

# ELECTED OFFICIAL LETTER

writing kit

Strengthen the real-world writing skills of crafting a powerful letter in this **complete step-by-step** kit.

## SO MANY USES

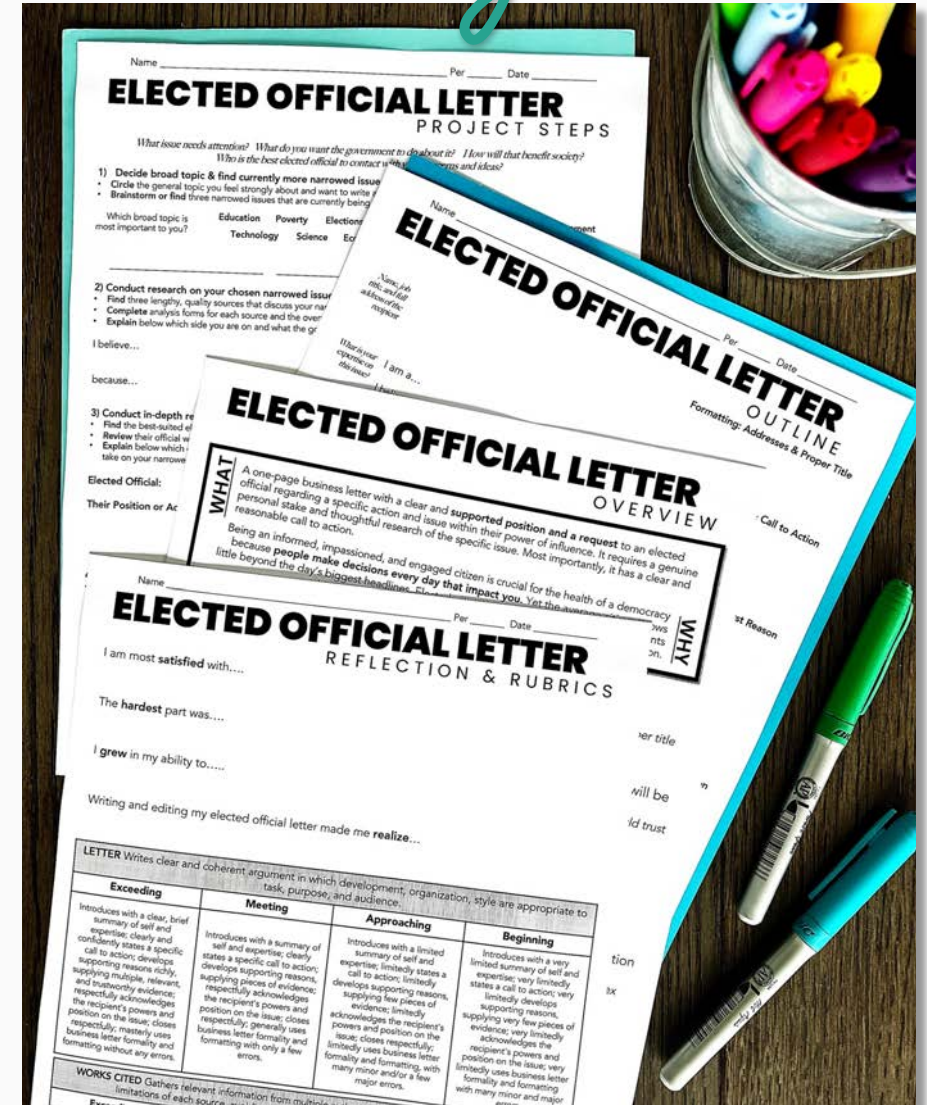
Add to any unit for a real PBL

Assign instead of a regular essay

Incorporate into your Current Issues, Civics, Social Studies, or writing class

Use an end-of-course research project

## **BOTH PRINT & PAPERLESS INCLUDED**



# SUPPORT ALL *students*

Included forms and how-to sheets *highly scaffold the writing process* from start to finish.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

