

# Learning & Teaching Materials on



## Letter Writing Competition -

**Writing a Letter to Express  
Love and Gratitude**

**(Secondary Level)**

# Contents

 What is “SOW in Love” Letter Writing Competition?

 What is a Love Letter?

 How to Write a Love Letter?

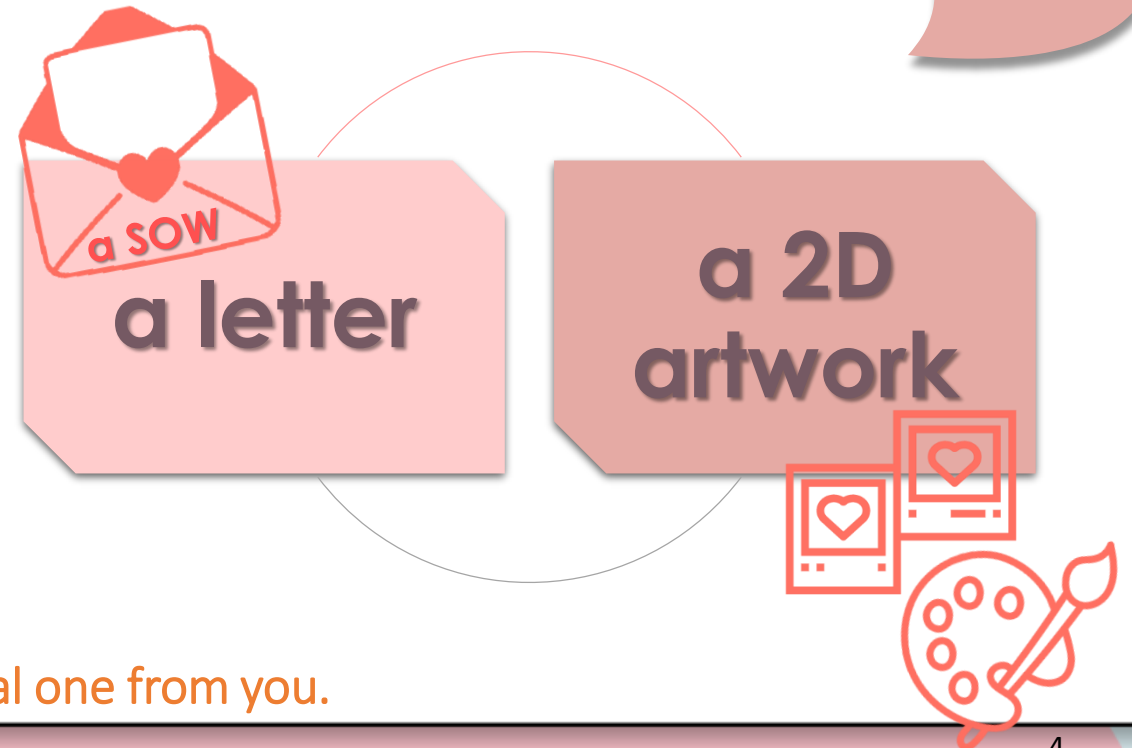
 How to Present a Love Letter Effectively?

**What is “SOW in L♥ve”  
Letter Writing Competition?**

♥ In the **“SOW in Love” Letter Writing Competition** organised under the campaign on **“Promoting Positive Values and Attitudes through English Sayings of Wisdom 2023/24”** (SOW Campaign 2023/24), students are to write a letter to express their love and gratitude to a recipient and address the overarching theme and the six sub-themes in the next slide.

♥ Each entry should include:

- ♥ a letter with a \*Saying of Wisdom as part of the content; and
- ♥ a piece of 2D artwork as a visual representation of the key message(s) of the letter



\* A proverb, a quote from a famous person, or an original one from you.

