

# EL/Civics Lesson Plan

Program Name Euclid EL/CIVICS

Staff Responsible for Lesson Wendy Oliver

Date(s) Used	2/23/11
Civics Category	III. US History and Government and Citizenship Preparation
Civics Objective	6. Community resources -Citizenship Preparation.
Time Frame to Complete Lesson	1 hour.
EFL(s)	NRS 5
Standard(s)	Listening: Integrate new information with prior knowledge
Benchmark(s)	L4.4 Respond appropriately to questions and 2-step directions from various listening situations
Materials	Computer Notebook Handouts 1 and 2
Activities	<p>Ask students if they know who their Senators and Congressmen are or will be. Note that you have to know who your representatives are to pass the naturalization test. Review the roles that these members of Congress play and what they can do for citizens.</p> <p>Discuss the reasons why citizens might write to a representative (for help with immigration, for information, to urge them to vote a certain way)</p> <p>Why would a representative be interested in helping or listening to a citizen?</p> <p>Pair students who are adept at using computers with those who are less so. Give them Handout 1. Have the student who is not using the computer mouse read directions to the one who is 'driving'. Encourage them to seek clarification as needed without reading. For step 14, prior to starting review the pronunciation of the slash and what it represents. Some classes may need to review the pronunciation of letters of the alphabet as well. Assist as necessary.</p>
	After students have obtained the correct information, return

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Assessment/ Evidence	to class as a full group and discuss what they have found. Ensure that each student has complete information. Review Handout 2 and discuss possible letters students might write. This can be the next lesson either as individuals or as a class.
Reflection	<p>Some students already knew their representative names, but they did not know how to contact them and the idea of writing a letter was new. There was some doubt about whether they would get a response. We will write a letter in the future.</p> <p>Also be sure to turn on all computers prior to starting to ensure that they are ready to go and to validate that they are all working.</p>

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## Find Your Senator and Congressman

- Step 1: Turn on the computer
- Step 2: Open a browser: Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox
- Step 3: Enter a search "Who is my Senator?"
- Step 4: Select [U.S. Senate: Senators Home](#)**
- Step 5: Enter your state in the drop down box
- Step 6: Copy the names of your two Senators into your notebook  
Write down their address and phone number  
Write down their political party
- Step 7: Enter a new search "Who is my Congressman?"
- Step 8: Select [The U.S. House of Representatives - Determining Your Representative](#)**
- Step 9: Enter your zip code
- Step 10: Click on 'Look up your representative'.
- Step 11: Copy the name of your representative into your notebook  
Write down the party of your representative (D=Democrat, R=Republican, I-Independent)
- Step 12: Click on the name of your representative
- Step 13: Find the Representative's District number and write it in your notebook. This is your district.
- Step 14: Go to  
<http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/uscongress/a/letterscongress.htm>
- Step 15: Print the information there.

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So, you're going to write your Congressman? Good idea. Make it a good letter.

People who think members of Congress pay little or no attention to constituent mail, are plain wrong. Concise, well thought out personal letters are one of the most effective ways Americans have of influencing law-makers. But, members of Congress get hundreds of letters and emails every day. Whether you choose to use the Postal Service or email, here are some tips that will help your letter have impact.

## **Think Locally**

It's usually best to send letters to the representative from your local Congressional District or the senators from your state. Your vote helps elect them -- or not -- and that fact alone carries a lot of weight. It also helps personalize your letter. Sending the same "cookie-cutter" message to every member of Congress may grab attention but rarely much consideration.

## **Keep it Simple**

Your letter should address a single topic or issue. Typed, one-page letters are best. Many PACs ([Political Action Committees](#)) recommend a three-paragraph letter structured like this:

1. Say why you are writing and who you are. List your "credentials." (If you want a response, you must include your name and address, even when using email.)
2. Provide more detail. Be factual not emotional. Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. If a certain bill is involved, [cite the correct title or number](#) whenever possible.
3. Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or change in general policy.

The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

## **Addressing Members of Congress**

To Your Senator:

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To Your Representative:

The Honorable (full name)  
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515