Preparing for Timed Writing

Business Letter

When responding to a prompt, use what you have learned from your reading, writing your business letter, and studying the rubric on page 656. Use the steps below to develop a response to the following prompt.

Writing Prompt
Write a business letter in which you express an opinion or make a formal request to a business or organization about a product or service. Make sure you use standard business letter format.

Study the Prompt

Begin by reading the prompt carefully. Circle or underline key instructional words: *opinion, formal request, business, organization, format*. Re-read the prompt to make sure you understand your task.

Remember that a business letter is different from a personal letter in both content and style. The prompt is reminding you to use the business letter format. You must think back to what you have learned to use the correct style. **Tip:** Spend about five minutes studying the prompt.

Plan Your Response

Think of a reason you might write to a business or organization. Make sure you think of a product or service that you can write about easily. Once you understand your task and have settled on your topic,

- identify the business or organization you'll be addressing
- write down your main point
- jot down several ideas that support your main idea about the product or service
- list the parts of a standard business letter that you'll need to include

Tip: Spend about fifteen minutes planning your response to the prompt.

Respond to the Prompt

Begin writing your letter using the notes you've just made. You can start with the actual body of the letter and add the other elements (date, addresses, salutation) later. It may help to follow these guidelines:

- In the heading of your letter, include the date and recipient's address. If you choose to include your address, list it above that of the recipient.
- In the body, include a formal salutation, introduction and statement of purpose, support, and conclusion.
- In the closing, include a complimentary close (such as *Sincerely*), your signature, and your typed full name.

As you are writing, remember to use formal language and a respectful tone. **Tip:** Spend about twenty minutes writing your draft.

Improve Your Response

Revising Go back to the key aspects of the prompt. Did you use the standard business letter format? Does your letter make a clear point?

Proofreading Take a few minutes to proofread your letter to correct errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Make sure all your edits are neat, and erase any stray marks.

Checking Your Final Copy Before you turn your letter in, read it one more time to catch any errors you may have missed. **Tip:** Save ten minutes to improve your paper.

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Have students work in small groups to define and discuss the key instructional words for the assignment: *opinion, formal request, business, organization,* and *format*. Allow students time to look up the words in a dictionary. Then tell them to talk briefly about how each concept works in a business letter.

Writers Gaining Proficiency

Have students use the Internet to research information about a product or service they are interested in. This will provide vocabulary and specific information that they can use in their business letter.

Standards Focus

Objectives

Students will

- write a business letter
- make a formal request or state an opinion
- use standard business letter format

Direct Teach

Guided Practice

Study the Prompt

Before students begin writing, encourage them to answer the following questions:

1. What is my time limit?
2. What are the key skills assessed in the scoring rubric?
3. Who is my audience?
4. What is my purpose?

Plan Your Response

Point out to students that the scoring rubric emphasizes the importance of showing a clear sense of purpose. Remind students that their purpose is either to express an opinion or to make a formal request about a product or service. Each paragraph in the body of their letters should reinforce that purpose.

Improve Your Response

Explain that the scoring rubric calls for students to demonstrate a mature control of language, including making word choices that clearly support stated ideas. Remind students to include transitional words and phrases to better organize their writing.

Assess

Use the rubric on p. 656 to assess students' essays.