

HEALTH AND LIFE SKILLS

GRADE 4

A LETTER TO TRISHA

ALBERTA LEARNING

- PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT -

Developed by AAC... everyday assessment tools for teachers

A LETTER TO TRISHA

OVERVIEW

Using the story, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, by Patricia Polacco, students will compose and write a letter to the main character, Trisha. The letter will identify, describe and give examples of negative incidents and feelings experienced by the main character. In the letter students will generalize and apply previously learned strategies for dealing with these feelings by empathizing and suggesting strategies for coping.

GRADE LEVEL – 4

TIME SUGGESTED

- **Assessment Task:** Three 30-minute periods

GENERAL OUTCOMES

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

No.	Description	No.	Description
Health and Life Skills – Grade 4			
R-4	<i>Students will</i> develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.	R-4.1	<i>Students will</i> recognize that individuals can have a positive and negative influence on the feelings of others.
		R-4.2	<i>Students will</i> identify and use short-term strategies for managing feelings; e.g., dealing with excitement, anger, sadness, jealousy.
		R-4.3	<i>Students will</i> recognize that management of positive/negative stress can affect health.
		R-4.4	<i>Students will</i> demonstrate respectful communication skills; e.g., describe behaviours that show respect for the feelings of others.
	(continued)		

R-4	(continued) <i>Students will</i> develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.	R-4.5 R-4.6	<i>Students will</i> identify changes that may occur in friendships, and explore strategies to deal with changes. <i>Students will</i> identify and describe ways to provide support to others; e.g., help a friend deal with loss.
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CRITERIA for assessing student products/performances based on specific outcomes that will be evaluated

Each student will:

- write in a way that clearly focuses on Trisha’s negative experiences in the classroom and recognizes that those experiences influence Trisha’s feelings and health
- identify possible reasons for negative treatment/discrimination of others based on the story
- suggest and describe skills or strategies for dealing effectively with negative treatment by others
- choose language that demonstrates respect for Trisha’s feelings
- provide support to Trisha through the tone and thoughtful suggestions in the letter.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- story, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, by Patricia Polacco
- chart paper
- various examples of graphic organizers (optional)
- sample friendly letters as examples of tone and format

PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND INSTRUCTION

Before completing this performance assessment, students should be able to:

- identify types and ranges of feelings
- recognize that individuals can influence the feelings of others (R-4.1)
- describe strategies for coping with disappointment and discouragement (R-4.2)
- recognize and describe ways in which poor management of stress can affect health, and how students can manage their stress to affect health positively (R-4.3)
- choose language and tone that shows respect for someone’s feelings (R-4.4)
- describe changes that can occur in friendships, and list ways to deal with them (R-4.5)
- describe and demonstrate ways to provide support to a friend, including through a letter (R-4.6)
- demonstrate understanding of empathy, by explaining the experience of “being in another person’s shoes”
- write a friendly letter, using correct format.

STUDENT PRODUCTS/PERFORMANCES

Letter to Trisha.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT TASK

Title: A Letter to Trisha

Purpose: Students have the opportunity to develop and apply a number of interpersonal skills for maintaining healthy interactions, through identifying with a fictional character who is dealing with a number of difficult issues.

Teacher Note: The following steps may be useful in facilitating the letter-writing activity:

- Read the first part of *Thank You, Mr. Falker* to the class. At the page just before Trisha meets her new teacher, Mr. Falker, stop reading and facilitate a discussion about the character and her difficulties.
- Once the difficulties have been identified, continue with a discussion about how Trisha might handle them. You may wish to chart shared ideas for students to refer to when composing their letter, or have them chart discussion ideas themselves using an appropriate graphic organizer.
- Ask students to think of ways they know of dealing with disappointment, failure and discouragement, or of new ways identified in the discussion, and ask them to offer these strategies to help Trisha deal with her situation.

Assessment Activity: Students will compose a friendly letter of support to Trisha. In the letter students will be asked to:

- identify specific incidents of negative treatment by peers and possible reasons why students might have treated Trisha that way (based on the story)
- describe how Trisha might have felt and how they would feel in a similar situation, showing respect and empathy
- suggest and describe strategies to help Trisha deal with negative treatment.

Role and Audience: In this activity, students are writing as themselves to the fictional character Trisha from the story. Classmates may also be part of the intended audience if letters are shared during the writing or assessment stages.

