

## Author's Choice

Your favorite author is holding a national contest to choose a town for the setting of a new book. You want your town to win! You are going to read several books by the author and find out more about the author's life. Then you will write a letter to convince your favorite author to choose your town as the setting for the new book.

	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Apprentice</b>	<b>Practitioner</b>	<b>Expert</b>
<b>Book Summaries</b>	book(s) read but not reviewed	2 books read and reviewed using somewhat correct book review format	3 - 4 books read and reviewed using correct book review format	> 4 books read and reviewed using correct book review format
<b>Author's Life</b>	includes some facts on author's life	includes some detailed information on author's life	includes information from all stages of author's life	includes information and stories from all stages of author's life; graphics enhance summary
<b>Sources</b>	1 source	2-3 cited sources	3-4 sources of varied media; all cited correctly	> 5 sources of varied media used including encyclopedias, periodicals, Web sites, and other Internet resources; all cited correctly
<b>Letter: Mechanics</b>	> 4 errors	neatly word processed; includes most letter elements; 3 - 4 errors	neatly word processed; includes all letter elements; varied sentence structure; < 3 errors	neatly word processed; includes all letter elements; varied sentence structure; no errors
<b>Letter: Content</b>	includes some reasons for choosing your town but lacks organization	somewhat organized; includes some reasons for choosing your town	organized with clear beginning, middle, and end; reasons for choosing your town are based on fact; connections made to author's life	well organized; reasons for choosing your town are detailed and based on fact; connections made to author's life; at least 3 different arguments in favor of your town

**Learning Focus**

writing a persuasive argument to sell an author on using your town for the setting of a new book

**Grade Level**

grades 2 - 4

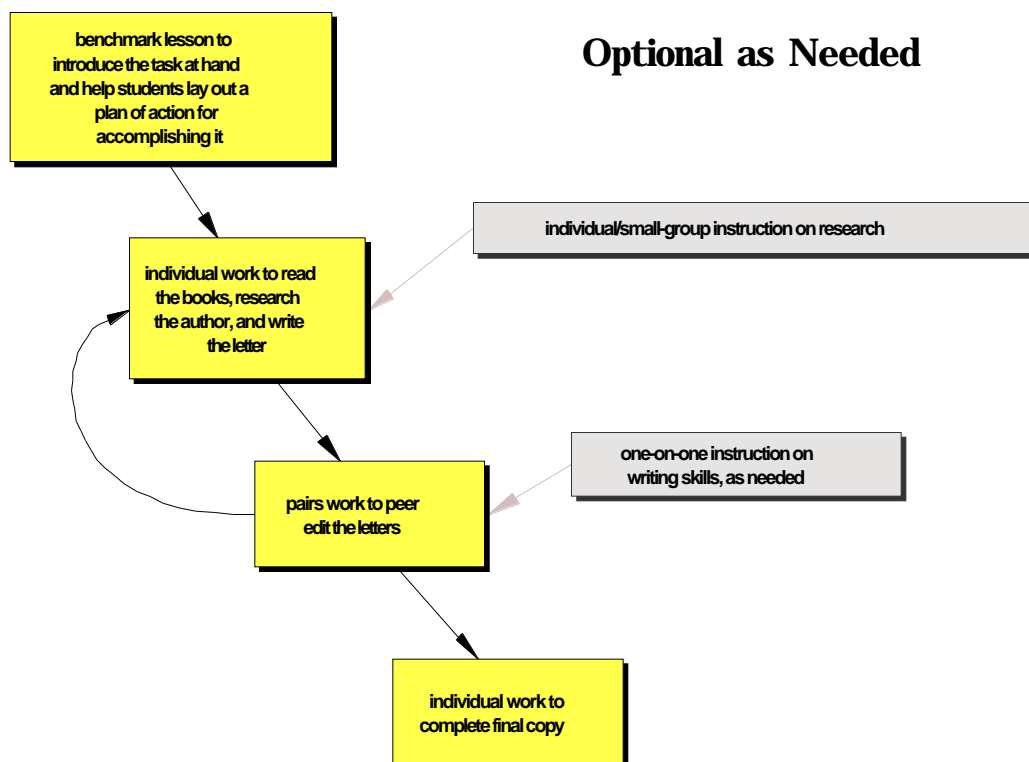
**Essential Learnings**

- reading: decoding skills
- reading: comprehension
- researching a person's life
- accessing Web-based information
- using the library to locate resources
- citing resources
- letter writing: format
- persuasive writing
- writing mechanics
- word processing
- concept of a town
- describing characteristics of the local town

**Participatory Structures**

This activity is primarily an individual reading and writing activity, although it could be redesigned to allow pairs of students to work together. Pairs work is included for peer editing of the letters. The task requires little introduction, perhaps just to set the context. The flow of the task might look like this:

**General Flow of Task**



## **Technology Infusion**

Internet to research the life of the author
word processing of the letter
books on CD-ROM for students with reading difficulties
digital camera to add pictures of town to enhance letter
designing Web pages to “sell” the author on the town

## **Timeframe**

The timeframes for this activity will vary depending on how much time is needed to read a collection of books. The total time for researching the author and writing the letter may be a week, given a daily time slot to work on it.

## **Classroom Management**

Students should be able to select and read books on silent reading time. You might assign computer time to each student or you might allow the students to sign up for their own computer time. Students should be paired for peer editing. Otherwise, students will be working on their own.

## **Instructional Notes**

You might use a benchmark lesson to set the context for the work and introduce the idea of the contest. You might ask students to select a favorite author and locate several books to read. You might want them to complete a reading form or book report for each book they read. You might offer small group lessons and allow students to tutor one another as the need for skills arises. Lessons might be needed for any of the essential learnings listed. As students are working, you will need to facilitate learning, both from a content perspective and from a process perspective. Possible facilitation questions:

Comprehension	What was the setting of the book? What have you learned about the author's life?
Application	What do you see in the author's books that reflect his/her own life?
Connection	How is the setting in the book like your town? What do you think the author would think of your town?
Synthesis	How would you convince the author to write his/her next book about our town?
Metacognition	How did you decide upon this argument to persuade the author?

## **Assessment**

Assessment would take the form of determining and helping the students determine where they are on the rubric and offering the kinds of learning opportunities to help students move to the practitioner and expert columns. You will probably want to conduct individual assessments on students' oral reading skills, decoding skills, and comprehension. You will also want to assess students' ability to search the Internet and use the library to access resources. Beyond that, the accompanying rubric will assess students' letter-writing skills.

## **Resources**

- a solid book collection of popular authors
- resources about authors' lives

### **How-To Sheets**

Step-by-step direction sheets may be useful in providing students with more learning independence in the following areas:

- searching the Internet
- word processing a letter
- citing resources
- writing mechanics checklist