



2020

Meet THESE African Americans

This lesson can address the following Common Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.2.A, L.1.2.C, L.2.2.A, L.2.2.B, L.3.2.B

This lesson can be used to honor *any* local or national African Americans that your students know and admire. It's not meant to be limited to career success. A letter can be written to a person of noble character in your local community just as well.

Now for the lesson!

1. Tell the students the storyline: "You're going to write a letter to an African-American working in a profession that you admire."
2. Explain to them that asking questions is an integral part of letter writing. It expresses interest in the other person and also elicits a response letter for continued dialogue. Have the students think of questions they can ask the person in their letter.
3. Show the five sections:
 - a. Greeting and introduction.
 - b. Tell your own interests.
 - c. Tell what you know about the person you're writing to.
 - d. Ask questions.
 - e. Conclusion

Remember: K-1st Graders are encouraged to write 1 sentence for each section,
2nd Graders 2 sentences, 3rd Graders 3 sentences and so on.

Now to write!

Guide the students through the following steps so their letter is organized and complete. They are free to write these ideas in their own words. There are sample sentences in italics.

4. Begin by writing the date on the first line on the right side of the page.
5. Skip a line.
6. Write the greeting on the 3rd line, left side (Dear Capital Letters and a comma).
Dear Mario Shaw,
7. Skip a line.
8. Write the introductory paragraph on the next line, left side. In your own words write a greeting and introduce yourself.
Hello! My name is _____. I'm in _____ Grade.
9. Write about your own interests.
I love playing basketball, drawing and math. I like to draw animals best. Right now, I'm learning multiplication in Math. It's my favorite subject!



10. Write what you know about the person you're writing to.
I know that you were a teacher in Charlotte, NC. Then, you started helping other black men become teachers. That is great!
11. Ask questions. Sample questions could be:
Was teaching hard? What was your favorite subject in school? What do you like to do when you're not working? Do you have a favorite author? Who do you admire?
12. Write a conclusion that is positive.
I'm so glad that you want to help make great teachers. I am thinking about being a teacher when I grow up. I would love to meet you one day!
13. Write the salutation under the body of the letter. *Respectfully, Kindly, Sincerely...*
14. Write your name UNDER the salutation.
15. If possible, photo copy each child's letter before sending it so they can have their own copy.
16. Complete an envelope. Stick a stamp and send it away!

Below are the names and addresses of the people I used for this lesson:

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
ATTN: Dr. Shirley Jackson
110 Eighth St.
Troy, NY USA 12180

Simone Biles
World Championship Centre
28865 Birnham Woods Dr.
Spring, TX 77386

Profound Gentlemen
ATTN: Mario Jovan Shaw
2701-C Freedom Drive
Charlotte, NC 28208

Bloc Power
ATTN: Donnel Baird
81 Prospect St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201



NOTE: The information below was gathered to serve as a resource for you and your students. It can be printed out for older students to read and refer to. For younger students, I suggest reading, simplifying and discussing key facts that they can understand and in turn use in their writing.

DR. SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON--Physicist and Nuclear Scientist

Source of information: <https://president.rpi.edu/president-biography>

DATE OF BIRTH: August 5, 1946

HOMETOWN: Washington, DC

EDUCATION: Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT)

EMPLOYMENT: Physicist and now president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: She helped AT&T build circuits as well as design and build semiconductors. She served as the chairperson on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). She currently serves as the President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York. From 2009-2014 Jackson served on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

AWARDS: In 2014, she was inducted into the US News STEM Leadership Hall of Fame. In 2016, President Barack Obama awarded her the National Medal of Science.

SIMONE BILES--Olympic Gymnast

Source of information: <https://www.biography.com/athlete/simone-biles>

DATE OF BIRTH: March 14, 1997

BIRTH PLACE: Columbus, OH

HOMETOWN: Spring, Texas, She was raised and eventually adopted by her grandparents.

EDUCATION: Homeschooled

EMPLOYMENT: Gymnast/Athlete

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: She won her first US and world all-around titles in 2013. In 2015, she won the world all around for the 3rd time in a row. In 2016, she led the US women's gymnastics team to win the gold medal. She also won gold in the women's individual all-around, vault and floor exercise. She won a bronze in the balance beam. In 2019, she won her 6th world all-around title.

BOOKS: She has her own book titled, Courage to Soar.

MARIO JOVAN SHAW--Teacher

Source of information: <https://echoinggreen.org/fellow/mario-jovan-shaw/>

<https://www.allamericanspeakers.com/celebritytalentbios/Mario+Jovan+Shaw/406308>

EDUCATION: Received a degree from the University of Cincinnati (BA) and a Masters in Education from John Hopkins University.

EMPLOYMENT: Mario co-founded Profound Gentlemen, an organization that finds, and trains black men to become teachers in cities who can also positively impact black male students. Mario is also a motivational speaker.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: He was a 7th Grade Teacher in Charlotte, NC for Teach for America. He created the Brother Hood, a group that focused on helping the black males in his classroom.

AWARDS: He was a 2015 recipient of the Echoing Green Fellowship.

DONNEL BAIRD

Source of information: <https://echoinggreen.org/fellow/donnel-baird/> and <https://bigthink.com/u/donnel-baird>

HOMETOWN: Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION: He graduated from Duke University and Columbia Business School

EMPLOYMENT: Founder and CEO of BlocPower

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: He was an energy efficient staffer for the Obama administration. In 2013, Donnel launched BlocPower, a business that markets, finances and installs solar energy efficiency technology to help facilities cut down on their energy costs.

AWARDS: He was a 2012 Echoing Green Fellow.

FUN FACT: He's a fan of the New York Knicks!