

Letters to the Future



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Letters to the Future



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Letters to the Future is a strategy for having students write letters to themselves that will be delivered in the future. The activity can be completed electronically using the website FutureMe.org which will automatically deliver an email on a specific date in the future, or it can be completed as a paper and pencil activity with letters being delivered personally. This teaching packet includes a sample parent letter, teaching suggestions, and a graphic organizer for brainstorming ideas.

Letters to the Future Project Overview

If you are considering the electronic method, visit the FutureMe.org website to learn more about it. The concept is really intriguing; write a letter to yourself, select a delivery date in the future, and email it to yourself. On that date, you'll receive a email from yourself! I've tried it, and it really does work. However, I suggest that before you use it you sign up for a free account and test it yourself. Write a brief letter to yourself and set it to be delivered tomorrow so you can see what's involved.

After taking a look around, you'll probably agree that while FutureMe.org is a great website for older students and adults, some of the ads and public letters are a bit questionable. The ads don't appear on mobile devices, but they do when you visit on a computer. However, you can avoid having students use the site by setting up the project using one of the options below:

- Students type their letters using a word processor and save them onto a flash drive. An adult then copies and pastes each letter into the form on the FutureMe website, enters the delivery date and email address, sets it to "private" and submits the form.
- Students type or handwrite their letters and place them in envelopes. The letters can be mailed by the teacher or delivered by hand on a designated date. The person who delivers them could be a parent, a future teacher, or even yourself if you want to give them to students on the last day of school.

Suggested Time Frame - This project will take several days to a week depending on the number of computers that you have available and the amount of time you spend brainstorming and writing letters. This is a great opportunity to walk students through the entire writing and publishing process!

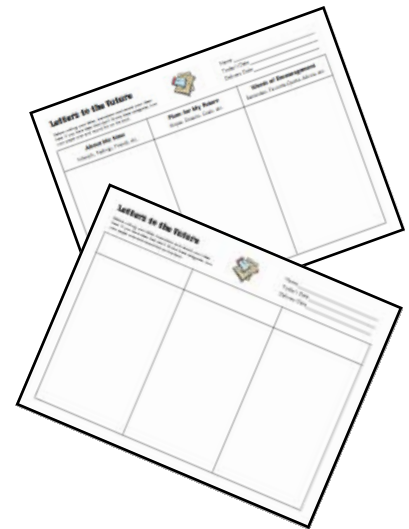
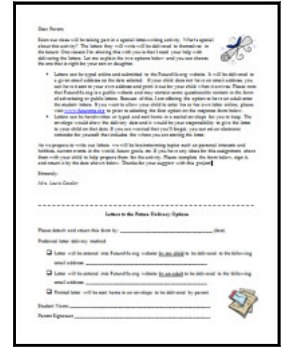
Letters to the Future Delivery Date Options

What's the best time of year for this activity? That depends on how you plan to use it and your chosen delivery date. The chart on the right shows a few options for when to write these letters and when you plan deliver to them. Just remember that the farther out you choose for the delivery date, the more difficult it will be to ensure that the student letters are actually delivered to them.

Write Letter	Deliver Letter
First Day of School	Last Day of School
Early January	Last Day of School
Early January	Next January
Fifth Grade	High School Graduation

Teaching Suggestions

- 1. Customize Parent Letter** - After you decide how to organize your project, customize the parent letter with the details that explain how your project will work. Before you duplicate it, be sure to add important dates and sign it. You'll see a sample parent letter on page 3, but you can download a customizable letter on the writing page at Teaching Resources: <http://www.lauracandler.com/filecabinet/literacy/writing.php>
- 2. Introduce the Activity** - Ask students to think ahead to a particular date in the future such as the end of the school year, this date a year from now, or their high school graduation date. Have them imagine how their lives might be different at that point and discuss their ideas with a partner. Then ask them to think about what they would say to themselves if they were able to contact themselves in the future. Would they want to tell about special memories they don't want to forget or give themselves advice. Then distribute the parent information letters and explain the project
- 3. Brainstorm Ideas** - Before your students are ready to write, they need to brainstorm ideas for their letters. Remind them that no one can predict the future, and this activity is not about making predictions to see if those predictions come true. It's more like a time-capsule activity where you write about what your life is like now and perhaps give yourself some advice or words of encouragement. Writing about goals and plans would work fine as long as students don't try to write as if the events have already happened. Graphic organizers are always helpful in brainstorming sessions, so you may want to have students use a simple chart such as the one on page 5. After you discuss the concept with the class for a few minutes, have them choose three categories for their charts or use one of the prepared charts on page 6 or 7. Give them time to talk with a partner and list ideas under each heading.
- 4. Writing Letters** - When students are ready to write their letters, explain your expectations clearly and help them to get their letters started. Remind them to include today's date and open with a greeting such as "Dear Future Me," or something similar. It might also be fun to include a way for them to contact you after they open and read their letters. If you have a class website, have them include the web URL and a reminder to visit the site. If you feel comfortable doing so, provide your school email address so they can write directly to you. Allow one day for writing or typing their rough drafts and several more days for editing, revising, and typing the final drafts. Be sure to include time for peer review and individual conferencing.
- 5. Scheduling Letters for Delivery** - The final step is adding the letters to the FutureMe.org website or deciding how they will be delivered in the future. If you have parents who did not want their children on the FutureMe website, you'll want to find an adult teacher assistant or volunteer to help copy and paste the letters and schedule them for delivery by email. Letters that will be given to parents can be sealed into envelopes before sending them home. Make sure those envelopes include the student name and the date for delivery. If parents want you to send the letters yourself later, you can give them a plain white envelope to address and stamp before returning those envelopes to you. Set up an electronic reminder of some sort to help you remember to send them on the designated date.



