

# Letter to a Student in Next Year's Class

In this protocol, students are writing a letter to someone who will be taking the same class next year, answering these three basic questions:

- What should they learn from the lesson and how they should go about doing this?
- What mistakes did you make that you want to warn them about so that they do not repeat them?
- What should they know about the teacher in order to be successful in the class?

It might look something like this:

*Dear Student in 2024,*

*I am writing this letter to you to let you know about the unit on geography. For this lesson, you will be looking at the problem of where the city should put a rec center that would benefit the entire community. You have to consider several things about it concerning the geography including where there is available land, what is the terrain of the land available, and where the population centers of our town are located.*

*At first I thought this was really obvious. Just put the center at the middle of town and that way no one is having to travel too*

far to get to it. The problem with that though is that there is not much available land in the middle of town for the size of structure you have planned to build. In addition, the middle of town is very flat and part of your plan is to create walking and bike trails that provide exercise for people. Walking or riding on flat trails does not give them much of a challenge. My biggest piece of advice is to find geographically a space that allows for expansion of the rec center but does not make it too far for some people. You also have to consider where most of the residential areas are and where people will be coming from.

By this time you have probably worked on a few problem-based learning lessons. If you were like me, you might find these annoying because Mrs. Kidwell makes you do all the work and it just seems like she is walking around the room talking with kids. You especially might not like the fact that she likes to talk about her cats all the time (I'm a dog person). Just enjoy the fact that you are not being talked at or made to do stupid worksheets. At least with these you are getting more choice in what you have to learn so take advantage of that and choose things you really care about.

Sincerely,

Robin

A reflection such as this requires students to not only think about the lesson as it stands today, but how they might look upon it once a year is passed. Hopefully this will get them to think about the long-term effects of the learning and how it might benefit them later. It will help them to gain a perspective on what they did.