Teacher Note: After completion of the letter-writing task, continue with a classroom discussion allowing students to share their strategies and give reasons why they chose them. Before completing the reading of the story, ask the students if they feel Trisha might have used any of their strategies. At the end of the story, discuss how Trisha’s difficulties were handled and what might have happened had Trisha not had Mr. Falker for a teacher. After the reading and discussion of the whole story, complete the Rubric: Letter to Trisha and have each student complete the Student Self-evaluation: Letter to Trisha.

ASSESSMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

“Continual self-reflection throughout the performance assessment enables students to assess progress, identify areas of difficulty, define learning and reassess goals. Self-reflection is the key to continued, powerful learning.” *How to Develop and Use Performance Assessments in the Classroom*, p. 31.

Students should be invited to evaluate and support their own performance based on the criteria from the student evaluation rubric provided. The self-evaluation as well as the teacher evaluation may be included in a notebook or portfolio.

Teacher Note:

- It is important to spend sufficient time going over the criteria for **teacher assessment** with students. This can be done by using the rubric provided or by using a simplified version written in language appropriate for Grade 4 students.
- Students could share their letters in small groups and assess the letters together using the simplified rubric or the student evaluation rubric, making suggestions for improvement as a group.
- Teachers may also wish to go over the student evaluation rubric with students while or before they evaluate their own letters.

RUBRIC: LETTER TO TRISHA

Level	Description of letter
4 Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completely focused and deals with a wide variety of Trisha’s experiences • clearly identifies and describes the negative treatment within the story • identifies clear and very detailed reasons for negative behaviour by story characters • provides a variety of clear and detailed strategies for coping with negative treatment • demonstrates respect and empathy for Trisha’s feelings and situation consistently
3 Proficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on Trisha’s negative experiences in the classroom • identifies and describes negative treatment within the story • identifies clear reasons for negative treatment by story characters • provides detailed skills and strategies for coping with negative treatment • demonstrates respect and empathy for Trisha’s feelings and situation
2 Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generally focused, but does not maintain focus consistently • acknowledges negative treatment to Trisha but does not describe it • identifies plausible reasons for negative treatment by story characters • provides appropriate skills and strategies for coping with negative treatment • demonstrates respect for Trisha’s feelings and situation
1 Limited*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows little evidence of focusing on Trisha’s negative experiences in the classroom • shows little or no evidence of negative treatment to Trisha • identifies implausible, if any, reasons for negative treatment by story characters • provides limited, if any, strategies for coping with negative treatment • demonstrates little, if any, empathy for Trisha’s feelings and situation
Insufficient/ Blank*	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.

- When work is judged as limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION: LETTER TO TRISHA

Level	Description of letter
4 Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My letter is all about many experiences Trisha had in the classroom. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter uses important details and information to describe how the children treated her badly. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter describes very clearly with detail why the children treated her badly. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter explains very clearly a number of different ways that Trisha can help herself deal with the bad behaviour of her classmates.
3 Proficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My letter tells about the negative treatment of Trisha in the classroom. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter describes clearly how the children treated her badly but gives few details. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter describes clearly why the children treated her badly but gives few details. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter provides some detailed ways in which Trisha can help herself deal with the bad behaviour of her classmates, but it could have more.
2 Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My letter is mostly about the negative treatment of Trisha but sometimes goes into something else. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter tells that the children treated her badly but is not specific. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter tells why children might have treated her badly but could explain more. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter provides ways in which Trisha can help herself but could use more details.
1 Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My letter has little to do with the negative treatment of Trisha. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter has little description about how the children treated her badly. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter does not give reasons for why the children might have treated her badly. <input type="checkbox"/> My letter does not describe ways Trisha can help herself deal with the bad behaviour of her classmates.

LINK AND LEARN

Adaptations/extensions for other subjects or settings

- Since this assessment covers a number of Health and Life Skills outcomes, it will be important to revisit these throughout the year in other situations. Students could do this by applying what they learned to real-life situations throughout the school year, showing empathy and offering support and suggestions for friends, classmates or new students. Studying similar situations in video, stories or books, with characters who face similar difficulties, would provide additional opportunities for students to practise their interpersonal skills.

Language Arts extensions

- In addition to the letter, teachers may wish to have students write a skit or perform a simple role-play conversation between themselves and Trisha, showing respect and empathy and offering suggestions.
- Students could invite the author to their classroom and present an oral report with ideas about how she could end the book differently; or, students could write their own alternative endings to the story, after considering the author's ending.
- Students could write an ending for the story **before** it is read to them, using one/some of the strategies that they suggested.

Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) outcomes

- Students could use technology to organize the strategies generated in class for how Trisha could deal with her problems.
- Students with access to computers may use word-processing skills to type, revise and print letters to Trisha.

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