

Text selected by student for assessment: Letter to Harper Lee

Learning outcomes in focus

Students should be able to:

R8. Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text

W1. Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate

W2. Discuss their own and other students' written work constructively and with clear purpose

W4. Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences

W10. Use and apply their knowledge of language structures, for example sentence structure, paragraphing, grammar, to make their writing a richer experience for themselves and the reader

Teaching and learning context

Our completion of the novel 'To Kill A Mockingbird' coincided with Harper Lee's passing. Students were saddened to learn of her death. Writing letters to Harper Lee gave students the space to reflect on aspects of the novel that they personally enjoyed. Some students wrote at length about characters, while others wrote about the impact of the novel's themes. This task allowed for genuine personal response, literary analysis and practice in writing formal letters.

Students engaged in peer-assessment by reading and commenting on each other's drafts.

Students drafted their introductions and layout first. They then drafted each separate point to ensure a clear purpose in each paragraph. Following this initial draft, students then wrote the letter out in its entirety.

Task

Write a formal letter to Harper Lee, expressing your appreciation of the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird.' Explain why you enjoyed the novel and the impact it had on you.

Features of Quality

Genre awareness and control/creativity

Writing competence and word choices

Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

* Students choose two texts from their collection to submit for assessment.

Donnybrook,
Dublin,
Ireland
23/02/2016

195 Broadway,
Floor 22,
New York,
NY 10007,
USA

Dear Ms. Lee,

My name is Roisin and I have recently just finished your book and I am writing to you to express my delight at reading your wonderful novel addressing the inequality and prejudice that many people succumb to doing in this world in your beautifully crafted novel that had touched many hearts and opened many minds.

Firstly, might I express to you my adoration for the superb characters in this book that you have fashioned to be the most unique and inspirational characters a reader will ever come across. My personal favourite character was Jem, who takes on the role of a caring brother who follows in the footsteps of his father and passes on Atticus's teachings and lessons to his sister, with whom he protects against the harsh world she was exposed to at a particularly young age and even tries to protect her against Bob Ewell, who had hoped to kill them both, but merely leaves Scout's outfit in tatters and Jem unconscious, as he had tried to heroically protect his little sister.

Secondly, may I add that your unique writing style and plot that will leave a reader speechless is some to be admired. The expressive detail you have put in this book is awe-inspiring and I have been on tender hooks many times during your novel, most memorable of all the Bob Ewell incident that left a shiver down my spine. Every word was brought to life in your book due to your exquisite and individual writing style.

Lastly, I will leave you with one final compliment based on your underlying theme of racism and innocence that gives a powerful message to readers worldwide of the hate we fuel from discrimination that is not needed in this world and simply wasted energy and the way we expose young children to the harsh world and the racist opinions that we harbour and feed to them ridding them of their innocence. This message is extremely powerful and gives us all a new perspective on prejudice and inequality that goes on in this world without us fully perceiving these actions as wrong.

Finally, Ms Lee, I am left to give my utmost gratitude to you and your incredible writing skills and on behalf of every reader, I thank you.

Kind regards,

Roisin Murphy.

Donnybrook
Dublin
Ireland
23/02/16

195 Broadway
Floor 22
New York, NY 10007
USA

Dear Ms. Lee,

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Kind regards,

Features of quality - teacher annotations and level of achievement

Teacher annotations:

FQ1. Genre awareness and control/creativity

The student's writing shows a good awareness of the genre throughout. The letter follows the layout appropriate to a formal letter. The student uses a formal tone throughout, demonstrates a clear purpose and makes effective use of paragraphs in structuring this letter, all to good effect. The student also signs off in an appropriate manner.

FQ2. Writing competence and word choices

The writing is generally competent. However, the use of overly long sentences, a lack of full stops and incoherence in sentence structure overall, results in a loss of clarity and control of expression. Nonetheless, the student makes a very good effort to maintain a formal tone and uses formal language throughout.

FQ3. Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

The student demonstrates very good awareness of the receiver, as she addresses Harper Lee from the outset and throughout her letter. However, the letter lapses into summary rather than comment/discussion in places. Furthermore, failure to limit sentence length shows that the student's awareness of the audience/receiver's experience of reading the text is limited.

Level of achievement:

Best fit on balance judgement =



In line with expectations

This example represents one text from the student's Collection of Texts. The student selected this and one other text to submit for assessment. Looking at a number of examples, teachers will see a variety of different text types, in a variety of genres.

More examples will be added over time at curriculumonline.ie

Features of Quality:

Exceptional

The student's text shows creativity and command of the chosen genre.
The writing is highly competent, marked by original ideas, and imaginative word choices are perfectly suited to the purpose of the text.
The work is fully shaped for its intended receiver/audience.

Above expectations

The student's text shows very good control of the chosen genre.
The writing is consistently competent, and effective word choices are very well matched to the purpose of the text.
The work is clearly shaped with the receiver/audience in mind.

In line with expectations

The student's text shows good awareness of the chosen genre.
The writing is generally competent, and word choices match the purpose of the text well.
Content and development of ideas reveal consistent awareness of the receiver/audience.

Yet to meet expectations

The student's text shows little awareness of the chosen genre.
The writing lacks competence, and word choices may be inappropriate to the intended purpose of the text.
Content and development of ideas reveal little awareness of a receiver/audience.

The annotations capture observations by the student's teacher, using the features of quality, with a view to establishing the level of achievement this text reflects. The annotations and judgement were confirmed by the Quality Assurance group, consisting of practicing English teachers and representatives of the Inspectorate, the SEC and JCT.