Step-By-Step Project Sheet

Overview, Brainstorming, Researching & Outlining Sheets

Sample Letter, Edit Checklist

Reflections & Rubrics

Writing Skill Sheets

### ELECTED OFFICIAL LETTER OVERVIEW

**WHAT**  
A one-page business letter with a clear and **supported position** and a **request** to an elected official regarding a specific action and issue within their power of influence. It requires a genuine personal stake and thoughtful research of the specific **issue**. **Most importantly, it has a clear and reasonable call to action.**

Being an informed, impassioned, and engaged citizen because **people make decisions every day that** in little beyond the day's biggest headlines. Elected officials that even one well-informed and

### FORMAT

Properly address and open the letter.  
• Include your **address, the date, their address, and a**

### INTRODU

Start by introducing yourself and explaining why you're discussing.  
• Describe in a few sentences who you are, what you do, and what you suggest  
• State what you would like him or her to do (call to action)

### 2 TO 3 BODY PAR

Share your personal experiences and research.  
• Develop a few reasons with **humanizing anecdotes**  
• Include **emotion, yet still**

### ELECTED OFFICIAL LETTER SAMPLE LETTER

Sally Student  
555 Footprint Drive  
Seattle, WA 98456  
  
April 26, 2025  
  
Honorable David Kim  
Washington State Senate  
1515 Memorial Drive  
Olympia, WA 98504

**REMEMBER**  
Open with a summary of yourself and your expertise  
Mix your emotion with trustworthy evidence  
Close with a firm and clear call to action  
  
Use the **bolded** sentence starters to get going!

Dear Senator Kim,

I am currently a high school senior taking American Government class. Although I thought I was aware enough of how our government works, I was completely floored when my teacher gave my class the US Naturalization Test and I failed miserably. Not a single person scored a "passing" number of questions.

These are such basic pieces of information like how long US Senators are elected and naming a First Amendment right. Do you know that 30% of Americans don't know the Vice President's name and even can't describe the purpose of the Bill of Rights? Newsweek does this poll frequently and reports that kind of numbers are nothing new. That's pretty embarrassing.

That Senators Lange and Gunderson are co-sponsoring a bill (SB 1105) this session to make passing it a high school graduation requirement. While I agree that the idea behind this is honorable and praiseworthy, I don't believe it should be yet another requirement to receive a diploma. High school students are already required to pass 5 subject area tests as well as create and present a "Beyond High School" plan in addition to meeting several credit requirements. I've seen my friends struggle to pass these and have to take "test prep" courses which completely takes the fun out of learning. If we make it a basic civic knowledge another "test prep" then I believe it loses the real reason teenagers should be learning these things.

Really, there are so many legislative requirements that have been passed over the decades that never seem to end. Do you know that every single K-12 student is supposed to be taught a lesson on the Constitution according to a law passed in 1976? Or how in the 80s another law was passed to require all 4th through 12th graders to have at least 3 hours of AIDS/HIV education each year? I learned all about this awful disease in 9th grade, which has still stuck with me 4 years later. These hours every year is a bit ridiculous these days when we have so much to learn about our country? What's to stop a citizenship test requirement in having the same

having to hear good reasons for both sides of every possible issue and if you're not sure, please trust our teachers to do their job and hold high standards for us. I'll be sure to learn these same basics in their graduation required Civics course without having to take another test. Don't vote for SB 1105. Thank you!

### INCLUDING EVIDENCE SKILL SHEET

**WHAT**  
The inclusion of, not only, specific examples from other sources to support your argument, but also the sources from which they come. Evidence should be **tightly focused and explicitly connected** to your argument, yet clearly stated as coming from other sources.  
**WHY**  
Empirical (measurable, data-driven) evidence and expert testimonial quotes from well-respected people and organizations are by far the most credible and worthwhile types of evidence to use if you want to convince anyone of anything. By including and qualifying the evidence to use if you want to convince anyone of anything, you further add to your own credibility.

