

"DEAR FRIEND" POSTCARDS

Description

"Dear Friend" Postcards are "Dear Abby" -type correspondences where students give advice to story characters about what they would do in their situations.

Type of Activity

Student Pairs and Individual

Materials

Postcard-like paper—three per student (see below), pen or pencil, some type of stamp, class mailbox

Procedures

- Select a story in which characters are facing a problem, which the students can role play.
- Have one student assume the role of the major story character who has some the problem; have the other assume the role of Dear Abby who will give advice to the character. Have students role play their respective parts.
- Have students select a character from the story that you have chosen to whom they'd like to write. Try to have more than one student select the same character so responses can be compared and contrasted.
- Have students write a "Dear Friend" postcard to that character, giving advice on how to resolve his/her dilemma (see ideas below).
- Have students with same character compare their written responses.
- Have students write "Dear Abby" postcards about some of their own concerns. Have them sign them in code, and put them in the class mailbox.
- When all postcards are in, have all students select one card and write a "Dear Friend" response to the "anonymous" friend. Have students return postcards with responses to the class mailbox.
- Have students find their cards and read Abby's response.
- Have all students return their cards to the class mailbox.
- To promote sharing, have students select a card at random from the mailbox and read aloud to the class.

Postcard Format:

<p>Dear _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Sincerely, _____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"></p> <p>To: _____ _____ _____</p>
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Topics

School Issues: Advice to the major character can include ways to work better with the teacher, ways to get better grades, ways to stay out of trouble and/or ways to enjoy school more.

Family Issues: Advice to the major character can include ways to get along better with parents, stepparents, brothers and sisters, ways to change things at home and/or ways to cope better with what exists in the family.

Personal Issues: Advice to the major character can include ways to change things about him/herself and/or ways to cope better with what s/he has.

References

Idea of postcard format for this activity excerpted from: Barch, M.R., & Mallett, J.J. (1980). *Reading rousers: 114 ways to reading fun*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.