*SDW Campaign 2023/24*

**Love the Community**

Fostering a harmonious and inclusive society, caring for your school and neighbours, respecting diversity



**Love Our Country**

Embracing our national identity, affection for hometown, appreciation of Chinese culture and heritage



**Love Myself**

Personal growth, self-management, leading a healthy lifestyle



**Love Our Family and Friends**

Filial piety and reverence for ancestors, responsibility and commitment to the family, friendship



**Love Learning**

Being inquisitive and reflective, a drive to apply and experiment with knowledge, lifelong learning



**Love Nature**

Biodiversity conservation, animal protection, green living



♥ Length:

**JUNIOR SECONDARY  
DIVISION  
(SECONDARY 1–3):** no more than  
**200** words

**SENIOR SECONDARY  
DIVISION  
(SECONDARY 4–6):** no more than  
**300** words

♥ More information about the competition can be found in [http://www.edb.gov.hk/sow\\_letter\\_writing](http://www.edb.gov.hk/sow_letter_writing).



**"SOW in Love" Letter Writing Competition  
(Primary/Secondary)**



The **"SOW in Love" Letter Writing Competition** is organised to enhance students' language skills and multimodal literacy, nurture their creativity and foster their positive values and attitudes. Students are invited to write a letter to express their love and gratitude towards an entity with a SOW of their choice and create a piece of two-dimensional (2D) artwork to enhance conveyance of meaning and visual representation of the letter.

To engage more students in the Competition, schools are encouraged to organise a preliminary competition within the school to shortlist outstanding student works across different year levels for the Competition. In support of the Competition, learning and teaching resources at primary and secondary levels will be disseminated in due course. For more details, please click [here](#).

**Important Dates**

Submission deadline

**What is a Love Letter?**

# What is a Love Letter?

♥ A love letter, which is deeply personal, is one of the best gifts for someone or something dear to our hearts to express our love and gratitude to them.





# You can express your love through showing...



# How to Write a Love Letter?

# How to Write a Love Letter?

Writing a love letter may seem challenging. The following steps will help you tailor-make a heartfelt letter to your loved ones:

**01**

Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

**02**

Generating ideas & enriching the content

**03**

Organising the content systematically

# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

To identify the focus and recipient(s), you can:

- ♥ Find a source of inspiration – a memorable experience in your life
- ♥ recall an awakening moment from the memorable experience and your feelings

