

5. Petitions, appeals

5th–9th grade

45 minutes



Following a discussion of unsatisfactory conditions or situations in the country of origin or the host country (country of residence), students brainstorm ideas about possible suggestions to ameliorate the situation and to whose attention concrete suggestions could be directed, or what an appeal to the media would look like, respectively. They then discuss and write appropriate texts. Whether the appeal will be sent to the intended appropriate recipient or remains a fictitious text will have to be decided for each individual effort.

Examples: an appeal or letter of protest to the president or the parliament in the home country about a current crisis or situation; a letter or appeal to a party or institution that is hostile to foreigners in the students' country of residence.

6. Letters, mails and sms: class correspondence, blogs and chats

2nd–9th grade



Many of the exciting possibilities for authentic written communication with other speakers of the same language were already referenced in #12: "writing for the target audience". Aside from the classic letter writing, modern media has opened up new possibilities of written communication, such as e-mails or sms, which are also well suited for school purposes. The same holds true for using blogs and chat forums, which exist in all languages. However, it is vitally important to be vigilant that students' personal data remain strictly confidential as well as to ensure that students stay clear of questionable forums and inappropriate content.

An appealing variation for addressing a real target reader in writing is when students compose (fictitious) letters, e-mails or sms to historical persons or other well-known personalities or politicians, which are then read in class. Authentic writing assignments also include students' creating, designing and writing of greeting cards, e.g. wishes for Mother's Day, Christmas, New Year or cards to celebrate a national holiday. Other opportunities for practical writing assignments might involve students' writing and designing invitations, such as invitations to a parents' evening or a cultural event at the school, hosted by the heritage language class.

7. Problem-oriented texts

5th–9th grade

45 minutes



Growing up in, with and between two cultures not only has positive sides, but also difficult aspects. Heritage language students have the advantage of double the resources, but may possibly also be confronted with prejudices and reservations, not only in the host country but in the country of origin as well. Dealing with these issues and supporting the students in their search for identity and a sense of belonging is an important part of heritage language instruction. Discussions and written reflection can contribute to this goal. Writing assignments in conjunction with this effort would include planning a discussion around specific questions, such as, "My thoughts and feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of growing up with two languages and cultures", "Great, I am bilingual!", "How I feel at home, here and in my country of origin", etc.

8. Fantasy texts, wishes and visions

3rd–9th grade

45 minutes



Possible outlines and topics:

If I were the President of my country of origin (or the one in which I now live)/ How I imagine my life in 20 years/ My vision of a world in which everyone is happy/ Problems that I hope will no longer exist 50 years hence, etc.