

## Close the Loop

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### Buy Recycled Friendly Letters Grades 3-5

**Materials:** Friendly letter example transparencies, reusable stationery, grading rubric (included), examples of packaging

**Activity Time:** 20 minutes (lesson), 50 minutes (follow-up)

**Concepts Taught:** Letter-writing, sentence structure

**Correlations to NCSCOS:** **Grade 3:** ELA 4.02, 4.04, 4.06, 4.07, 4.09, 4.10, Competency Goal 5; Social Studies Objectives 1.01, 5.02; Computer/Technology Skills Objective 3.03; **Grade 4:** ELA Objectives 4.02, 4.05, 4.06, 4.07, 4.09, 4.10, Competency Goal 5; Social Studies Objective 6.04; Computer/Technology Skills Objective 3.06; **Grade 5:** ELA Objectives 4.02, 4.05, 4.06, 4.07, 4.09, 4.10, Competency Goal 5; Social Studies Objective 5.01

#### Objectives:

- Students will understand the phrase “Buy Recycled” and realize its importance.
- Students will write a friendly letter to persuade another person to buy recycled.
- Students will utilize proofreading and editing skills in preparation of a final draft letter.

#### Background:

- The three-arrow recycling symbol represents the three steps of recycling: 1) collection of recyclables, 2) manufacturing new products from recyclables, and 3) buying recycled.
- The phrase “Close the Loop” refers to the idea that buying products with recycled content finishes the loop made by the three arrows in the recycling symbol.
- **The three-arrow recycling symbol does not always indicate that a product is made from recycled content.**
  - It can simply be a reminder to recycle or can indicate that the product is recyclable.
  - There may also be labels on the product that describe the amount of post-consumer material included in the product. Post-consumer content is material that has been through consumer hands, or material that people have used and recycled. Other recycled content is usually factory leftovers such as material left over after a box has been cut from a pattern or items reclaimed from the factory floor.
- Buying recycled content material saves natural resources such as trees, land, and energy.
- Some examples of recycled content products include: newspapers, bathroom tissue, or notebook paper made from recycled paper; aluminum cans, pie tins, or bleachers made from recycled aluminum cans; fleece jackets, toys, T-shirts, lumber and playground equipment made from recycled plastic bottles.

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## Lesson:

1. Review the concepts above with students. Remind them what the three-arrow recycling symbol means and why it is important to close the loop and buy recycled.
2. Show students examples of the three-arrow recycling symbol on packaging (cereal boxes, cracker boxes, and similar boxes are usually good examples).
3. Ask students what they think a “pen pal” is and if they have ever had a pen pal. Explain to students that they will write a letter to a friend telling them why buying recycled is important. Remind students that they should ask questions in the letter so that the person receiving it will have something to respond to.
4. Brainstorm ideas to write about and write them on the board. Ideas could include reasons why buying recycled is important, explaining the phrase “close the loop,” and giving examples of recycled content products. Brainstorm and record questions that might be included in the letter.
5. Review the format of a friendly letter using the friendly letter template included in this kit. A sample letter is also provided.
6. Have students write a rough draft of their letter. Students should then exchange letters with a partner and proofread each other’s work. Instruct students to write their revised letters on final stationery.

## Extensions:

1. Letters can be typed, printed, and edited using computers, or sent to pen pals at another school or in another country.
2. Students can participate in a scavenger hunt to find recycled content symbols and labels on products. They can collect items from home and bring them in or find items in the classroom, stores, or catalogs. They can write down or cut out objects with this symbol or label. These examples could then be included in the friendly letter.

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## Friendly letter template

\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ **Greeting** \_\_\_\_\_,

**Body** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Body** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ **Closing** \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

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Tuesday, May 2, 2005

Dear Susan,

I hope you are doing well! I learned some really cool information at school today! Do you know how important it is to buy recycled products? Well, let me tell you, it's really important! When you buy recycled products it saves natural resources like trees and land. You can tell if the product is made with recycled material by looking for the three arrow symbol and reading words that say the product is made with recycled materials. Buying recycled products also saves energy because it takes less energy to make something using recycled materials than it does to use new materials to make it.

I was amazed at how many products can be made from recycled materials. Some of these products are notebook paper, pencils, toys and even t-shirts. I think we should plan to go shopping this summer and buy some recycled products. What do you think? I will be out of school on June 1. Write back soon.

Your friend,

Charlie

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## Grading Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Layout/Design</b>	The letter is creatively designed with easily read text. Grammar, style, and purpose are excellent for a friendly letter.	The letter is eye-catching and attractive. Text is easy to read. Grammar, style, and punctuation is indicative of a friendly letter.	Letter appears messy. Text may be difficult to read. May have some grammar and/or punctuation that indicates it is a friendly letter.	Letter is inappropriate. Text is difficult to read. It does not have proper grammar or punctuation for a friendly letter.
<b>Use of Time</b>	Used time well during each class period (as shown by observation by teacher) with no adult reminders.	Used time well during most class periods (as shown by observation by teacher) with no adult reminders.	Used time well (as shown by observation by teacher), but required adult reminders on one or more occasions.	Used time poorly (as shown by observation by teacher) in spite of several adult reminders.
<b>Spelling &amp; Grammar</b>	No spelling or grammatical mistakes within the letter.	Few spelling or grammatical mistakes within the letter.	Several spelling or grammatical errors within the letter.	Many spelling and/or grammatical errors within the letter.
<b>Content</b>	All content is in the student's own words and is accurate and creative.	Most content is in the student's own words and is accurate and interesting to read.	At least half of the content is in the student's own words, but information is limited.	Less than half the content is in the student's own words and/or is poorly written or incomplete.
<b>Required Elements</b>	Letter is complete with all required elements.	One friendly letter element is missing.	Two friendly letter elements are missing.	Three or more friendly letter elements are missing.
<b>Cooperation</b>	Worked cooperatively with partner all the time with no need for adult intervention.	Worked cooperatively with partner most of time but had a few problems that the team resolved themselves.	Worked cooperatively with partner most of the time, but needed limited adult intervention.	Worked cooperatively with partners some of the time, but needed frequent adult intervention.