

Text selected by student for assessment: Letters

Learning outcomes in focus

Students should be able to:

OL1. Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups, for a range of purposes, such as asking for information, stating an opinion, listening to others, informing, explaining, arguing, persuading, criticising, commentating, narrating, imagining, speculating.

R2. Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison.

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.

R13. Appreciate a variety of registers and understand their use in the written context.

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

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.

W7. Respond imaginatively in writing to their texts showing a critical appreciation of language, style and content, choice of words, language patterns, tone, images.

Teaching and learning context

Students studied five World War 1 poems, analysing themes, language and imagery and offering their personal response to the poems studied, both orally and in writing. Students were then given the task of creating a piece of writing in letter, diary entry or short story form, inspired by the war poetry studied and containing the appropriate features of their chosen genre. Students had been explicitly taught the layout and features of letters, diary entries and short stories and had written in these genres previously.

A crucial aspect of the process involved students' drafting, editing and re-drafting their written texts over four class periods. Students engaged in peer and self-assessment to aid the editing process. Following classroom-based work on their initial drafts, they typed up their final drafts.

Task

Create a piece of writing in letter, diary entry or short story form, inspired by the war poetry discussed in class and containing the appropriate features of your chosen genre.

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.

November 5th 1914

Dearest Kitty,

It has been a month since I left that dreadful place I used to know as home. I honestly wonder if anyone has even noticed; not that it matters anyway, as you can be sure I will never return to them.

Life here is very different. Its tough, and the days are long, but i'm starting to settle in. There are so many men from all types of backgrounds, and suprisingly a few in the same situation as me. I am nervous for the days of battle that await me, but I must persevere if I wish to provide for you. You are the one light in my life of darkness. I often find myself longing for you during the lonely nights, and reminiscing on the days we spent together.

I hope you are well and that Tom is showing signs of improvement, the poor fellow really did get a bad case. How is the job in the Arthurson's bakery? Philip promised he would keep on eye on you for the first few months alone, so I hope he's looking after you well.

Unfortunately I must stop here; if I could, I would write endless letters to you my dear. Please reply with haste, the silence is driving me mad.

Your unconditional love forever,

George

January 12th 1915

Dearest Kitty,

It has been a very long time since I have written to you. I never recieved a reply, so thought it best to wait. Perhaps your letters got lost along the way? Nevertheless, I have so much to tell you.

Firstly, I would of course like to wish my dear love and her son a merry christmas and happy new year. I do hope you had a pleasant celebration, and weren't too lonely during the dark winter nights.

To my surprise, christmas here was not as grim as I had envisioned. There was this simply glorious moment, when all of a sudden the constant rattle of gunfire came to an abrupt halt. I was bewildered, as were my commrades. I thought a truce had been called! Could you imagine that? But then we heard it. A distant sound of singing coming from the German Trenches. They were singing Stille Nacht, or as you and I know it - Silent Night, in honour of christmas. As you can imagine most of us were rather unsure of how to react, however my good friend Paul knew what to do. Within minutes both sides were joined in song, with nothing but the battlefield to seperate us. It was a moment of pure hope and unity which i will never forget until the day I die.

Unfortunately life returned straight back to normal, with no end of the war in sight. Wor-ry not my darling; i would fight in hundreds of wars if it meant keeping you happy and healthy. I hope I recieve your letter this time with no complications, and please make it as detailed as you can, I wish to hear all that is going on at home.

Your unconditional love forever,

George

March 3rd 1915

Dearest Kitty,

Your absence is driving me insane. To my dismay I still haven't received one letter from you. Your efforts seem to be proving fruitless. How I long to hear how you are doing, how you are feeling, what you are thinking. It is like a stab to the heart everytime I see my comrades receiving letters from their love's.

I have fallen unwell of late. I believe it is a case of Trench Fever as it is very common here. However, you are not to worry as it is nothing out of the ordinary. Speaking of illness, I hope that Tom has fully recovered by now; and that the money I'm providing you with helped in paying for any treatment. Remember I'm doing this for you my love. I am becoming more exhausted each day. I am not only physically, but also emotionally drained, due to seeing the constant destruction war does each day. I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy. I can only imagine your reaction if these undignified images of death and brutality were to ever grace your beautiful, innocent eyes.

I have a lot of time to think. Sometimes too much time. My mind always seems to wander back to you. Your short, curled chestnut hair, your beautiful, porcelain-like, soft skin, those big, glossy, olive eyes, and the way your rose bud lips curl into a warm, friendly smile. It hurts me to think I may not see you for quite some time, but I know when the war finally ends I will return to a renewed, prosperous England, where we can live together knowing, my time spent fighting for this country was all worth it in the end.

Stay safe my dear, I am counting down the days until I receive your reply.

Your unconditional love forever,

George

June 20th 1915

Dear Kitty,

I don't know where you are my dear. Am I even getting through to you? I feel so lost, as if i'm talking to myself. My mind is a constant buzz, contemplating where you could be, what is going wrong, who I am. Is this all some sort of sick joke my very own mind conjured up to torture me? Then I think to myself that is proposterous. The image of you in my head is simply too vivid. I can see the way you move, the way you sip your tea when its still too hot, the way you furrow your brow when you're deep in conversation, or prehaps invested in one of your favourite works by dickens, the way your lips whispered "I love you" for the first time, it couldnt be.

I don't like to write to you much anymore; I mean, of course I do, but not hearing anything back causes a wave of depression to wash over me. I've written you hundreds of letters these past few months, yet only sent four. I write about my worries and fears; my feelings too. But I can't bear the not knowing.

Kitty, do you still love me like you said you did that icy, winter morning when I last felt your warm embrace?

Your unconditional love forever,

George

October 8th 1915

Kitty,

I am so sorry my darling, I didn't mean to question your love. Please don't be upset. As I said before I have a lot of time to think, too much time. Please write to me my dear. Just so I know you're still there? I am desperate Kitty, please. My world is falling apart. What's the use anymore? If I don't have you.

Your unconditional love forever,

George

October 10th 1971
14 Tottenham Court Road
London
England

George Williams
St Ann's Psychiatric Hospital
Poole, Dorset
England

Dear George,

I hope you are well. My name is Lisa Hughes. I have received many of your letters over the past few months who I believe were intended for someone named Catherine Kinglsey or "Kitty" as you called her, who lived here many, many years ago.

I have spoken to your doctors at St Ann's, and have reason to believe you are an English World War One Veteran. They have told me about your condition, which must be very difficult for you.

I thought perhaps sometime soon I could visit you, as it must get rather lonely with no family. I would love to hear your story of growing up as an orphan and going to war for your love at just nineteen years of age; and if it was alright with you I would be very grateful if you allowed me to publish it in the newspaper I work for.

I also recently found a box in the attic full of pictures and trinkets I believe to have belonged to your love, Kitty. I will bring it along for you as it is only right for you to have it.

Thank you very much, and I will be in touch.

Regards,

Lisa Hughes

Features of quality - teacher annotations and level of achievement

Teacher annotations:

FQ1. Genre awareness and control/creativity

The informal letters are of a personal nature and addressed to a specific recipient. References to past memories and people in the couple's lives add authenticity and make the letters real and credible. The final formal letter that concludes the story provides a clever twist.

FQ2. Writing competence and word choices

The student makes effective word choices for the most part. Although simple, the language reflects the characters' background and life experiences.

FQ3. Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

The unfolding of the narrative in the letters is very engaging for the reader. However, the lack of accuracy with regards to spelling, grammar and punctuation is quite distracting and detracts from the reader's experience.

Level of achievement:

Best fit on balance judgement =



Above 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.