

Newsletters: Mass Communication with Families



Before the dawn of emails and classroom websites, the hard copy newsletter was the primary way in which teachers communicated what was happening in their classrooms with families. Today, though not extinct, the traditional form of the newsletter has taken a back seat to more instantaneous communication that parents can view from any screen they have access to, large or small. But there is something to be said for holding a paper in your hand for both the parent and the student. Hard copies carry their own magic for communication. They can be passed from one person to another and viewed by the student over and over again without any need for logins. They can be drawn on, folded, attached to the fridge or placed in a keepsake box for future perusal. Paper newsletters can be quite powerful in conveying the learning that is happening in your classroom and ensure that ALL families, especially those with limited or no access to technology, can feel as though they are a vital part of their child's educational journey. Newsletters can come in many forms. There is no wrong way to do it. You can start by thinking about these five questions:

- Who are the families we are sharing this information with? (What will hook them into wanting to read our newsletter?)
- What do we want families to know about our classroom?
- What information should we include to convey this message?
- How can we help families understand why are we working on certain skills? (CC Standards, cross curricular connections, what will they encounter in the upcoming grade, etc.)
- How will we illustrate what the family's role is at home when working with their child? (Suggested activities, books, websites, projects, etc.)

In this section you will be provided templates for successful newsletters that are already in use in classrooms as well as a few tips on how to create custom documents on Microsoft Word and MAC computers.

Newsletters can be published and shared in a number of ways, such as:

- Teacher written weekly, bi-weekly or monthly parent information for all grade levels
- A year long way to communicate with families with limited technology access on a weekly basis
- A writing & publishing project for students in grades 2-5 once a month or once a semester
- An outside the classroom posting so that visitors can see what learning is taking place in your room
- School-Wide Newsletter focused on what is happening at each grade level in your school. This will help to foster a positive learning community across grade levels.

Hard copy newsletters should not be viewed as a replacement for digital forms of communication, but seen as a means of ensuring that all families are engaged throughout the school year.

How to Create A Custom Classroom Newsletter

Visit these links to learn more:

Creating Newsletters Using Microsoft Word Video Tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWXbrWpwpSw>

Creating Newsletters Using Word on a Mac Video Tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqUb5SZe7X4>

<https://www.theeducationcenter.com/search/newsletter> You can enter your information in and choose from several layouts.

Items to consider including in your newsletter:

- Class photos
 - Important dates
 - Student scanned work
 - An interactive portion that has to be returned to you (question of the week, poll, scavenger hunt, etc.)
 - Classroom News
 - Student of the week
 - Current and upcoming skills that are being taught in class
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