

Writing Your Letter

Unit Title:

Directions: Start your letter with an introductory paragraph. Then, list three details from the documents that will go into each body paragraph. Finally, close your letter.

Introductory Paragraph

Greeting:

Topics for letter:

Letter Topic #1: home & family life

Detail 1:

Detail 2:

Detail 3:

Letter Topic #2: school

Detail 1:

Detail 2:

Detail 3:

Letter Topic #3: the land

Detail 1:

Detail 2:

Detail 3:

Concluding Paragraph

Summary of three topics:

Closing:

**Mini-Q Sample Essay: Non-Proficient
Life on the Plains**

Dear Clyde,

March 28, 1886

Thanks for your letter but I bet your Ma made you write it. You asked a bunch of questions which I kinda wish you hadn't of.

What is your house like? Well, it's made of grass so that tells you a lot. Mostly it's the bugs that like it.

You asked about school. When I go I kind of like it because of the girls but most schooldays I'm in the fields with Pa. I'm almost 15.

The land is dry and we sing a lot about rain. I don't think I been fishing once. I'm getting powerful hungry, Clyde. Bye!

Zach

**Mini-Q Sample Essay: Basic Proficiency
Life on the Plains**

Dear Clara,

March 28, 1886

Thank you for your letter. How I miss you all back in Virginia. You asked me three big questions about life at home, school, and the land. I will do my best to answer.

You probably won't believe it but we live in a dirt house. Actually, around here they call it a sod house and Pa built it himself. It had no windows for about three months but then Pa put in two store-bought ones. Pa even got me a colt to break. Such fun!

Our school is also a sod house with a very nice teacher. The little children sit in the front and we bigger kids are in the back. There are more of us girls because most of the older boys are out in the fields plowing and planting. One thing that is different from back home is that our little school gets used a lot at night for Literary and for singing.

Now I'll tell you about the land. When we first got here a year ago, I didn't like what I saw. It was all grass and no trees! At school we once sang a song called "Nebraska Land" which was all about no rainfall and people who couldn't move because they're too poor. I've thought about that song and wonder if things could get that bad.

Clara, I hope you have a better picture now of my life at home and school, and what the land looks like. Please visit soon!

Your cousin, Anna