**An Environmental Letter of Complaint**

This lesson is a great follow-up to my lesson ‘A Greener School’ (see englishwithrosie.wix.com). It gives students some useful language and organization for a letter of complaint using a model, then has students write their own letter of complaint.

Level: Intermediate +

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Handouts below - #1 for each pair, #2 and #3 for every student (#1 needs to be cut up), paper for writing

1. If you have already done the ‘A Greener School’ lesson, review with students what problems and solutions they thought of to make their school more green.

If you haven’t done that lesson, brainstorm in what ways their school is not environmentally friendly. Next, brainstorm some solutions to these problems.

1. Elicit in what ways they could make their solution a reality (ex: fundraising, educating other students at the school, writing a petition) finally eliciting writing a letter to the principal/DOS/you (the teacher). Explain that that’s what they’ll do in the lesson.
2. Pass out hand out #1 cut up and in a random order. In pairs (same pairs or groups from ‘A Greener School’, if applicable), tell students to put the letter in the most logical order, not worrying about the blank spaces yet. Monitor and help if needed.

Check answers as a class.

1. Pass out hand out #2 to each student. In the same pairs, have students discuss the first section – the order of information in the letter.

Check answers as a class.

1. Pass out hand out #3 and, again in pairs, have students put the phrases in the correct spaces in the letter. There may be some new language here so monitor closely and help students when needed.

Check answers as a class.

1. Next, students will write their own letter of complaint to the principal/DOS/you (the teacher). Tell them to make sure they use the organization they learned, and encourage them to use some of the language too. This should only take 10-15 minutes. Monitor and help as needed.
2. When students have finished, have them swap letters with another pair. Students check their classmates’ work for spelling, grammar, and organization. They also can give their classmates tips on how to make the letter stronger.

Next, two pairs will come together to make a group of four and discuss their editing,

1. Students revise their letters if needed.
2. As a wrap-up, students can read each other’s letters and vote on the most convincing, best arguments, best organized, etc.

Additionally, try giving the letters to your principal/DOS and ask for their opinion! They can read through them and decide which letter is best, most convincing, etc. You can follow up with the students about his/her opinion in the next class. The last time I did this lesson, I gave our principal these letters to have a quick read. He wrote a letter back to the students saying that he was very impressed and, starting next week, all of their solutions would be implemented! But of course, he said, with the added cost of these solutions, the super environmentally-friendly students wouldn’t mind paying $200 more per week to the school! ☺

#1

To the Principal,

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(1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the large amount of food that is wasted every day in your school. This habit is uneconomical and bad for the environment.

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Each day in the lunchroom, students are throwing away too much food. This behavior is (2)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a great school like ours. (3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ frustration as we see students wasting food so much. (4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, this wastes students’ money and the school’s money because the school needs to buy bin bags. (5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this is very bad for the environment because all of the wasted food goes to landfills. (6)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(7)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I know that we can’t expect students to always finish all of their food. (8)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we can give them (9)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to throwing their food away. Leftover food can be used to make compost (mixture of unused food that can be made into soil). If we had a compost bin in the lunchroom, students could put not only unwanted food in it, but also banana skins, apple cores, etc. This could then be made into soil which we could use in a garden!

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(10)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, students need to be educated about food waste and composting. Without education, students will not know what to do. Teachers should make lessons about the environment and composting so students know how important it is.

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(11)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, food waste is a big economical and environmental problem at our school. By putting a compost bin in the lunchroom and educating students about the environment, (12)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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(13)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

The Class

#2

**What is the order of the letter? Number 1-6.**

\_\_Thank you and signature

\_\_Solution(s)

\_\_Introduction (saying why you’re writing)

\_\_Conclusion (mentioning the problem and solution)

\_\_The Problem

\_\_Greeting

**Fill in the blank spaces with these useful phrases.**

1. Secondly
2. we can solve this problem
3. Unfortunately
4. I am writing to draw your attention to
5. Thank you for your time
6. To sum up,
7. an alternative
8. However
9. Firstly
10. is not what I expected from
11. I have a few ideas to solve this problem and make our school more environmentally friendly.
12. I must express my own, and other students,
13. To make matters worse,

#3

To the Principal of CCEL,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the large amount of food that is wasted every day in your school. This habit is uneconomical and bad for the environment.

Each day in the lunchroom, students are throwing away too much food. This behavior is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a great school like ours. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ frustration as we see students wasting food so much.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, this wastes students money and the school’s money because the school needs to buy bin bags.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this is very bad for the environment because all of the wasted food goes to landfills. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I know that we can’t expect students to always finish all of their food.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we can give them\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to throwing their food away. Leftover food can be used to make compost (mixture of unused food that can be made into soil). If we had a compost bin in the lunchroom, students could put not only unwanted food in it, but also banana skins, apple cores, etc. This could then be made into soil which we could use in a garden!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, students need to be educated about food waste and composting. Without education, students will not know what to do. Teachers should make lessons about the environment and composting so students know how important it is.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, food waste is a big economical and environmental problem at our school. By putting a compost bin in the lunchroom and educating students about the environment,\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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Sincerely,

The Class

Answer Key:

**6** Thank you and signature

**4** Solution(s)

**2** Introduction (saying why you’re writing)

**5** Conclusion (mentioning the problem and solution)

**3** The Problem

**1** Greeting

To the Principal,

I am writing to draw your attention to the large amount of food that is wasted every day in your school. This habit is uneconomical and bad for the environment.

Each day in the lunchroom, students are throwing away too much food. This behavior is not what I expected from a great school like this. I must express my own, and other students, frustration as we see students wasting food so much. Unfortunately, this wastes students’ money and CCEL's money because the school needs to buy bin bags. To make matters worse, this is very bad for the environment because all of the wasted food goes to landfills. I have a few ideas to solve this problem and make our school more environmentally friendly.

Firstly, I know that we can’t expect students to always finish all of their food. However, we can give them an alternative to throwing their food away. Leftover food can be used to make compost (mixture of unused food that can be made into soil). If we had a compost bin in the lunchroom, students could put not only unwanted food in it, but also banana skins, apple cores, etc. This could then be made into soil which we could use in a garden!

Secondly, students need to be educated about food waste and composting. Without education, students will not know what to do. Teachers should make lessons about the environment and composting so students know how important it is.

To sum up, food waste is a big economical and environmental problem at our school. By putting a compost bin in the lunchroom and educating students about the environment, we can solve this problem.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The Class