♥ browsing an Instagram post



♥ joining a dinner gathering



♥ reading a book



♥ watching a film

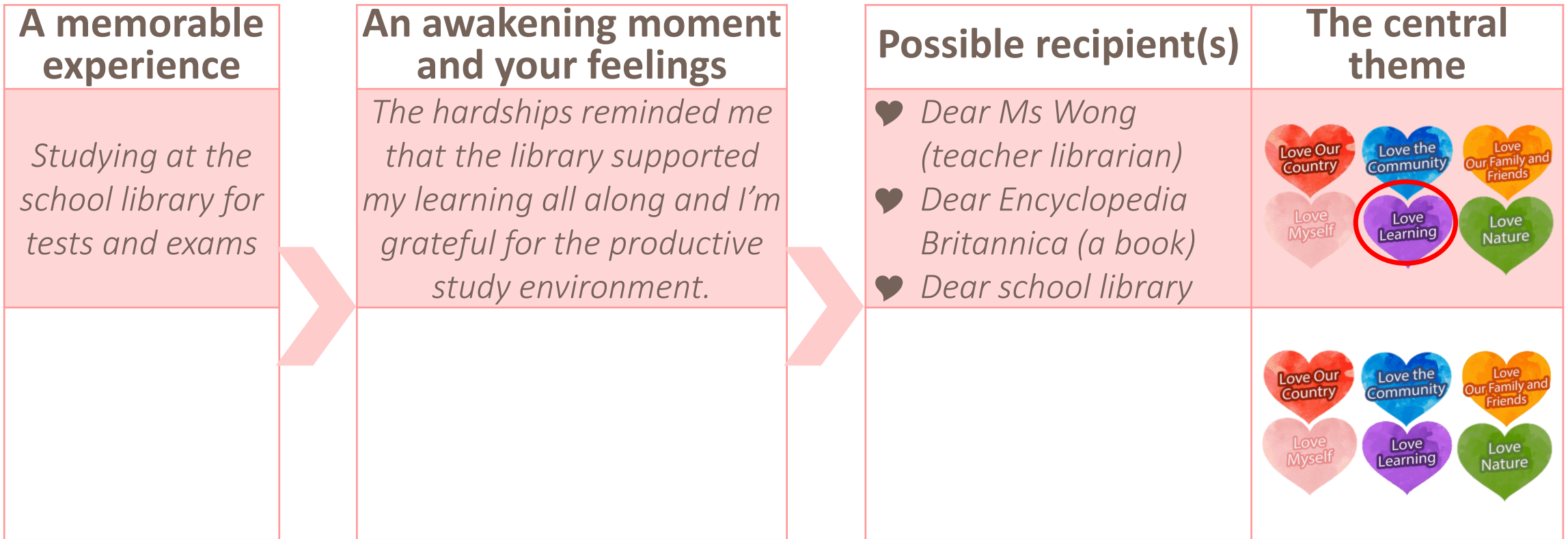


♥ visiting a memorable place



# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW



# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

When deciding recipient(s), you can be more creative and consider different options. The recipient(s) can be:

a person

an individual

real

right here and now

OR

an object/a place




a collective group of people

imaginary

in the past/future




# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

The central theme	Possible recipient(s) (more creative options)	
 <p>Love Our Country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ President Xi</li> <li>♥ government officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Beijing</li> <li>♥ the Great Wall</li> <li>♥ national anthem</li> </ul>
 <p>Love the Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Hong Kong</li> <li>♥ street cleaners</li> <li>♥ scavengers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ trams</li> </ul>
 <p>Love Our Family &amp; Friends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ mum and dad</li> <li>♥ a friend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ a late pet</li> <li>♥ a future family member</li> </ul>

# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

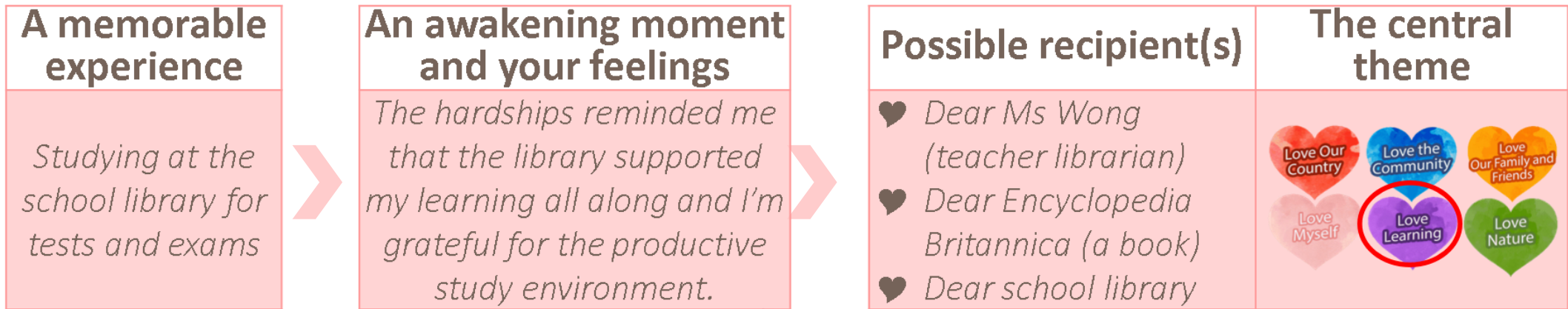
The central theme	Possible recipient(s) (more creative options)	
 Love Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ myself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ my old or future self</li> <li>♥ past experiences (blessings/sufferings)</li> </ul>
 Love Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ a teacher</li> <li>♥ a book</li> <li>♥ a scientist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ my school bag</li> <li>♥ alma mater</li> <li>♥ school library</li> </ul>
 Love Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ planet Earth</li> <li>♥ staff members at the Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries</li> <li>♥ an environmental group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ endangered species               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ polar bears</li> <li>♥ Chinese White Dolphins</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# 01

## Identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW

After identifying the central theme and recipient(s), think of a Saying of Wisdom (SOW) to echo the overarching theme and/or the sub-theme(s) chosen.



*The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding.*

By Leonardo da Vinci

**Your turn!**

Complete Part 1 of the writing plan.

