

**Summary**

Throughout history, people have written letters for a variety of purposes. This text examines different kinds of letters and gives information about the development of the postal service.

**Features of the Text**

- Facsimiles of letters and envelopes
- Procedural text
- Timeline
- Headings and sub-headings
- Contents page, glossary, index

**Purpose**

*Looking at Letters* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** identifying the features of letters;
- S** reading and interpreting timelines;
- S** reading specialised vocabulary.

**The Guided Reading Lesson**

- S** Identifying the features of letters
- S** Reading and interpreting timelines

**Introducing the text**

As you introduce, read, and discuss this text, note the non-fiction text features and check that the students understand the information and how it is formatted. Spend time on the features your students need the most support with.

Pages 3 and 6 – fact boxes

Pages 9, 10, 11, and 12 – sample letters and envelopes

Pages 9, 11, and 13 – various fonts

Page 16 – glossary and index

Discuss with the students the times they have written or received letters.

- *What was your letter about?*
- *Do you like receiving letters? Why/why not?*

**Following Up**

The students can:

- write a letter to a friend using a quill or a nib and ink pen, making sure that the letter is set out and addressed correctly
- use the blackline master on page 81 to compare different kinds of letters
- collect letters from home and school (making sure that they have permission to use them) and glue them into a scrapbook or onto a poster, explaining the purpose and features of each letter on a label beside it.

**Reading and discussing the text**

Read the title of the book together and then look at the contents page.

- *What information do you think you might find on these pages?*
- *Do you recognise all the kinds of letters listed here?*

Discuss the different kinds of letters and predict when they are used.

Ask the students to read to the end of page 6 to find some historical information about letter writing.

- *Who wrote some of the first letters? How?*
- *What have you learnt about the postal system?*

Refer the students to page 14 to identify how the author has recorded this information.

Ask the students to read to the end of page 7.

- *Do you think the postal systems of today are better than those of the past?*
- *What are some of the problems with delivering mail?*
- *Can you think of any improvements that could be made?*

Ask the students to read pages 9 to 12. When they have finished, compare and contrast the features of personal and business letters.

- *In what ways are personal and business letters the same? How are they different?*
- *What do you notice about the envelope on page 10? Would the address be written differently for a business letter?*

Discuss any new information that the students are finding in the text.

Ask the students to read to the end of the text. Spend some time discussing the glossary and index when they have finished reading.

- *Which words are in the glossary? Why?*
- *How would you find information about the Pony Express in this book?*

