

Social Studies

Genre

A **Letter to the Editor** is usually from a reader to a newspaper or magazine expressing an opinion.



Text Feature

Schedules are graphic aids that often show a timetable.

Content Vocabulary

persuade **exceptional**
excel **commitment**

Mentoring Matters

When members of a sixth-grade mentoring group realized they needed more mentors, they decided to invite other students. Mark, one of the mentors, offered to write a letter to **persuade** readers of the school newspaper to become mentors.



To the Editor:

I am writing on behalf of One-on-One, the sixth-grade mentoring group. Our group is two years old and our mission is to help students reach their goals through mentoring. You could consider this good classroom citizenship as it helps others in your school.

Our group consists of 14 students who **excel** in different subjects. Each member is assigned to a student who can use help in one of these subjects and has similar interests and schedules.

We hope the readers of this school newspaper will join our group. Many students would benefit from the **exceptional** skills of a mentor. Mentors can inspire other students who want to follow a similar path. This is my first year as a mentor, but I have already learned that everyone involved in mentoring gets something out of it. I was assigned to a mentor last year.

As it turns out, mentoring was one of the best things that happened to me. It helped me focus on certain math concepts that I just didn't get. I was able to turn the corner at an important point in my studies, going from nearly failing math, to not only passing, but to having math become one of my favorite subjects! It still amazes me that I completely changed from almost hating math to loving it! Would you believe I'm even thinking of studying math in college? Even if I don't, I have skills that I will use for the rest of my life.

My own experience convinced me to become a mentor this year and help other students like myself. Now that I am a mentor, I realize what a good feeling you get from helping someone else and knowing that you're making a difference in his or her life. In many cases, lasting friendships are made as well. My mentor and I hit it off right away, and we're still good friends today.

Becoming a mentor is a serious **commitment**. Mentors spend one hour every week with the student they are mentoring.

Considering your responsibilities, it may be difficult to add another commitment to your schedule. But I hope you will at least consider the possibility.

Please come to our next meeting on Wednesday at 1:00 P.M. (bring your lunch). You can meet the other mentors, learn more about what we do, and hear from a few students who will share their own personal stories.

Thank you for considering our invitation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mark Lopez



Time for Mentoring

Knowing your weekly schedule is just one of several factors you need to consider if you are thinking about becoming a mentor. By comparing your schedule with the schedule of the student you might be mentoring, you will be able to tell when you both are available. Meghann will have to compare her schedule with Christine's to see when it will be possible for them to meet.

Meghann's Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15-8:30	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:30-10:00	Math	PE	Math	PE	Math/PE
10:00-11:30	Science	Spanish	Science	Spanish	Science/ Spanish
11:30-1:00	Art/Chorus	Computer/ Drama	Art/Chorus	Computer/ Drama	Art/Chorus Computer/ Drama
1:00-1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-3:00	Language Arts	Social Studies	Language Arts	Social Studies	Language Arts/Social Studies
3:00-5:00	Volleyball Practice		Volleyball Practice	Volleyball Practice	
5:00-7:00		Home Game			Away Game

Christine's Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:15-8:30	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:30-10:00	Language Arts	PE	Language Arts	PE	Language Arts/PE
10:00-11:30	Math	Spanish	Math	Spanish	Math/Spanish
11:30-1:00	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies/Science
1:00-1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-3:00	Art/Band	Computer/Library	Art/Band	Computer/Library	Art/Band/Computer
3:00-5:00	Soccer Practice		Soccer Practice	Soccer Practice	
5:00-7:00					Soccer Game

Connect and Compare



1. Compare the two schedules. When can the girls meet? **Reading a Schedule**
2. How do you think Mark's experience last year will help him as a mentor this year? **Analyze**
3. Think about Mark and the student in *Breaking Through*. Explain why they both would be good mentors. **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Social Studies Activity

Research mentoring programs in your area. Write a letter to your school newspaper about the value of mentors.



Find out more about mentors at www.macmillanmh.com



Writer's Craft

Formal and Informal Language

The language and tone you use in your writing should reflect your voice, or your personality. Depending on your purpose, use **formal** or **informal language**.

Write a Speech

Meeting My Hero

by Bella L.

My purpose is to tell about the time I met my hero.

If you could meet anyone in the world, whom would you choose? Would you choose your hero? There was one special person I wanted to meet, and last year I did just that!

Sue Lopez is my hero. She is a dazzling basketball player who is going to try out for the WNBA team the Seattle Storm. In case you don't know, WNBA stands for Women's National Basketball Association, and Sue wants to be part of that league.

I used informal language in my speech.

My cousin Sara lives in Seattle and plays basketball at school. In her spare time, Sue helped coach Sara's seventh-grade team last year. When I told my dad, he decided that we should visit Seattle during basketball season.

I went to Sara's practice with her, and she introduced me to Sue. Sue was glad I came to meet her. I told her how I wanted to grow up to be a basketball player just like her. Sue smiled and explained that she was once a young player like me who never imagined she would be trying out for a professional team. She said it took a lot of hard work, both in school and on the court, but she did it. Then she told me that I could do it, too!

Your Turn

Write a speech about someone you know or about someone you would like to know. Choose a formal or an informal tone, depending on your purpose, and make sure your voice is clear in your speech. Include adjectives that help describe the person. Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Is it clear whom I am describing and why I admire the person?
- Organization:** Do I catch the listeners' attention in the beginning? Did I include details that will help my audience get to know the person?
- Voice:** Does my speech sound like me? Did I choose the appropriate **formal** or **informal language**?
- Word Choice:** Do I use fresh and interesting language to describe the person?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I read my speech aloud to check the flow of language?
- Conventions:** Did I proofread my speech, checking for proper spelling, grammar, and usage? Did I capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives?