

GOAL: Write a Note, Message, or Text

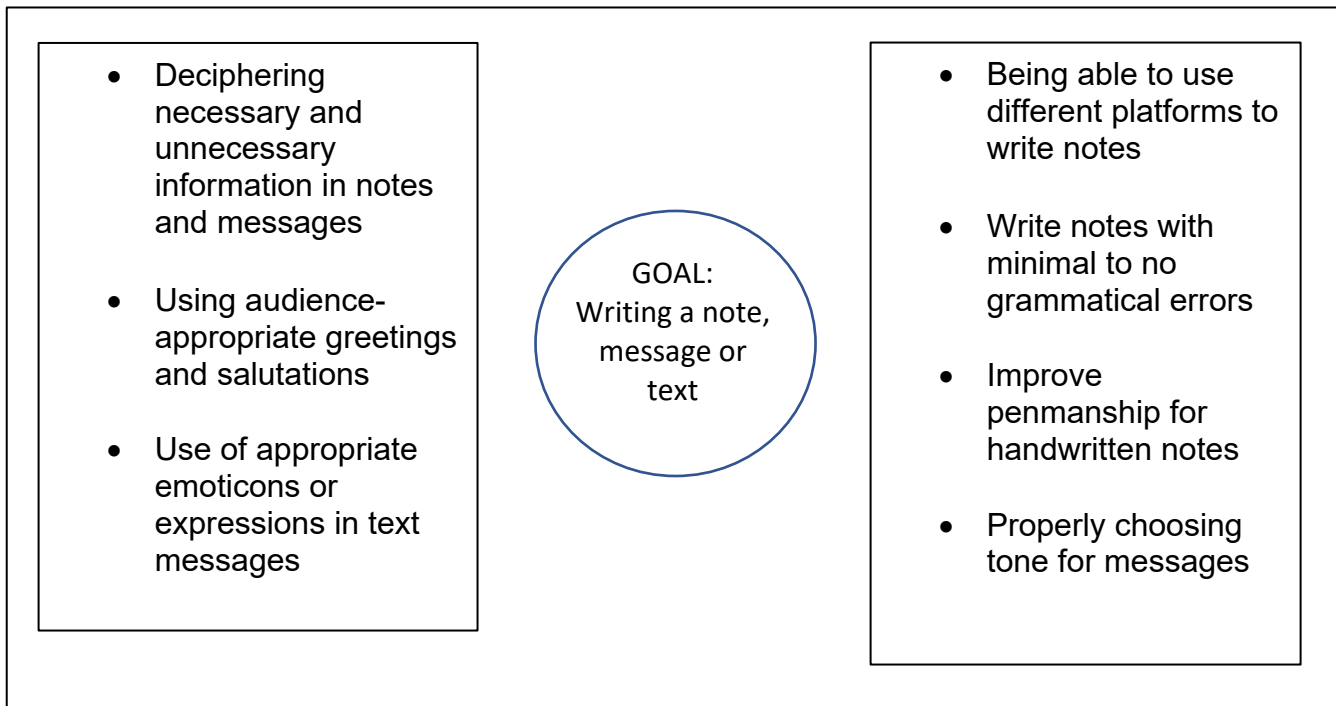
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Introduction

A note can be a short form of writing to give someone or oneself information. This type of writing is similar to an informal letter and is a quick way to communicate one's ideas, feelings, information, or needs to someone else. Traditionally people use handwritten notes as a way to express gratitude, sympathy, or simply ask for an act of service. Nowadays we also write out messages and notes via text or digital platforms. Digital messaging and texting platforms such as email, social media messaging apps, and cellphone note applications have become a common way to communicate today.

GUIDEPOST I: Where to Start

Before getting started, it is important to pay attention to the skills the learner already knows that may come in handy when writing messages or notes, and what skills still need to be learned. One way to accomplish this is by breaking up the learner's goal of writing a note, message, or text into individual short-term elements. Tutors can begin by asking learners why they are interested in writing a message or note and who their intended audiences may be. This can help determine what the ultimate goal for learning how to write a message, note, or text is. For example, a learner might want to successfully communicate with their employers. Tutors and learners can breakdown the learner's long-term goal into shorter objectives. Below is a mind map of possible short-term components or objectives for this goal.



Tip: Remember, every mind-map will look different and is based on individual skill levels and abilities. One may need to start with basics as tutors and learners move their way across the learner's mind-map. For example, a short-term component of this goal may be learning how to use texting applications. This will call for the need to focus on digital literacy skills instead of reading or writing practice for that specific lesson.

GUIDEPOST II: What You Will Learn

Once tutors and learners have identified smaller components of the larger goal of writing a note, message, or text, tutors can begin planning their lessons based on that short-term goal and begin assembling materials and activities that relate to the learner's goal. Transparency is essential in the adult learner's journey; therefore, it is important to explain to learners what they will be learning throughout that lesson, how they will learn the concepts (what methods will be used), and why that activity is important and relevant in achieving the learner's goal. Below is a list of resources and materials that tutors can use to help plan lessons and activities.

Book Suggestions

Browne, Kelly. *101 Ways to Say Thank You: Notes of Gratitude for All Occasions*. Sterling, 2015.

Fadie, Steve. *Words to the Rescue: The Sentiment Guide for the Tongue Tied. 1000 Thoughtful Things to Write on the Card when You Don't Have a Clue*. Orange Sky Books, 2007.

Isaacs, Florence. *Just a Note to Say . . . : The Perfect Words for Every Occasion*. Potter Style, 2005.

Lamb, Sandra E. *How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write*. Ten Speed Press, 2011.

Maggio, Rosalie. *How to Say It, Third Edition: Choice Words, Phrases, Sentences, and Paragraphs for Every Situation*. Prentice Hall, 2009.

Shepherd, Margaret. *The Art of the Personal Letter: A Guide to Connecting Through the Written Word*. Crown, 2008

Smith, Lynette M. *How to Write Heartfelt Letters to Treasure: For Special Occasions and Occasions Made Special*. All My Best, 2012.

Online Resources

Video Tutorials: Here are a variety of online video resources for tutors and learners. Use these to brainstorm lesson activities or to forward to learners to use as a supplement to reading or writing practice.

[Video - How to send a text message](#)

[Video - How to Write Greetings & Closings for Informal, Friendly Email Messages](#)

[Video - How to leave a message for someone](#)

[Video- Tutor Ready Writing: Using models to write an email to a teacher](#)

Sample Message & Text Templates: Here are a variety of samples and templates that learners can use to write out their own notes or messages for family, friends, and work colleagues.

[Examples of Celebratory, Birthday Greetings, and Condolence Notes](#)

[Examples: How to comfort a friend via text message](#)

[Examples: How to write an informal letter](#)

Example: Writing Templates--See templates at the end of this lesson.

Online Writing Tools:

[Appropriate Salutation Examples for Letters and Emails](#)

[Bilingual Texting Worksheet/Activity](#)

[Business Letter Salutation Examples](#)

[Common Texting Abbreviations](#)

[How to End a Letter with Closing Examples](#)

[Text Message Abbreviations Worksheet](#)

GUIDEPOST III: How You Will Learn

Once tutors and learners have established what needs to be focused on and why it relates to the overall goal of note and message writing, they need to decide **how** these skills will be taught and practiced. Focus on including multiple multi-sensory activities that are directly based on the learner's individual learning preferences and interests. Ensure that these activities further reinforce necessary key vocabulary and concepts needed to write notes and messages. Below are a few vocabulary words and concepts important to writing notes, along with a few examples of multi-sensory activities that can be used as reading and writing practice.

1. Key Vocabulary & Concepts

- **Audience**
 - Who is the recipient of the note or message? Is it for a friend, family member, someone at work, or a personal reminder?
- **Greetings/Salutation**
 - Including "Dear," "To Whom It May Concern," "Hey/Hi/Hello, [recipient's name]," and "Good morning/afternoon/evening!"
- **Closing/Signature**
 - Including "Sincerely," "Best Wishes," "Yours Respectfully," "Love," and "Best Regards"
- **Common Types of Messages/Notes**
 - **Sympathy**
 - **Celebratory**
 - **Thank you notes**
 - **Asking for a service or clarification**
 - Example: Sending a message to a doctor to ask something
 - Asking an educator to excuse a child's absence

2. Reading Practice

1. Use practice templates like those included at the end of this document or from the online resources to practice reading common types of messages and notes, paying attention to the format, salutations used and tone of the message/note.
 - a. Ask comprehension questions
2. Using a similar approach as the activity above, read sample notes and texts for different occasions. Create a general template with learners that they can use as guidance when doing their own writing.
3. *Sequencing Activity*: Laminate cards with different sections of pre-written messages, for example separate the intro, body and conclusion and have the learner place the different components in the order they believe the message should be written.
 - a. Mix in random tones and conversations to help practice sorting out appropriate tone and recognizing information that can be left out.

3. Writing Practice

1. Practice writing messages and notes by sending messages, notes or texts to tutor, family or friends via text message apps or email.
 - a. These messages can be used to draft templates and can be kept in a writer's portfolio for future use.
2. Practice by responding to online reviews or comments on public forums, have learners write out a message to the business owner (reviews) or original commenter on public forums. This will help practice writing to different audiences and setting different tones.
3. Have learners respond to pre-written prompts:
 - a. Example: Write a text message to Shelby telling him you are unable to join him to the theater and will have to cancel your date. Tell him what's wrong. Make plans to reschedule for a different day.
 - b. Example: Write a message to a friend telling them your favorite thing about virtual learning.
4. Practice writing daily to-do lists, noting what is important and what can be left out for the day. Have the learner practice writing a note for a family member to help with any tasks that were not completed the previous day.

5. Real World Practice (Field Trips)

1. Practice leaving reviews or messages for places you have visited.
 - a. Include what you enjoyed, what you may have disliked and what could have been done differently. Leave your contact information if you would like a response.
2. *Emoticons activity*: Practice choosing emoticons based on the tone and content of a text or online message. Message a friend back and forth using proper emoticons, if help is needed ask the friend what the emoticon is and when they would use it. See how their use and yours differ.

GUIDEPOST IV: What worked, what didn't, what can you use?

An important process of tutoring an adult learner is constantly discussing what was learned during a lesson and whether or not the learner thought it was helpful. A successful lesson ends with this reflection process which helps determine which activities and lessons can be kept and what can be done differently. It is equally important to focus on and acknowledge milestones (progress made) throughout the completion of the learner's goal. Below are some points to consider when reflecting and a few milestones that get learners closer to achieving their goal of note, message and text writing.

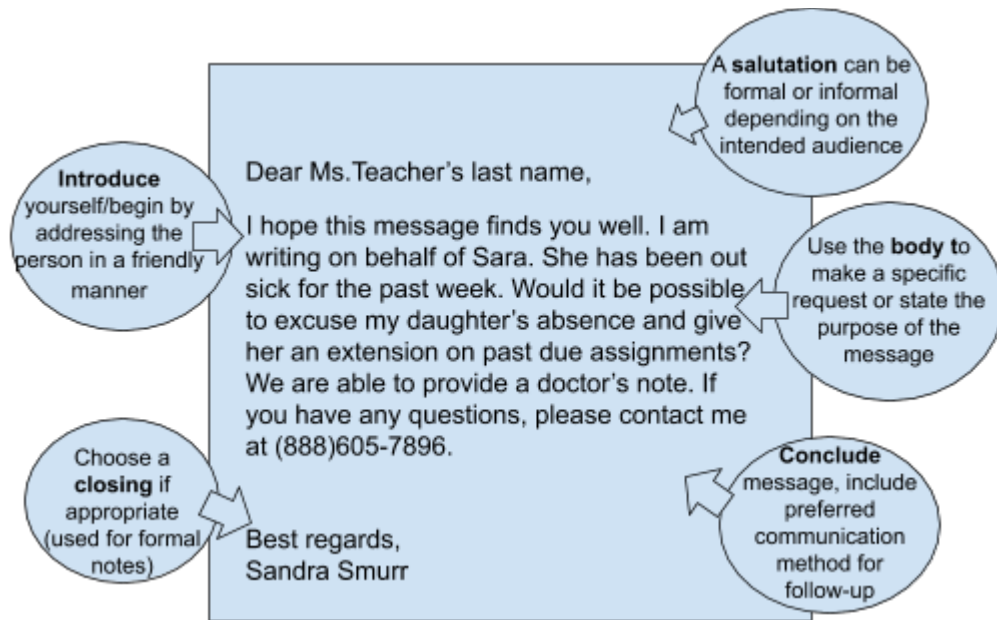
- Ask the learner which exercises and activities are helpful and which ones are not so helpful. If something is too challenging or confusing, break it down into smaller steps and goals. Go through the examples and explain them to the best of your ability.
- There is always room for improvement. If one style of teaching a concept is not working, try another method. Find out their learning style so that you can better adapt the lessons in a way that helps them to understand better.
- Review with the learner what concept(s) they worked on today and how they can use their new knowledge on their own to achieve their goals. Provide them with resources that they can refer to at home, such as the letter templates.
- Keep track of the learner's progress. Looking back at accomplishments is encouraging. Keeping a learner portfolio of their completed tasks and milestones is a great way to see how far they have come and to review any past concepts as needed (see Milestones).

Milestones:

- The learner understands the component steps and necessary skills needed to write notes, messages and text independently (INITIAL EFFORT)
- Sending the first message/note with the tutor's help (MAKING PROGRESS)
- Sending the first message/note by themselves (CONTINUED PROGRESS)
- Writing a message using various platforms--e-mail, text, social media, or handwritten note. (GOAL ACCOMPLISHED)

Tip: To document progress, keep a learner portfolio of photocopies or screenshots of the first notes that the learner wrote, comparing the first notes with the more recent ones to compare and keep track of progress.

Sample Email Message



Questions to ask the learner:

- What works well in this message?
- What can you use from this message for your own note or message?
- Is this a formal or informal note?



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See the Online Resources section of this lesson plan for additional examples and templates for notes.