

Sample Letters Home

Communicating with Parents/Families About Instruction

Parents/families are better able to support their children at home if they know what is taking place in the classroom. The following pages contain a sample letter for each of the instructional programs that make up the Pearson English Learning System: *Cornerstone*, *Keystone*, *Language Central*, *Keys to Learning*, and *Building Bridges*. Teachers can modify and use the letters to inform parents/families what will be taking place in the classroom during a unit of instruction.

Each program is designed to be used with an instructional model. The following chart lists common instructional models. For more information about each program model, please refer to pages 56–63 in this Guide.

Structured English Immersion (SEI)	An English-only approach that seeks to increase students' English fluency rapidly by teaching in English.
Sheltered Instruction (SI)	Teaches grade-level content to English learners strategically to make concepts comprehensible while simultaneously increasing the students' English language proficiency
Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)	Teaches content to English learners while simultaneously developing English language proficiency. Its focus is to increase the comprehensibility of academic courses. Classes using the SDAIE model are taught in English.
ESL Push-In	An approach that integrates language and content goals within the classroom instruction. ESL teachers go into general education classrooms to help English learners learn content and language rather than pulling them out for specialized instruction.
ESL Pull-Out	Provides individualized instruction to English learners. ESL teachers adapt English lessons to each student's proficiency level, typically focusing on English oral conversation, grammar, and vocabulary. Students are "pulled out" of their regular classes to receive English language instruction.
Newcomer Programs	Designed to develop English language skills, help students acculturate to U.S. schools, and make them aware of educational expectations and opportunities

Sample Letter Home When Using Cornerstone or Keystone

The following sample letter can be used with *Cornerstone* or *Keystone* and either the SI or SEI instructional model to inform parents/families about what is taking place in the classroom. Send a letter at the beginning of each unit that includes the Big Question, the Readings, and information about the grammar, vocabulary, and writing lessons. Don't forget to mention any upcoming assessments. Letters can be translated for families who are not proficient in English.

Dear Family,

For the next several weeks, our class will be studying a unit on change and how it can improve people's lives. This week, we will be reading about the first Americans.

We will be learning about:

- **Vocabulary: New Key Words and Academic Vocabulary**
Vocabulary includes all of the new words students will learn while studying the unit. These are often words that students will use in other classes and words students need to learn to become more proficient in English.
- **Reading Strategy: Preview**
Reading strategies help students better understand what they read. Previewing a text helps students understand the content more quickly.
- **Review and Practice: Comprehension**
Students answer questions about the text to reinforce and expand understanding.
- **Fluency**
Students practice reading to improve their rate, speed, and accuracy.
- **Grammar: Order of Adjectives**
Adjectives describe people, places, or things. When more than one adjective is used to describe a noun, the adjectives should be listed in the proper order.
- **Writing: Describe a Group of People**
Students will learn how to write descriptively using adjectives to describe the characteristics of a group of people, such as their values and customs.

You can help your son or daughter by talking about changes in society or changes that have occurred in your life. Help him or her understand how these changes have improved life for those involved.

Visit our classroom website [insert url] to find out more about what we will be doing in class this week. Translations of online content are also available. Please let me know if you would prefer to receive printed copies.

Thank you!

Your Classroom Teacher

Sample Letter Home When Using Language Central

The following sample letter can be used with *Language Central* and the ESL Push-In instructional model to inform parents about what is taking place in the classroom. Send a letter at the beginning of each unit that includes the Big Question, the readings, and information about the grammar, vocabulary, and writing lessons. Don't forget to mention any upcoming assessments. Letters can be translated for families who are not proficient in English.

Dear Family,

For the next several weeks, our class will be studying the kinds of challenges people face and how they meet them. This week, we will be reading about firefighters.

