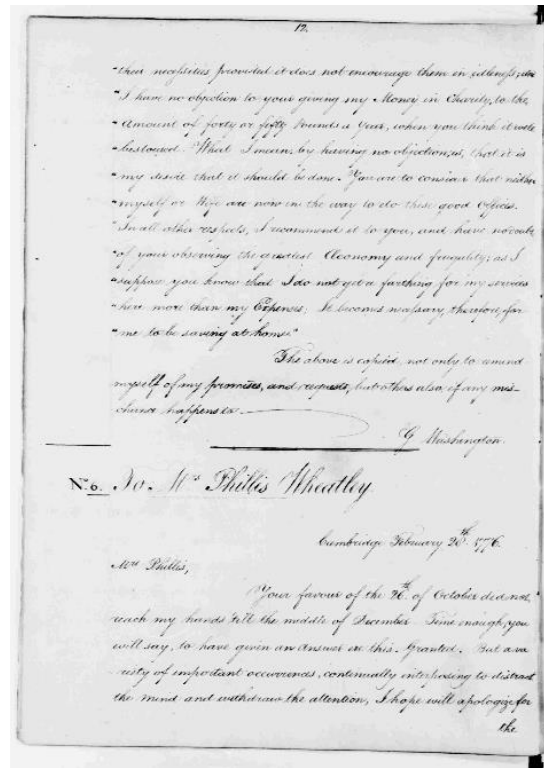


# Lesson Plan "Writing a letter to someone who inspires you."

By Amy Finegold

## Phillis Wheatley's Correspondence with George Washington



Washington, George. *George Washington Papers, Series 3, Varick Transcripts, 1775 to 1785, Subseries 3H, Personal Correspondence, 1775 to 1783, Letterbook 1:- Dec. 25, 1779.* - December 25, 1779, 1775. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw3h.001/>.

**Suggested grade levels:** 3-5, but adaptable for all ages/levels

**Standards:** Demonstrate commands of the conventions of academic English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**Content Objective:** To write a letter to someone inspiring you.

**Linguistic Objective:** Use Present Tense and Action Verbs.

**Procedure:**

- a) Reading to notice individual word choice, purpose, and tone
- 1) The teacher will read Wheatley's letter to George Washington. The teacher and the students will discuss parts of the letter that show admiration.

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-02-02-0222-0001>

- 2) The teacher will read Washington's letter to Phillis Wheatley. The teacher and students will discuss part of the letter that show admiration.

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-03-02-0281>

- b) Reading for historical context

Questions: What do you notice about the lines in the letter that talk about the Revolutionary period?

Why do you think Phillis Wheatley wrote to George Washington?

Why do you think Washington wrote to Wheatley?

**Writing Activity:** The students will write a letter to someone they admire. Write three paragraphs that show the character traits that you admire about that person. Also, explain in the letter why you admire that person.

**Extension Activities:** Write a letter in a small group or with the whole class. Create a geographic timeline starting with Senegal, Boston, London, and Boston. Add brief notes about Phillis Wheatley's life under each geographic area.

### **Additional Resources for Learning:**

Copy of Washington's letter in his handwriting

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw3h.001/?q=wheatley&sp=13&st=text>

Copy of the poem Wheatley sent to Washington with her letter

<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/9383hpr-4d6874a0b13c2f0/>

Historian Alexis Coe talks about Wheatley's poem to Washington

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-Hi5atFHEg>