### PARAPHRASED EVIDENCE SKILL SHEET

Sum up what a source is uniquely arguing/saying/depicting in a brief description, usually leading with the source's author and title or type of source.  
• In Kevin Peters  
• Thomas Friedman  
• Abigail Adams  
• Lewis Hine, in

### ANALYZING & EVALUATING SOURCES SKILL SHEET

**WHAT**  
Media are the sources creating today's information and tomorrow's history. They are the videos, blog posts, editorials, infographics, and articles we use to learn about the world. And today anyone, anywhere, can instantly and freely post content.  
**WHY**  
Since media sources are created by truly anyone, through an ever-growing variety of ways, it has created a lot of uncertainty and "gray area" where there used to be unquestioned reliability and credibility. It has never been more imperative to have a critical eye when consuming any source before we can trust it.

### TYPE: How would you classify this source?

• News - blurb, article, feature article, interview  
• Post - blog, image, video, podcast, message board, comment  
• Editorial - essay, review, op-ed essay, letter to the editor  
• Advertisement - sponsored post, print ad, commercial, video  
• Informational - documentary, biography, encyclopedia entry, infographic

### AUTHOR/PUBLISHER: Who wrote it? What's their expertise?

Do they have a lean or reputation?  
• Is the author's name provided? Job title? Background? Expertise?  
• What organization published this source? What does their "About Us" say?  
• Is the author and/or publisher known? What is their reputation?

### SOURCES CITED: Who is referenced as sources?

• Experts in the field - scientists, historians, professionals, government officials  
• Experts in the event - first-hand accounts, studies, news articles, academic journals  
• Other sources - embedded links, video, audio, images

### THE MAIN IDEA: In a sentence...

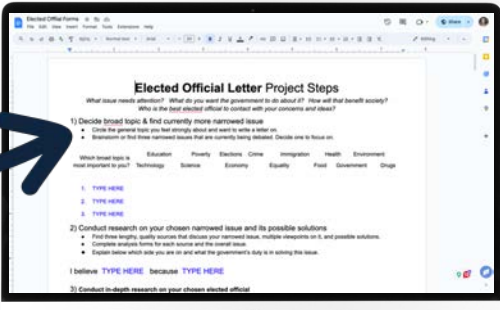
Lead with the author/publisher's name, type of source, the question, and the main idea.  
• In Mr. Friedman's editorial in the New York Times, he questioned the...  
• Kim Burns' documentary covers...  
• This NOVA two-part episode explored not only...

### EVALUATION: For what is this source good or bad?

• Explain what this source is useful for and what it's limited in regard to...  
• This article provided many quotes from people who witness...  
• While this editorial cites many statistics that... they all come from...  
• Although a blog post, it's hosted by the well-regarded website...

### DEFICIENT: What doesn't this source cover? Why?

• Background or history of the topic  
• More information on the other side of an issue  
• More in-depth coverage of a component of the topic  
• An update since this source was written



# FREQUENTLY ASKED *questions*

## What grades is this best for?

It was designed for **high school students**. However, if your middle school students are strong writers and you are looking for a more real-world writing exercise, this could work. Be sure to examine the preview and product description closely to decide if this resource is a good fit for your students.

## Is this editable?

The planning, outlining, and rubric forms are available in print PDF and an editable Google Doc file that can be customized to meet your student's needs. The how-to reference sheets are available in print PDF and non-editable Google Slides.

## Can I use this in a homeschooling setting?

**Definitely!** **Step-by-step forms** for brainstorming, outlining, and editing forms and **detailed how-to sheets** with a sample letter and skill sheets guide you and your student(s) through this complete writing process for this writing format and skills.

## What standards does this support?

**Several!** This kit supports writing, research, and social studies standards from various states, including:

- Develop writing by planning, revising, and editing
- Conduct research to answer a question; gathering relevant information from multiple authoritative sources
- Introduce, develop, and support a claim with relevant evidence; address the counterclaim
- Follow proper grammar and punctuation conventions; create a works cited
- Produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience