

Allow Me to Introduce Myself

Writing a Letter of Introduction

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	150 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	3–4 class periods

Essential Question

What experiences have shaped who you are?

Summary

A letter of introduction can serve as a personal statement and paint a picture of who someone is as a unique individual. In this lesson, students will learn how audience and purpose can impact their writing. Students will apply their new understanding to compose a formal letter of introduction then revise it based on peer feedback. This lesson would fit well at the beginning of the year as a getting-to-know-you activity and formative writing assessment between teacher and new students.

Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to a song about how self-introductions can be awkward.

Explore 1

Students examine which attributes they would and would not include for an introduction.

Explain 1

Students draft the body of their letter of introduction, using a list of topics as inspiration.

Explore 2

Students examine a model letter of introduction and identify the audience and purpose.

Explain 2

Students deepen their understanding of how audience and purpose help organize ideas.

Extend

Students draft the body of their letter of introduction, using the list of topics as inspiration.

Evaluate

Students edit and revise their writing based on peer feedback.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

ORG 301: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Group most ideas logically -Use transitions between and within paragraphs to clarify some relationships among ideas

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.2.W.1: Routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop ideas and plan).
8.2.W.2: Routinely and recursively organize and develop ideas to compose a first draft.
8.2.W.3: Routinely and recursively revise drafts for intended purpose, audience, organization, coherence, and style (e.g., word choice and sentence variety).

Attachments

- Introduce Yourself—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.docx
- Introduce Yourself—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.pdf
- Introduce Yourself—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.docx
- Introduce Yourself—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.pptx
- Model Introduction—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.docx
- Model Introduction—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.pdf
- Model Introduction—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.docx
- Model Introduction—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.pdf
- Sorting Characteristics—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.docx
- Sorting Characteristics—Allow Me to Introduce Myself - Spanish.pdf
- Sorting Characteristics—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.docx
- Sorting Characteristics—Allow Me to Introduce Myself.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Sorting Characteristics cards (attached; print one-sided; one per pair)
- Model Introduction handout (attached; print one-sided; one per student)
- Introduce Yourself handout (attached; print two-sided; one per student)
- Student devices (optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Begin the lesson by introducing the essential question on **slide 3** of the attached **Lesson Slides**: “What experiences have shaped who you are?” Display **slide 4** and share the lesson objectives to the extent you feel necessary.

Display **slide 5** and ask students the following question: “Has a teacher ever asked you to introduce yourself at the beginning of a new school year?”

Wait for student responses (likely affirmatives), then continue with the subsequent questions on the slide:

- What was the experience like?
- What kinds of things did you share during your brief introduction?
- Why do you think teachers ask students to introduce themselves to their classmates?

For students who shared that it can be uncomfortable to introduce themselves to a crowd, tell them that they are not alone in their feelings. Ask why they think it can be uncomfortable sometimes to introduce themselves and what they think can be gained from introductions. The benefits of introductions may seem obvious but do not directly tell students these benefits. Instead, allow them to reason through possible benefits and share their thoughts.

Transition to **slide 6** and introduce the *An Awkward Self-Introduction* video by telling students that they are about to watch Janelle sing an original song about self-introduction. Share with students that they are not watching the video to critique the singer’s talent. In fact, context clues from the video title should reveal that she is explicitly trying to seem "awkward." Instead, tell them to focus and listen to her words to appreciate someone else’s personal experience of introducing herself. Then, play the video on the slide.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=FPlqeaVe9Ok

5 minutes

Explore 1

Teacher's Note: Preparation

Before you begin, print the attached **Sorting Characteristics** cards (one copy per pair). Consider printing on cardstock paper, especially if you plan to reuse these cards. Cut out the cards; all cards are the same size for easy cutting.

Have students find a partner or assign pairs. Show **slide 7** and give each pair a set of Sorting Characteristics cards. Have students use the Card Sort instructional strategy to sort their cards into two groups: characteristics that they would share and characteristics they would *not* share in an introduction.

Have students set aside their two groups of cards, keeping them sorted. They will return to this activity at the end of the next portion of the lesson.

20 minutes

Explain 1

Ask students what they think an audience is (or examples of an audience) and how considering an audience might impact their writing. Display **slide 8** and share how writing for a specific audience can help organize ideas for writing. Explain what "audience" means in the context of writing and ask students to think about the importance of considering who their audience is.

Transition to **slide 9** and discuss the questions that students should ask themselves on the slide. Then, ask students what the differences are between formal and informal writing.

After students have given a few answers, proceed to **slide 10** and discuss some of the important features of formal and informal style included on the slide.

Show **slide 11** and tell students that another important thing to consider when planning to write is your purpose. Ask students to think of and share examples of different types of writing for different purposes. For example, you would write an essay to inform, a speech to persuade, and a story to entertain. Once you have discussed a few examples, transition to **slide 12**. Ask students to consider how their style and content would change depending on the scenarios on the slide:

- Write a story to entertain your best friend or a group of teachers.
- Write a letter to inform a business owner or your parent/guardian.
- Write a speech to persuade your principal or a student organization.

As needed, pose guiding questions to help students understand how their audience should influence their writing style. Consider asking, "What style would you use for an informative letter to a business person? Would you use that same style if you were writing an informative letter to your parent/guardian?"

Display **slide 13** and have students revisit their sorted cards. Ask students to think about how the characteristics they included might change depending on the audience. Have students imagine that they are introducing themselves to an important business person. Then, have groups change the category of any cards that they think should include or not include in a formal introduction now that they know the audience.

Ask for a few volunteers to share which card(s) they moved and their reasoning.

10 minutes

Explore 2

Give each student a copy of the **Model Introduction** handout then display **slide 14**. Have students use the Think-Pair-Share instructional strategy and consider the audience and purpose of the letter on their handout as they read.

Display **slide 15** and have students discuss with a partner who they think the audience and what purpose of the letter is. Have students discuss what text in the letter supports their thinking. Then, ask for a few volunteers to share with the class.

30 minutes

Explain 2

Teacher's Note: Adjusting Assignment Expectations

Students are going to write a letter of introduction for a teacher they have never met. The **Introduce Yourself** handout includes the assignment expectations. Edit this handout as needed to clearly communicate your expectations for this writing assignment. Additionally, font style and size are suggested but may be modified.

Once students have an understanding of how audience and purpose can impact writing, display **slide 16** and give each student a copy of the attached **Introduce Yourself** handout. Preview the activity by explaining to the students that they are going to write a letter of introduction. Use the handout to share the overview of the assignment, and use the Model Introduction handout to clarify misunderstandings, as it follows the assignment expectations such as formatting, etc.

Display **slide 17** and help students imagine situations with different audiences where they would likely need to introduce themselves. Use this slide to share real-world examples of when they could use what they are learning in this lesson (writing to apply for a job, scholarship, etc.).

Now, it is time to enter the drafting phase of this writing process. Show **slide 18** and share with students that they are going to begin with an outline. Give them their audience, a teacher whom they have never met, and purpose, to inform their audience about themselves.

Assign pairs or allow students to choose their own partner. Ask students to each get a piece of notebook paper and create an outline for their letter. Encourage students to either brainstorm with their partner as they create their outline or start individually then trade outlines for feedback. Having students work in pairs might help those who struggle to write about themselves.

Give students approximately 20 minutes to work on their outlines.

45 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Purpose

For this stage of the lesson, the writing mechanics, style, and format are secondary to the content: students introducing themselves and the writing process. The evaluation is a chance for students to participate in the revision stage of the writing process.

Display **slide 19** and share the elements and formatting of a letter: salutation (Dear…), today's date on the same line, a closing salutation (Thank you, Sincerely, etc.), and line breaks above and below the body of the letter.

Show **slide 20**, have students use their outlines and handouts to begin the first draft of the letter of introduction.

Give students one full class period to draft their letters. Depending on the students' pace, additional time might be necessary.

Alternative Pacing

You may choose to give this writing as an assignment to complete outside of class and return. If that is the case, consider giving students a weekend or at least two evenings during the week to complete their letters.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 21** and turn students' attention back to the Introduce Yourself handout. Focus on going over the format of their letters. Their letters should begin with a salutation and the date on the same line. A line should then be skipped between the salutation and the beginning of the letter's body. Each paragraph should begin with an appropriate transition (First, Next, Additionally, etc.). At the end of the letter's body paragraphs, another line should be skipped, and a closing salutation (Thank you, Sincerely, etc.) should precede a printed name and signature. Give students a few minutes to make any needed corrections.

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

Many students who have been raised as digital citizens do not have experience with the difference between printing their name and having a signature. Gauge where students are with this and practice, if necessary.

Have students trade drafts. If the drafts are digital, they can trade by exchanging laptops, sharing access, etc. Display **slide 22** and introduce the TAG Me! instructional strategy. Tell students to use this strategy to provide at least five comments or suggestions. Transition to **slide 23** and prompt students to check their peer's letters for:

- Writing style
- Use of first person
- Grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure (look for fragments and run-ons!)
- Interesting and varied word choice and descriptions
- Clear, organized letter structure
- Distinct paragraphs that accomplish their specific tasks
- Transitions between paragraphs

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

Since these letters are a personal introduction, allowing students to choose their own partner may make sharing the content more comfortable.

Next, have students return their letter to the original author and move to **slide 24**. Give students time to revise their letter. After final revisions are made, share how you would like students to submit their final draft to you.

Resources

- Serote, J.M.. (2020, November 24). *An awkward self-introduction (original song) - lyric video* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPlqeaVe9Ok
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card sort. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/147
- K20 Center. (n.d.). TAG me! Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/2873
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139