Dear Educator,

The Do the “Write” Thing! program, sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association, aims to help you improve your students’ ability to write clearly, correctly, and descriptively. This program also celebrates the beauty and uniqueness of paper while discovering their renewable, recyclable, and sustainable nature.

To this end, we are providing lessons and a poster that encourage the art of writing and raise awareness of the importance of paper recycling. While paper recycling has reached record high levels in the U.S. (63.5 percent of the paper consumed was recovered in 2010), your students have an opportunity to help increase this level by recycling at home and at school – to reach an industry goal to exceed 70 percent by 2020.

The activities within this guide engage students in written forms of communication in a fun and motivating way. Lesson plans are aligned to common core writing standards and can be used repeatedly.

We hope this program will involve your students in authentic writing activities while they learn about the importance of recycling and the role they play in making sustainable choices for the future.

Your Friends at the American Forest & Paper Association
Lesson Objective:
In this lesson, students will consider the importance of paper documents, examine historical documents, and create a notebook journal.

Before the Lesson:
- Ask students to bring in an original or copied paper document from home. This could be a diary, photograph, letter, postcard, or greeting card. Be sure to bring an example yourself!
- Print copies of the children’s journals from the Iowa Historical Society.

Lesson Procedure:
- Share and celebrate the documents students have brought to class. Discuss whether a scanned, digital version of their document could replace the original.
- Show students the children’s journals found on the Iowa Historical Society website. Discuss the uniqueness of the covers and the handwriting inside. What do they suggest about the writers? Read some of the journal entries and discuss how they give us a snapshot into the life of a 19th century child. Interesting examples might be the fire in Linnie Hagerman’s journal or an excerpt from Charles W. Hadley’s journal written during the Civil War.
- Provide art materials to construct a journal including construction paper, photographs, and other materials that can be used to create a cover. Encourage each child to create a journal that reflects their personality, interests, likes, and experiences.
- The journals are now ready for your students to use! The approach you take is up to you. You might ask students to write an entry:
  - every day for one week;
  - on the same day each week for a semester or year; or
  - only when an important event happens, whether that event is local, national or international.
- Provide opportunities for children to share and discuss their journal entries, focusing on the quality and descriptiveness of the writing.

Extensions:
- Use the original documents brought in by students (or photocopies of these documents) to create a “classroom history quilt” to display in the classroom or hall. This display could be added to as students receive new significant documents throughout the year.
- Create your own paper for the journal covers.
- Visit a local museum or library and examine some genuine historical documents. Alternatively, invite a local historian or archivist to visit your class, bringing in historical documents to share.
Activity 2

Writer’s Workshop

Lesson Objective:
Students will use the “writer’s workshop” process to create stories based on historical documents and events. These will then be published as a class book.

Before the Lesson:
- Print a copy of the Mayflower Compact in the handwriting of William Bradford.
- Position a flip chart or white board.
- Collect materials to create a cover for the final class book.

Lesson Procedure:
- Discuss with students the events surrounding the departure of the Mayflower for America and the harrowing journey the Pilgrims took across the Atlantic. Show them the Mayflower Compact dating from almost 400 years ago and written in the hand of one of the original settlers.
- Ask students to consider the emotions of those pilgrims on the Mayflower and to reflect on their extraordinary experiences. Create a vocabulary list of relevant words as the discussion proceeds using a flip chart or white board.
- Explain that students will write a fictional piece about the experiences of the pilgrims on the Mayflower. They could imagine:
  - that they are preparing to embark on the Mayflower;
  - that they are on board the Mayflower, journeying across the Atlantic; or
  - that they are already in the Mayflower settlement and are enduring the hard life there.
- Review with them the steps in the writer’s workshop process which will lead ultimately to them publishing their own piece of finished writing.
- When students have completed their finished copies, bind them together to create a book of short stories.

Extensions:
- Repeat this activity using other historical documents as a jumping off point for students’ writing. Jefferson’s letter from Paris about the French Revolution, Jackie Robinson’s letter to President Eisenhower, or letters from former slaves settling in Liberia could all provide inspiration.
- Ask students to create original artwork for their book in the form of collages, drawings, or paintings.
- Suggest that students create comic strips about the events surrounding a particular document. Their comics could be published and shared with others in the school.

Core Standard – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Time Needed:
1-2 hours
Activity 3

Writers of the Lost Art

Lesson Objective:
In this lesson students will consider the differences between electronic and traditional methods of communication, research a topic using online resources, and create a written report.

Before the Lesson:
- Position a flip chart or white board.
- Create a timeline along one wall of your classroom or in the hallway.
- Research examples of “text talk.”

