



Educator Guide for *Dear Mr. G*

A picture book by Christine Evans and Gracey Zhang

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Letter Writing Lesson for K-5

The following plan can be adapted for kindergarten to fifth grade according to your needs.

Learning Outcomes

Students will discuss the key ideas and details from the text, discuss the craft and structure of the book, and learn about the different types of letter writing. Then they will write their own letters to tell a story to the recipient.

Lesson Plan

1. Explain that writing letters is a way of expressing yourself and connecting with others.
2. Talk about some examples of letters: formal, informal, thank you, sorry, invitation, letters to Santa or Tooth Fairy, fan letters.
3. Show the cover of *Dear Mr. G* pointing out the illustrator and author names, the title, and other parts of the book. Ask what they think the book might be about.
4. Read *Dear Mr. G*.
5. Discuss: the story, characters, settings, and events in the story

6. Ask: What were the different types of letters in the story?
7. Now you can write your own letters. Discuss as a class ideas of who they could write to. Some ideas: class volunteers, school admin, thank you to a place you visited on a field trip, cards for family members, the President or other government officials, letter to a favorite author, seniors like Mr. G (see resources).
8. Write letters - talk about the elements of a letter: salutation, introduction, body, sign off (see examples below).
9. Talk about what they might include in their letter. They could retell something that happened to them, for example.
10. Make and/or decorate envelopes if you would like (see Pinterest board below)
11. Show the students how to address an envelope (see resources below).

Further Resources

How to address an envelope



<https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm100/addressing-mail.htm>

Write letters to seniors

Be sure to read the organizations' guidelines for how to write to seniors and what to include in your letters.

Letters Against Isolation <https://www.lettersagainstisolation.com>

GlamourGals Foundation <https://www.glamourgals.org>

Love For Our Elders <https://loveforourelers.org/letters>

Grief Resources

<https://speakinggrief.org/>

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/childhood_traumatic_grief_information_for_parents_and_caregivers.pdf

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/24/716702066/death-talking-with-kids-about-the-end>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/two-takes-depression/201612/the-dos-and-donts-talking-child-about-death>

More Letter Writing Ideas

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/pinkchristine/letter-writing/>

About *Dear Mr. G* by Christine Evans (Author), Gracey Zhang (Illustrator)

A gentle and moving story about an intergenerational friendship between a young child and their neighbor told through a series of letters, for fans of *Ida, Always*.

When Jackson's soccer ball accidentally lands in his neighbor's rose bush, he thinks he's ruined Mr. Graham's roses forever. So he quickly writes a letter to Mr. Graham that blossoms into a marvelous friendship. Jackson writes letters, highlighting the everyday moments to make them feel larger than life, and Mr. G keeps writing back until the very end of his life, encouraging Jackson to live each day to the fullest.

This breathtakingly beautiful epistolary story shows the strength of letter-writing and intergenerational bonds. The text is accompanied by tender and evocative artwork to remind us that even as seasons change, our loved ones always stay in our hearts.

[Starred review SLJ](#) "This book will encourage children to explore unlikely friendships, as well as introduce the topic of grief and loss. It could also serve as an introduction to the benefits of pen pal friendships, from the perspectives of both parties... A moving tale that touches on topics of patience, love, and loss. A worthy purchase for all libraries."

[Kirkus Reviews](#) "With care and heart, Evans' epistolary tale centers on a neighborly and intergenerational bond. Zhang's art beautifully illustrates the warmth of their bond, the passing of time, and the ache of loss. A colorful palette and evocative strokes of the brush bring energy to Evans' gentle and moving narrative..."

[Publishers Weekly](#) "Evans shows how written words can help grow friendship in a story that underscores an intergenerational bond's many gifts."

Christine Evans is the author of *Evelyn the Adventurous Entomologist*, *Emily's Idea* and *The Wish Library* series. She is a British expat living in California with her husband and family. She invites you to visit her at pinwheelsandstories.com.

Gracey Zhang is the illustrator of *The Big Bath House*, *Nigel and the Moon*, and *The Upside Down Hat*. Her debut author-illustrator book, *Lala's Words*, was the winner of the Ezra Jack Keats Illustrator Award. She received her BA in illustration from Rhode Island School of Design and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. She invites you to visit her at graceyzhang.com.