# Selected SOWs

Here are the 18 SOWs selected for the 6 sub-themes featured in the campaign:

<b>Love Our Country</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In love of home, the love of country has its rise. (Charles Dickens)</li><li>2. I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him. (Abraham Lincoln)</li><li>3. He loves his country best who strives to make it best. (Robert G. Ingersoll)</li></ol>
<b>Love the Community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. No one has ever become poor by giving. (Anne Frank)</li><li>2. The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. (Mahatma Gandhi)</li><li>3. We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men. (Herman Melville)</li></ol>
<b>Love Our Family and Friends</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light. (Helen Keller)</li><li>2. Love begins by taking care of the closest ones – the ones at home. (Mother Teresa)</li><li>3. Friendship is a sheltering tree. (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)</li></ol>

<b>Love Myself</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The first wealth is health. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)</li><li>2. To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance. (Oscar Wilde)</li><li>3. Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself. (George Bernard Shaw)</li></ol>
<b>Love Learning</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Try to learn something about everything and everything about something. (Aldous Leonard Huxley)</li><li>2. I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious. (Albert Einstein)</li><li>3. The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding. (Leonardo da Vinci)</li></ol>
<b>Love Nature</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere. (Vincent van Gogh)</li><li>2. The richness I achieve comes from nature, the source of my inspiration. (Claude Monet)</li><li>3. To sit in the shade on a fine day and look upon verdure is the most perfect refreshment. (Jane Austen)</li></ol>

# 02

## Generating idea(s) & Enriching the content

After identifying the focus, recipient(s) and SOW, you may use the following 3 strategies to generate ideas and present your love.

### 1. Recounting memorable experiences you had with the recipient(s)

- ♥ What were the memorable moments or experiences you shared with the recipient(s)?
- ♥ How did you feel? What made it memorable?

### 3. Making commitment & expressing hope and good wishes for your recipient(s)

- ♥ What promises/commitments will you make to your recipient(s)?
- ♥ What wish(es) do you have for the recipient(s)?

### 2. Reflecting on the recipients' influence and impact on your life

- ♥ How did the recipient(s) change your life?
- ♥ What qualities or characteristics of the recipient(s) do you admire?

**Recounting memorable experiences you had with the recipient(s)**

Dear Ding Ding,

The trip back to granny's tonight reminded me of our fond memories. I couldn't help taking a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect for your dedication of service and contribution to heritage preservation.

I still remember the good old days when I lived in Sheung Wan. You were a reliable friend carrying me to school on time. I always sat near the windows in the front row on the upper deck. Mum would sit next to me. I can still recall the feeling of the wind brushing my face and the noise of the neighbourhood. The rides with you were precious childhood memories.

**Reflecting on the recipients' influence and impact on your life**

For over a century, you have been running between the east and the west of Hong Kong Island, offering the most affordable and greenest public transport to citizens from all walks of life. Your dedication of service and contribution to heritage preservation have also inspired me to serve at school and in the community. To honour you, I've recently volunteered at a community centre and organised an activity to take some newly-arrived children on a tram ride to let them experience Hong Kong life and the vibe of the city. As the saying goes, "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others".

**Making commitment & expressing hope and good wishes for your recipient(s)**

Sitting on the upper deck on a tram to feel the dynamics of Hong Kong is my favourite pastime. I enjoy the massage by breezes while watching the stories of citizens at different corners of Hong Kong. Because of you, I have learnt to slow down and appreciate the beauty and culture of our place. I hope you will not be phased out in the rapid changing city.

I want to witness the growth of our home and the changing scenery with you. To continue your legacy, I promise to cherish the disappearing heritage in our city which carries collective memories of several generations.


Thank you for being an important part of our collective memories and your dedication is truly admirable.

Love,  
Tommy

# 02

## Generating idea(s) & Enriching the content

### Strategy 1: Recounting memorable experiences you had with the recipient(s)

Central theme:	 Love Our Country
Greeting:	Dear the Great Wall




Standing on the Great Wall made me feel proud, and the breathtaking views blew my mind. Walking along the paths made of ancient stones and touring around the watchtowers, I couldn't help but marvel at how you protected our ancestors. You've been standing still alone guarding the territory of our country safe for years. Your legs may ache but you never complain. The unforgettable trip not only strengthens my national pride but also inspires me to protect my country. Thank you for your sacrifice.

