preston
b. The library |
| 2. How does the writer feel about the library? | a. happy
b. angry |
| 3. What did the library do? | a. The library helped the writer to read.
b. The library helped the writer to do maths. |
| 4. What can the writer do now? | a. Read letters from home.
b. Read websites. |
| 5. Where can you ask for help with reading and writing? | a. in the laundry
b. in the library |

2. Vocabulary: Opposites

Match the words on the left with their opposites on the right.

1. new		a. dirty
2. fast		b. late
3. tidy		c. slow
4. clean		d. a mess
5. early		e. old

3. Use words from the groups in task 2 to complete the sentences.



The class starts _____

The class starts _____



The classroom is _____

The classroom is _____

The classroom is _____

The classroom is _____



The books are _____

The books are _____



The computers are _____

The computers are _____

Write you own sentences using these words

Resource 2b

1. Who is the letter from?
2. How does the writer feel about the library?
3. How did the library help the prisoner?
4. What can the prisoner do now?
5. Where can you ask for help with reading and writing?

Vocabulary: Opposites

Match the words on the left with their opposites on the right.

1. new	a. dirty
2. fast	b. late
3. tidy	c. slow
4. clean	d. a mess
5. early	e. old

Resource 3 Gapped text

I am very _____ with the _____ here at
HMP Snape.

Before prison, I could not _____ very well.
_____ ago, I came here and got _____ from
the library.

I am now at Entry 3 in English. I _____ write to
my family and friends. I can read _____ from
home. I can also read stories.

If you want help with reading and writing,
_____ your library. You will soon _____ to
read _____. You just need to ask for help.

Thank you to the staff at HMP Snape library.

Resource 4 Word cards



happy	library
read or write	one year
help	can
ask	learn
books	letters



Resource 5a Writing a letter

Praise/Complaint about education in prison

We are writing about English classes in prison. We like / don't like our lessons.

We like / don't like our classroom. It is clean / dirty and tidy / a mess. We can / can't learn well here. The start times are very early / late. The lessons are long / short. The computers are fast / slow. The books are very old / new.

We need more _____ please.



Resource 5b

Writing a letter

Title: _____

We are writing about English classes in prison. We think
..... because

The start times are very

Many people think the lessons are

We're..... because we can.....

The computers are

There are books but.....

We think we need

