

Thank You for Being a Friend

Writing a Thank You Note

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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Duration**	1-2
Subject	English/Language Arts		
Course	Composition		

Essential Question

Why is it important to give thanks?

Summary

There are a multitude of reasons why we offer thanks to others. Whether someone has done us a favor, given us a gift, shared their personal or professional time, or even just offered a kind word, thanking them with a sincere thank you note is a timeless and appreciated form of gratitude. A timely and genuine thank you note is essential in a range of circumstances, which makes writing one a useful skill to learn. In this lesson, students will write a sincere thank you note to someone they wish to extend gratitude. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning. Resources for use in Google Classroom are included.

Snapshot

Engage

Students use www.worditout.com to generate a word cloud of terms pertaining to giving thanks.

Explore

Students brainstorm ideas of who to send a thank you note to and explore the format of a thank you note.

Explain

Students draft a thank you note.

Extend

Students edit and revise their thank you note and examine the benefits of giving thanks.

Evaluate

Students reflect on the process of giving thanks and send their thank you notes.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.
9.4.W.2: Students will select appropriate language to create a specific effect according to purpose in writing.

Attachments

- Lesson-Slides-Thank-You-for-Being-a-Friend.pptx
- Thank-You-Note-Format-Thank-You-for-Being-a-Friend - Spanish.docx
- Thank-You-Note-Format-Thank-You-for-Being-a-Friend - Spanish.pdf
- Thank-You-Note-Format-Thank-You-for-Being-a-Friend.docx
- Thank-You-Note-Format-Thank-You-for-Being-a-Friend.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Thank You Note Format (attached; one per student)
- Materials for physical thank you notes:
  - Notebook paper
  - Construction paper
  - Stationery
  - Envelopes
  - Stamps
- Internet or Wi-Fi
- Access to word cloud generator (like www.worditout.com)

Engage

To begin, open a new Collaborative Word Cloud template using Mentimeter.

Teacher's Note: Word Cloud Generators

Mentimeter is just one easy-to-use word cloud generator. Other alternatives include Worditout.com and WordArt.com.

Display **slides 3-4** and review the lesson's essential question and learning objective with your students.

Display **slide 5** and tell students that you want to hear what words come to mind when they hear the phrase "giving thanks." Tell students that you will be typing in words in a word cloud generator and want synonyms for the words "thankful" and "gratitude." Since you shared those last two words, start the word cloud list in worditout.com with the entries "thankful" and "gratitude." Type in words as they share.

Begin with words that are synonymous with giving thanks like "gratitude" and "thankful." Sample responses might also include "honored" "grateful" "pleased." Once it seems like this first round is exhausted, tell students that you would like them to share words that express how they feel when someone does a favor for them or gives them a gift. Ask for a new round of words, using the same worditout.com template. Sample responses might include "excited," "surprised," "recognized," etc. Keep typing in responses for students to see until it seems that the energy is waning and there are enough quality words shared.

After the template is full, press the button to generate the word cloud and look at it as a class. **Slide 6** is a placeholder for you to include an image of the word cloud in the lesson slides if you would like.

Explore

Tell students that they will be writing a thank you note and that this word cloud is part of the brainstorming process. With the word cloud image still displayed, ask for a few ideas of why someone would write a thank you note. After hearing responses, display **slide 7** and share the additional reasons:

- When you receive a favor
- When you are given a gift
- After an interview
- When you have been a guest
- Just because!

For these examples, source ideas from the class about specific examples they have experienced when writing a thank you note was appropriate.

Pass out copies of the attached **Thank You Note Format** handout and read the introduction together.

Ask students to keep their responses to the word cloud in mind while you go over the handout as a class, reflecting on someone that they might want or need to write thank you note for.

Teacher's Note: Class Needs

This lesson addresses writing a general thank you note. At this point in the lesson if there is something or someone that this thank you note needs to focus on (i.e. to a guest speaker), now is the time to make that differentiation in the instructions. Edits may also be made to the handouts to suit different needs. Besides determining the focus of these thank you notes, also determine how they will be sent (formally—handwritten and mailed, or informally—emailed or submitted as drafts via an LMS like Google Classroom).