# 02

## Generating idea(s) & Enriching the content

### Strategy 2: Reflecting on the recipients' influence and impact on your life

Central theme:	 Love Learning
Greeting:	Dear school library




You are an integral part of my school life. You opened my eyes by allowing me to explore the sea of knowledge. Diving into the worlds of literary classics and walking through the lives of scientists made every one of my days. The wide variety of resources available have nurtured me into a lifelong learner, an avid reader and an eager explorer. What's more, you lent me a hand during exam time. The silent, reading-friendly environment you provided helped me focus and made my revision more effective.

# 02

## Generating idea(s) & Enriching the content

### Strategy 3: Making commitment & expressing hope and good wishes for your recipient(s)

Central theme:	 Love the Community
Greeting:	Dear Ding Ding (trams)

I hope you will not be phased out in the rapid changing city. I want to witness the growth of our home and the changing scenery with you. To continue your legacy, I promise to cherish the disappearing heritage in our city which carries collective memories of several generations.



**Your turn!**  
Complete Part 2  
of the writing plan.



# 03

## Organising the content systematically

### Greeting

Dear Ding Ding,

### Opening

- e.g. ♥ Source of inspiration  
♥ Purpose of writing

The trip back to granny's tonight reminded me of our fond memories. I couldn't help taking a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect for your dedication of service and contribution to heritage preservation.

### Body

- e.g. ♥ Relationship between the recipient(s) and you  
♥ Reflection on the recipient(s)' impact(s) on your life

I still remember the good old days when I lived in Sheung Wan. You were a reliable friend carrying me to school on time. I always sat near the windows in the front row on the upper deck. Mum would sit next to me. I can still recall the feeling of the wind brushing my face and the noise of the neighbourhood. The rides with you were precious childhood memories.

For over a century, you have been running between the east and the west of Hong Kong Island, offering the most affordable and greenest public transport to citizens from all walks of life. Your dedication of service and contribution to heritage preservation have also inspired me to serve at school and in the community. To honour you, I've recently volunteered at a community centre and organised an activity to take some newly-arrived children on a tram ride to let them experience Hong Kong life and the vibe of the city. As the saying goes, "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others".

Saying of Wisdom (SOW)

Sitting on the upper deck on a tram to feel the dynamics of Hong Kong is my favourite pastime. I enjoy the massage by breezes while watching the stories of citizens at different corners of Hong Kong. Because of you, I have learnt to slow down and appreciate the beauty and culture of our place. I hope you will not be phased out in the rapid changing city. I want to witness the growth of our home and the changing scenery with you. To continue your legacy, I promise to cherish the disappearing heritage in our city which carries collective memories of several generations.

### Ending

- e.g. ♥ Expression of gratitude and wishes  
Closing and writer's name

Thank you for being an important part of our collective memories and your dedication is truly admirable.

Love,  
Tommy

# How to Present a Love Letter Effectively?

# How to Present a Love Letter Effectively?

Below are several tips to articulate love in a more personal, bespoke and effective manner.

Tip #1 – Writing with a heartfelt tone

Tip #2 – Using quotes (e.g. SOW)

Tip #3 – Enhancing emotional appeal with creative use of English

Tip #4 – Varying language patterns

Tip #5 – Utilising visual aids

## Tip #1 – Writing with a heartfelt tone

A love letter is written to express affection, admiration and other emotions you have for your recipient(s). It is important to create a sincere, warm and heartfelt tone. You may want to:

- ♥ address yourself and your recipient(s) with personal pronouns “I” and “you” to add a personal touch
- ♥ keep your sentences simple and short to sound friendlier and less formal

## Tip #2 – Using quotes (e.g. SOW)

Quotes can be an insightful sentence said or written by famous persons. Sayings of Wisdom are quotes promoting positive values and attitudes. *(Refer to Slides 18-19 for the selected SOWs for the Campaign.)*

Quotes can be placed in different parts of the letter for different purposes and effects:

Organisation	Purpose(s) & Effect(s)
Opening	♥ frame the letter with a key message and offer an overview
Body	♥ enhance the reflection ♥ illustrate the relationship between the recipient(s) and you and their impact(s) on your life ♥ resonate and connect with the target audience
Ending	♥ end the letter strong with a takeaway