For more information on this project, visit my Corkboard Connections blog and read my **Dear Future Me** blog post. Read the comments and share your own ideas!

~ Laura Candler, Teaching Resources, www.lauracandler.com



Dear Parent,

Soon our class will be taking part in a special letter-writing activity. What's special about this activity? The letters they will write will be delivered to themselves in the future! One reason I'm sharing this with you is that I need your help with delivering the letters. Let me explain the two options below and you can choose the one that is right for your son or daughter.



- Letters can be typed online and submitted to the FutureMe.org website. It will be delivered to a given email address on the date selected. If your child does not have an email address, you can have it sent to your own address and print it out for your child when it arrives. Please note that FutureMe.org is a public website and may contain some questionable content in the form of advertising or public letters. Because of this, I am offering the option to have an adult enter the student letters. If you want to allow your child to enter his or her own letter online, please visit www.futureme.org to prior to selecting the first option on the response form below.
- A hard copy of the letter can be home in a sealed envelope for you to keep. The envelope would show the delivery date and it would be your responsibility to give the letter to your child on that date. If you are worried that you'll forget, you can set an electronic reminder for yourself that includes the place where you are storing the letter.
- A hard copy can be placed in a self-addressed, stamped envelope for me to mail in the future.

As we prepare to write our letters, we will be brainstorming topics such as personal interests and hobbies, current events in the world, future goals, etc. If you have any ideas for this assignment, share them with your child to help prepare them for the activity. Please complete the form below, sign it, and return it by the date shown below. Thanks for your support with this project!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laura Candler

Letters to the Future Delivery Options

Please choose one of the options below and return this letter by: _____ (date.)

- Letter will be entered into FutureMe.org website by my child to be delivered to the following email address: _____
- Letter will be entered into FutureMe.org website by an adult to be delivered to the following email address: _____
- Printed letter will be sent home in an envelope to be delivered by parent.
- Letter will be mailed by the teacher. (Please send in a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you choose this option. Use a first-class stamp on a plain white envelope.)

Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____



Letters to the Future



Name _____

Today's Date _____

Delivery Date _____

Before writing your letter, brainstorm and record your ideas here. If you have ideas that don't fit into these categories, turn your paper over and record them on the back.

Letters to the Future



Name _____

Today's Date _____

Delivery Date _____

Before writing your letter, brainstorm and record your ideas here. If you have ideas that don't fit into these categories, turn your paper over and record them on the back.

About Me Now Interests, Feelings, Friends, etc.	Current Events Local & World News, Personal News	Plans for My Future Hopes, Dreams, Goals, etc.

Letters to the Future



Name _____

Today's Date _____

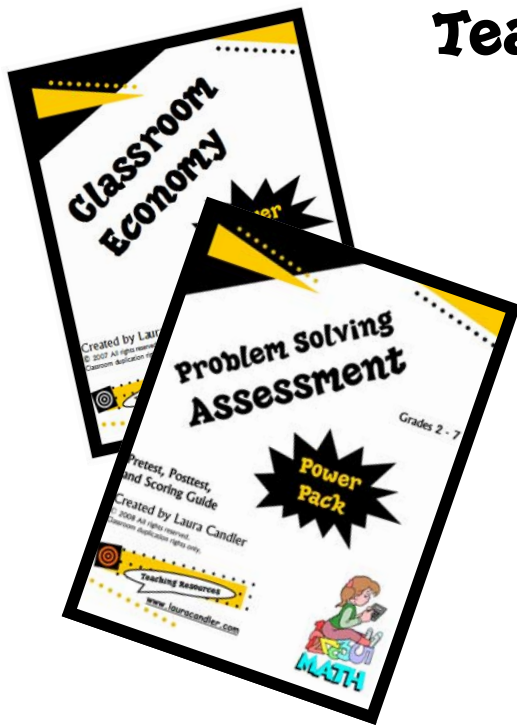
Delivery Date _____

Before writing your letter, brainstorm and record your ideas here. If you have ideas that don't fit into these categories, turn your paper over and record them on the back.

About Me Now Interests, Feelings, Friends, etc.	Plans for My Future Hopes, Dreams, Goals, etc.	Words of Encouragement Reminders, Favorite Quote, Advice, etc.

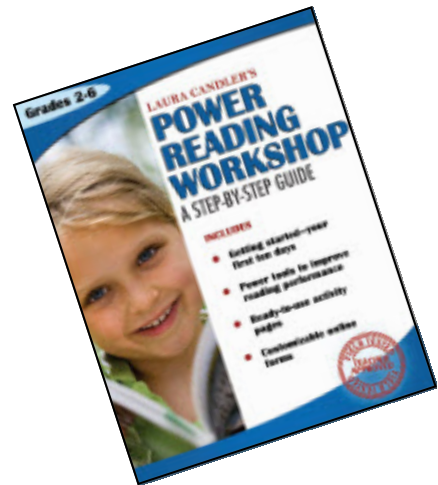
Teaching Resources Website

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Free Resources for Teachers!

- Blackline masters and activity sheets
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