Next, ask students, "When is the best time to send a thank you note?" Tell them that timing is important. The best practice is to send a note of thanks as soon as possible. Of course, there are times when we realize gratitude far after we have received kindness or a favor from someone; in these instances, a belated thank you note is still appropriate and appreciated by the recipient.

Direct students' attention to the "Format" section of the handout and **slide 8**. Look at the elements of a thank you note together.

- Appropriate greeting (formal or casual)
- Personal context (if needed)
- Particular details about the event
- Particular details about why you are appreciative
- Reiterate a statement of gratitude
- Appropriate closing

For each element, there is a coordinating explanation and example on the second page. As you go through each part of the email, encourage students to take notes and source other examples.

Display **slide 9** and review the email together.

Teacher's Note: Slide Animation

Slide 9 contains animation within it. Each time you click "next" a new label will appear to reveal the different elements of an e-mail.

Display **slide 10** and direct your student's attention to the bottom of the handout. In this space, instruct your students to begin brainstorming their own thank you note. Now that you have gone over each element of a thank you note on the handout, have them determine who they will write a thank you note to and for what they are thanking the recipient.

Explain

Using the handout as a guide, and **slide 11**, provide students with time to draft a thank you note.

Teacher's Note: Materials

Another point of differentiation at this point in the lesson will regard the materials used for the thank you notes. Depending on the unique context of your class, determine whether students will compose handwritten and mailed or emailed thank you notes for the final product and adjust the steps of the lesson as necessary. If notes are being composed to someone at school or that you have contact with, you may simply collect the notes and deliver them personally on behalf of your students.

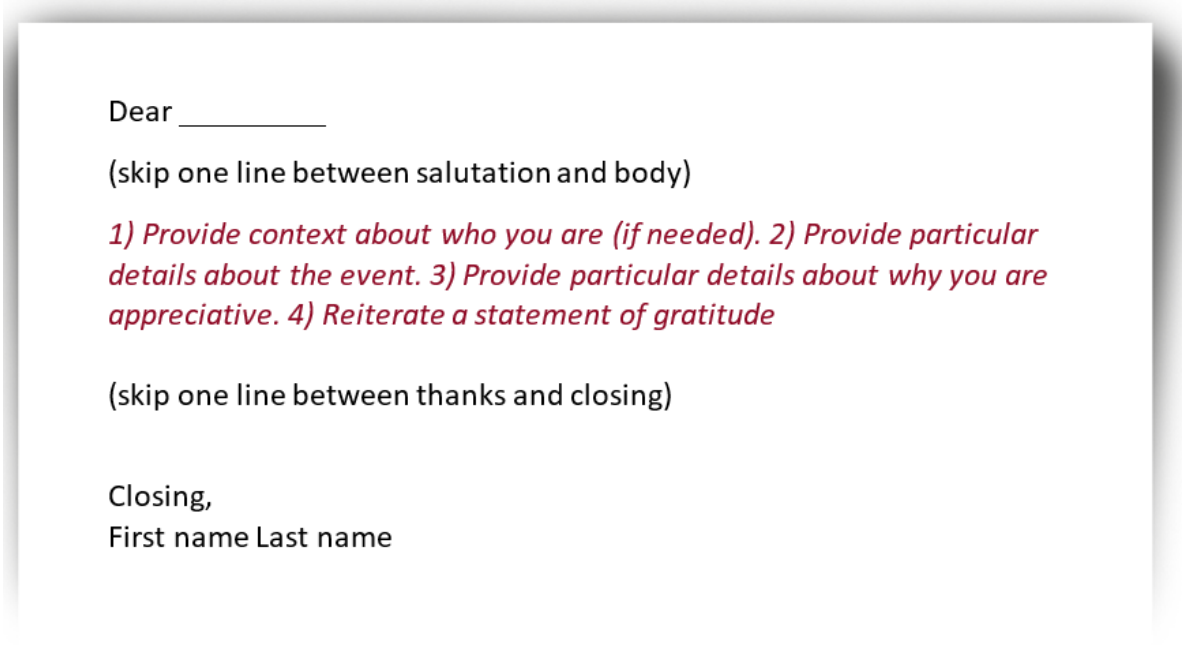
A hard copy thank you note is a classic medium. Materials can range from simple notebook paper and an envelope to formal stationery. If letters will be mailed, a postage stamp is necessary, as is the recipient's address. In the event that these materials are unavailable, it is still important to express gratitude. A less formal means of doing this is through email. For ease of sending notes, this lesson recommends writing a note to a teacher at school to whom students are grateful. When letters are complete, they could be hand-delivered to the teachers' school mailboxes.

Teacher's Note: Typing versus Handwriting

For students who are uncomfortable with handwriting, one-one-one discussions relaying that typing is appropriate can be held.

Regardless of how the thank you notes will be sent (mailed or emailed), the first draft should be handwritten.

After determining who students will write to, and about what, they will use the format below (and on the handout) as a template.


Dear _____

(skip one line between salutation and body)

1) Provide context about who you are (if needed). 2) Provide particular details about the event. 3) Provide particular details about why you are appreciative. 4) Reiterate a statement of gratitude

(skip one line between thanks and closing)

Closing,
First name Last name

Extend

Display **slide 12** and instruct students to re-read their thank you note draft to look for errors. This is a short note, but remind students that even though this draft is short, it is still a draft, and as such should go through the writing process.

Students have done their brainstorming and composed a rough draft. Now, ask them to re-read their email draft through the eyes of the recipient.

Teacher's Note: Peer Review

Since some of the actions for which students are writing notes of thanks may be personal, a peer-review may be inappropriate. If desired, offer for students to have a peer read their thank you note but do not make it mandatory.

Once students have had time to re-read, edit, and revise their thank you notes, tell them that there is a multitude of benefits to giving thanks. Articles like Forbes' "7 Scientifically Proven Benefits Of Gratitude That Will Motivate You To Give Thanks Year-Round" describe the personal benefits to both the recipient and sender of gratitude.

Share this article, or one like it, with students to extend their understanding of having an "attitude of gratitude". Reinforce that sending a thank you note is not just about checking off a box, and that cultivating gratitude has deeper implications.

Evaluate

To close this lesson, display **slide 13**, and revisit the essential question: “Why is it important to give thanks?”

Pull up the www.worditout.com word cloud image that was generated in the Engage of this lesson. Now that students have composed their thank you notes and looked at some benefits of expressing gratitude, they will do a reflective write based on the original word cloud.

Display **slide 14** and instruct students to write a Word Splash on a separate sheet of paper using the word cloud image for inspiration:

1. Choose 3 words from the word cloud image (for example, “thanks,” “gratitude,” “recognition.”
2. Use these 3 words in a reflection that answers the question “Why is it important to give thanks?”
3. Write at least 3 sentences.

Take volunteers to share their answers. These reflections can be turned in separately from the thank you notes.

After the reflection, and as a culminating step to this lesson, the thank you notes will be sent from students to their recipients.

Teacher's Note: Delivery

The process of sending the notes will be up to you. Again, If notes are being composed to someone at school or that you have contact with, you may simply collect the notes and deliver them personally on behalf of your students. This would negate the issue of postage.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Collaborative Word Clouds. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/103
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google Classroom. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Word Splash. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/199
- Morin, A. (2017, November 27). 7 scientifically proven benefits of gratitude that will motivate you to give Thanks year-round. https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2014/11/23/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-of-gratitude-that-will-motivate-you-to-give-thanks-year-round/?sh=15100fe0183c
- Transform your text into word clouds! (n.d.). http://www.worditout.com/