# Tip #2 – Using quotes (e.g. SOW)

## Examples

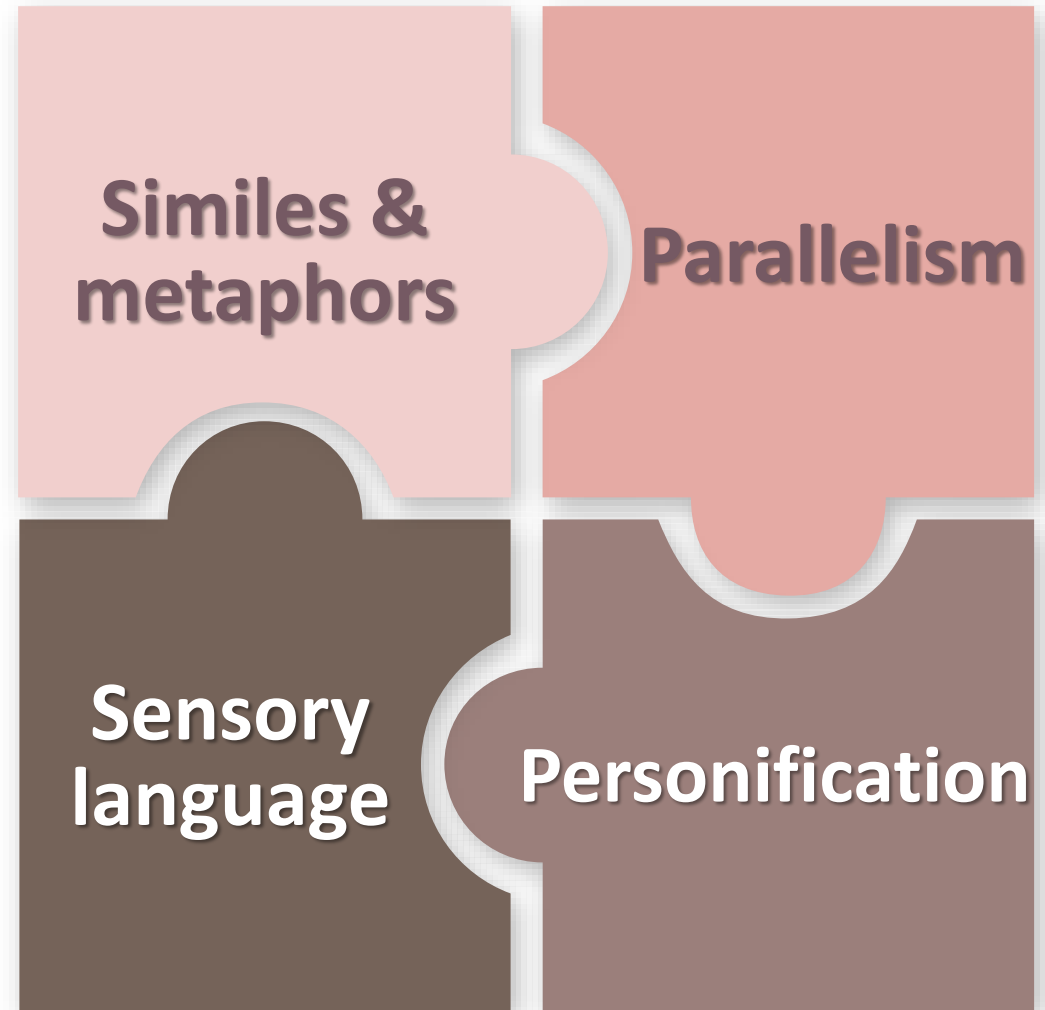
Theme:	♥ Love Nature
Greeting:	Dear nature
SOW:	Nature always wears the colours of the spirit.
Examples:	<p><b>Body:</b></p> <p>(1) Ralph Emerson once said, <u>“nature always wears the colours of the spirit.”</u> The greenery you provide always reminds me of the beauty of life when I am down.</p> <p>(2) You always cheer me up with the vibrant colour when I am down. As the saying goes, <u>“nature always wears the colours of the spirit.”</u></p>

Theme:	♥ Love Our Family and Friends
Greeting:	Dear Thomas (my friend)
SOW:	Friendship is a sheltering tree.
Examples:	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <p>(1) <i>Have you ever heard of a saying, <u>“friendship is a sheltering tree”</u>? You have always been my sheltering tree and I decide to write this letter to thank you.</i></p> <p><b>Ending:</b></p> <p>(2) <i>“<u>Friendship is a sheltering tree.</u>” I want to end my letter by thanking you for your unconditional care, support and love, which made me who I am today.</i></p>



## Tip #3 – Enhancing emotional appeal with creative use of English

Creative use of English enhances emotional appeal of the love letter. Let's explore how some literary devices and sensory language help with the delivery.



# Similes

♥ Comparing one thing to another using 'like' or 'as' explicitly.

## Effects

- ♥ visualising abstract ideas
- ♥ creating a memorable impression

Theme:	♥ Love Our Country
Greeting:	Dear Motherland
Example:	<i>You are like a majestic dragon soaring through the sky. You continue to bring us to new heights in the pursuit of better livelihood and prosperity. I cannot thank you enough.</i>

Theme:	♥ Love the Community
Greeting:	Dear respected street cleaners
Example:	<i>You are as important as machine parts in a sophisticated engine. Without anyone of you keeping our community clean and tidy, we would not have a comfortable and hygienic neighbourhood.</i>





# Metaphors

♥ Equating two things based on common/shared features, usually using “to be”.

Theme:	♥ Love Our Country
Greeting:	Dear government officials
Example:	<i>The country is a train. The leadership of the government is the engine which brings about changes and progress to those on board.</i>

## Effects

- ♥ visualising abstract ideas
- ♥ providing richer and more vivid description

Theme:	♥ Love Myself
Greeting:	Dear future me
Example:	<i>Life is a race full of unknowns. Some are blessings whereas others challenges. Thank you for persisting and enduring all the hardships all along. You've done so well. I'm so proud of you.</i>



# Parallelism

♥ Repeating phrases, clauses or sentences using a similar structure.

## Effects

♥ linking related ideas and emphasising the relationships in between

Theme:	♥ Love Nature
Greeting:	Dear polar bears
Example:	<i>I apologise wholeheartedly to you and your family. I'm sorry that <u>your home is melting, your body is aching and your population is dwindling</u> because of us.</i>

Theme:	♥ Love Our Family and Friends
Greeting:	Dear mum
Example:	<i><u>It is you who always welcomes me with your warmest smile. It is you who always comforts me with a bowl of hot soup. It is you who always supports me with your unlimited love and care.</u> You are the wind under my wings.</i>



## Personification

- ♥ Giving human characteristics to non-living things such as animals and objects.

Theme:	♥ Love Our Country
Greeting:	Dear the Great Wall
Example:	<i>You've been standing still alone guarding the territory of our country safe for years. <u>Your legs may ache but you never complain.</u> Thank you for your sacrifice.</i>

## Effects

- ♥ crafting a vivid image of the object being described

Theme:	♥ Love Learning
Greeting:	Dear school bag
Example:	<i>You don't just carry my books and belongings, <u>you also carry my burden and worries.</u> Never have I realised how much I enjoy learning and <u>you have been there accompanying me.</u></i>



# Sensory language

♥ Describing things using vivid words related to the five senses.

## Effects

- ♥ crafting a vivid imagery
- ♥ enhancing emotional appeal

Theme:	♥ Love Our Family and Friends
Greeting:	Dear grandma
Example:	<i>I still remember our weekend routine. Chicken with <u>aromatic ginger and scallion sauce</u> 🧠 was a luxury but a must-have on our <u>colourful dining table</u> 👁️. Right after <u>the knife banged against the cutting board</u> 👂, you would always offer the nicest and juiciest part – the chicken leg 🗑️ to me. I always rejected because <u>the greasy yellow skin</u> 👁️ was never my cup of tea. Yet, your love was well received.</i>

Theme:	♥ Love Learning
Greeting:	Dear alma mater
Example:	<i>Leaning on the rails overlooking the three basketball courts we were very proud of, <u>I heard the squeak of rubber soles, the swish of the net and the clank of the rim, usually followed by sighs or cheers</u> 👂. Thanks for providing us space and chances to unleash our potentials and embrace our dreams.</i>