Lesson Procedure:
- Write some examples of “text talk” on a flip chart or white board. Ask students to work quickly in pairs or small groups to translate the words, phrases, and sentences. Examples might include ttyl (talk to you later), b4 (before), lol (laughing out loud).
- Identify when and why these shortcuts might be appropriate (for example, when sending a quick email to a friend). Identify when and why these shortcuts are not appropriate and when they might create a bad impression (for example, when writing a school report or essay).
- Ask students to research and write about a topic relating to communication. This might be, for example, the history of the telephone, how radios work, how the mail reaches us, or the invention of the printing press. Students could work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
- Allow students time to present their reports to the class and then, as a class, create a “communications” timeline, showing important events in the development of communications up to the modern day.

Extensions:
- Ask students to bring in other examples of texting or instant-messaging shorthand. Use the examples of “text talk” to create a “texting dictionary.” Have students translate “text talk” and encourage them to always use the correct spelling/grammar – even when using electronic forms of communication.
- Keep an eye out in newspapers and other journals for examples of “text talk” making its way into formal communication and share these with your students.

Core Standard – Write informative or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Time Needed: 1 hour
Activity 4

Better Letters

Lesson Objective:
In this lesson, students will find out about the paper industry, investigate paper recovery and recycling, research the ways in which paper products are recovered within their school or community, and create an informative and persuasive letter to one of several possible audiences.

Before the Lesson:
- Ensure access to printed or online resources on paper recovery and recycling. Check out Page 7 of this guide for suggestions.
- Position a flip chart or whiteboard.
- Bring in examples of persuasive advertisements or print out online examples.

Lesson Procedure:
- Provide students with some basic information about recycling and the paper industry. For example:
  - In 2010, 63.5 percent of the paper consumed in the United States was recovered for recycling.
  - More paper is recycled than is sent to landfills.
  - More than 37 percent of the fiber used to make new paper products comes from recovered paper.
- Explain to students that they can help to increase the percentage of paper recovered for recycling still further, and in doing so help to reach the industry goal of exceeding 70 percent by 2020.
- Divide students into small groups and ask them to research the recycling process and recycling statistics. Ask them to investigate the kinds of paper products that can be recycled in your area and to discover what provision is currently made either within their school or within the local community for the recovery of paper products.
- Give students a chance to share the results of their research and note their findings on a flip chart or white board.
- Explain that they will be writing a letter to a person of their choice to inform them about the paper recovery process and to convince them of the importance of recycling paper as much as possible.
- Identify the elements that help to make writing more persuasive. You might like to share with students examples of persuasive advertisements.
- Brainstorm a list of the possible recipients of these letters. These might include a parent or older sibling, a neighbor, the principal of your school, a business owner within the community, or a local government official. Discuss how letters should be formatted.
- Ask students to draft, peer review, rewrite, and finally publish their letters. You may wish to provide them with a rubric to use at the peer review stage to ensure they have included all the important elements in their letters.
- Use the envelope contained with your program materials to mail the finished letters.

Extensions:
- Take time to share replies to the letters. Use these replies to assess the effectiveness of the letter-writing campaign and to plan next steps.
- Invite a local business person or government official to come into your classroom and discuss paper recovery in their workplace.
- Enter your school in the American Forest & Paper Association’s Recycling Awards!
Lesson Resources 
and Tools

Activity One:


Activity Two:

10. Letters from Liberia: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/liberia/terrell.html#1858

Activity Three:


Activity Four:

15. AF&PA Recycling Awards: http://www.paperrecycles.org
Dear Parent or Guardian,

The American Forest & Paper Association invites you to participate alongside your child in the Do the “Write” Thing! program. This is a school-home initiative in which children participate in meaningful paper-based writing activities while becoming knowledgeable about the sustainable nature of paper production and actively engaging in the recovery of paper for recycling.

Your child is already engaged in writing activities at school as part of the program. If you would like to Do the “Write” Thing! at home, then chose one or more of the activities below to complete with your child. By participating in this program, you will know that you are helping to enhance your child’s writing skills and encouraging an awareness of the importance of recycling in the next generation.

• **Write a Letter!** You know how the morning seems much brighter when you receive a personal letter in the mail. Unfortunately, this doesn’t happen as often as it once did. Brainstorm a list of family friends or relatives who you seldom see and write them a letter, postcard, or greeting card. They will be delighted to receive it and, you never know, you might receive a response in return!

• **Make your Opinion Felt!** Encourage your child to write to a local newspaper or television station about the issue of paper recovery and recycling in your community. Help them to format and phrase their letter appropriately and to find the relevant address. Or, if you and your child have seen particularly good or bad examples of paper recycling (at a local restaurant, at a park, etc.) write a letter together to let the management know.

• **Check Out Local Recycling!** Check out recycling in your area and encourage all family members to recycle. Maybe you already have paper recycling curbside in your neighborhood or there may be a convenient drop-off point. If not, you and your child could write to local government to promote increased recycling services.

We hope that you will enjoy joining your child in the Do the “Write” Thing! Program! For more information about the American Forest & Paper Association, please visit [http://www.paperrecycles.org](http://www.paperrecycles.org) and [www.afandpa.org](http://www.afandpa.org).

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