We will be learning:

- **Vocabulary in Context: *firefighter, station, brave, courageously, emergency, inspired, suddenly***
Vocabulary includes all of the new words students will learn while studying the unit. These are often words that students will use in other classes and words students need to learn to become more proficient in English.
- **Language Workshop: Describing**
We use adjectives to tell about people and how they do things.
- **Comprehension Support: Character and Plot**
Most stories are about people or animals and what happens to them. The people or animals are called characters. What happens to the characters is called plot.
- **Grammar: Four Kinds of Sentences**
There are four kinds of sentences in English. Declarative sentences make a statement and end with a period. Interrogative sentences ask a question and end with a question mark. Exclamatory sentences make an emotional statement and end with an exclamation point. Imperative sentences tell someone what to do and end with a period.
- **Think, Talk, and Write: Courage**
This section encourages students to think about a topic and then to produce language related to the topic. In this unit, students will talk and write about courage.

You can help your son or daughter by talking about challenges that you or others you know have faced. Help him or her understand how facing these challenges has made a difference for those involved.

Visit our classroom website [insert URL] to find out more about what we will be doing in class this week. Translations of online content are also available on our classroom website. Please let me know if you would prefer to receive printed copies instead.

Thank you!

Your Classroom Teacher

Sample Letter Home When Using Keys to Learning and Building Bridges

The following sample letter can be used with *Keys to Learning* and *Newcomers* to inform parents about what is taking place in the classroom. Send a letter at the beginning of each unit that includes the Big Question, the Readings, and information about the grammar, vocabulary, and writing lessons. Don't forget to mention any upcoming assessments. Letters can be translated for families who are not proficient in English.

Dear Family,

For the next several weeks, our class will be learning about making new friends. This week, we will be reading about being in a new school.

We will be learning about:

- **Vocabulary: New Words and Expressions**
Vocabulary includes all of the new words students will learn while studying the unit. These are often words that students will use in other classes and words students need to learn to become more proficient in English.
- **Grammar: Subject Pronouns and Present Tense of be: Statements and Yes/No Questions**
Students will learn the subject pronouns *I, you, he, she, it, we, and they* and how they work in a sentence. Students will also learn about the present tense form of the verb *to be*.
- **Reading—Learning Strategy: Personalize**
Learning strategies help students better understand what they read. When students use the learning strategy *Personalize*, they think about how a story reminds them of something in their own lives.
- **Writing Workshop—Learning Strategy: Use a Graphic Organizer**
Graphic organizers help students organize their ideas, and make it easier for them to write their first drafts.
- **Listening and Speaking Workshop**
Introduce yourself to your classmates and listen as they introduce themselves.

You can help your son or daughter by talking about friendship. Ask him or her about other students and whether they might make good friends.

Visit our classroom website [insert URL] to find out more about what we will be doing in class this week. Translations of online content are also available on our classroom website. Please let me know if you would prefer to receive printed copies instead.

Thank you!

Your Classroom Teacher

The following sample letter can be used with *Building Bridges* and Newcomers to inform parents about what is taking place in the classroom. Send a letter at the beginning of each unit that includes the Big Question, the Readings, and information about the grammar, vocabulary, and writing lessons. Don't forget to mention any upcoming assessments. Letters can be translated for families who are not proficient in English.

Dear Family,

For the next several weeks, our class will be studying about journeys. This week, we will be reading about nomads.

We will be learning about:

- **Prepare to Read: Use Prior Knowledge**
Using prior knowledge helps students understand a new concept by connecting it with something they already know about.
- **Vocabulary: New Key Words**
Vocabulary includes all of the new words students will learn while studying the unit. These are often words that students will use in other classes and words students need to learn to become more proficient in English.
- **Reading Strategy: Preview**
Reading strategies help students better understand what they read. Previewing a text helps students understand the content more quickly.
- **Review and Practice: Comprehension**
Students answer questions about the text to reinforce and expand their understanding.
- **Extension: Speaking About Shelters**
Students expand their understanding by thinking about the concept in a new way.

You can help your son or daughter by talking about journeys. Help him or her understand how and why people move from place to place.

Visit our classroom website [insert URL] to find out more about what we will be doing in class this week. Translations of online content are also available on our classroom website. Please let me know if you would prefer to receive printed copies instead.

Thank you!

Your Classroom Teacher