

& PROJECT

P.S. You Sound Like Someone I Can Trust

Session 2 of 7

MEET YOUR PARTNER & INTRODUCE YOURSELF

In this session, students will read their partner’s survey answers and begin to write an introductory letter.

YOU WILL NEED

- Notebooks, blank paper/construction paper, writing utensils
- [“Reuben & Giselle”](#) — Mentor Text

BEFORE YOU START

Before you start this session, it’s incredibly important to exchange copies of the initial “Match-Up Survey” with your partner organization and work with your partner educator to match up your students. There are countless ways to do this: you can match students with similar interests or values, match students from different backgrounds, or even pair them at random. However you decide to match students, it’s always a good idea to share your methods with your students

ahead of time.

You will also need to make sure copies of the mentor text are available for each student—that could look like making copies, sharing the link with students, or ensuring that you have the means to project it.

HOW TO BEGIN (7 MINUTES)

Open with the I Am Map exercise. The individual steps are below:

- Make sure every student has a blank piece of paper—this can be white printer paper, colored construction paper, or notebook paper.
- In the middle of their paper, they should draw a circle with either their name or the words “I am” in the middle.
- Branching out from the circle, they should fill the page with adjectives/things that make up who they are. Examples of things they could include: an older brother, learner, reader, gamer, silly, Latinx, Jewish, chef, etc.
- If you have time, have students share their maps—either in partners, whole class, or a combination of the two. This is also a great opportunity for you to get in on the fun and create/share your own I Am Map.

STEP 1 (10 MINUTES)**Mini-Lesson: Reuben & Giselle**

Obviously, not every letter is the same—they each depend on the writer, the audience, the purpose, etc.—but every letter does tend to carry the same components. So ask your students what those components are. Some answers are below:

- A greeting of some kind
- An introduction of the writer sometimes with a story
- A shared connection to the reader
- A few questions for the reader and why the writer is interested
- A message of gratitude
- A sign-off

Keeping these components in mind, read “[Reuben & Giselle](#)” as a class. If you want to up the engagement, have one person read (with expression) for Giselle and another for Reuben. After, discuss initial first impressions—some sample guiding questions are below:

- Did Reuben and Giselle’s letters include all of the components?
- How would you describe their letters? What information did they choose to share with each other?
- Could you feel their personalities through their words?
- What can you do to make your letters (to someone you’ve never met before!) feel authentic?

Note: “Dear My Blank” is an excellent source for additional letters to peruse as mentor texts!

STEP 2 (20 MINUTES)

Partner Match-Up

Hype this up as dramatically as you can: this the moment we've all been waiting for (since we found out we were doing this project during the last session): finding out who our writing partners are going to be!

Set the vision for this next block of time:

- Read the survey from your matched buddy
- Write down any connections/similarities you already see with them. You could also frame this as “write down why you're excited to write to this person”
- Write down any questions you want to ask your buddy

Pass out their matched surveys and let your students work through them, reading and responding to the above prompts. If you have any time left, either have your students share one thing they're excited about (either to learn or to connect with) their buddy with the class.

STEP 3 (20 MINUTES)

Letter Writing

Writing a letter that's engaging and shows who you truly are sounds easy—until you start. The next activity will support your writers begin an engaging, authentic opening to their letter.

Your students should use their “I Am” maps, their partners’ survey, and even “[Reuben & Giselle](#)” as fodder to craft their very first letter to their partner. They should think about how they want to present themselves in this letter (what they want their partner to know about them) and what they want to know about their partner (what questions they want to ask).

You can feel free to model this process by writing a letter of your own (to your partner educator, a friend, someone you’ll never send it to, etc.), and this is also a great opportunity to circulate and individually conference with your students.

STEP 4 (3 MINUTES)

Wrap-Up

The next session is all about finishing, editing, and rewriting these letters—either collect them to pass back or have your students put them into their folders.