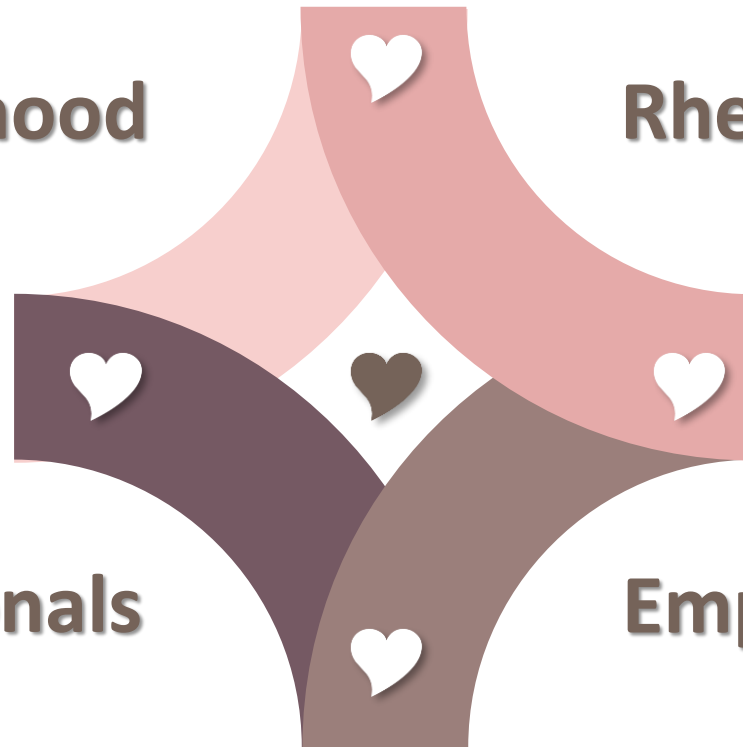
## Tip #4 – Varying language patterns

**Subjunctive mood**

**Rhetorical questions**

**Conditionals**

**Emphatic structures**



# Rhetorical questions

We can use rhetorical questions to stimulate thoughts, emphasise a point and hook the readers' interest.

Theme:	💙 Love the Community
Greeting:	Dear Mr Firemen
Example:	<i>How can I reward the hard work you have done and sacrifice you have made for safeguarding our lives?</i>

Theme:	💛 Love Our Family and Friends
Greeting:	Dear dad
Example:	<i>Don't you feel exhausted from my emotional swings? How did you manage to calm me down and offer the most needed comfort and advice all the time?</i>



# Emphatic structures

We can use emphatic structures to put emphasis on and extend the emotional appeal of a certain idea, point or word. They include the use of “so”, “such” and inversion.

Theme:	♥ Love Myself
Greeting:	Dear future me
Example:	<i>You've done so well. I'm so proud of you. You've been <u>so tough that</u> you survived all challenges. You've proven to yourself that you're <u>such a persevering person</u>. You should be proud. Keep the spirit up.</i>

Theme:	♥ Love Nature
Greeting:	Dear Chinese White Dolphins
Example:	<i>We live on the same planet. <u>Never should we sacrifice your needs for our own benefit.</u></i>

# Conditionals

- We can use Type 3 conditional to speculate past events and express an imagined outcome contrary to reality.
- In a love letter, we may use this conditional to express our gratitude.

Theme:	♥ Love Nature
Greeting:	Dear staff members at the Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries
Example:	<u><i>If you had not put in such efforts in conserving the giant pandas, the species would have been extinct.</i></u>

Theme:	♥ Love Learning
Greeting:	Ms Chan (my English teacher)
Example:	<u><i>If you had not encouraged and supported me, I would not have won the public speaking competition.</i></u>





# Subjunctive mood

We can use the subjunctive mood to talk about hypothetical situations and outcomes or express wishes unlikely to happen.

Theme:	♥ Love Myself
Greeting:	Dear future me
Example:	<i>I wish you <b>lived</b> a life with no regret when you read this letter.</i> Life is full of opportunities. I believe you made the best decisions with the given conditions. Be grateful for what you have achieved is way more beneficial than condemning yourself.

Theme:	♥ Love Learning
Greeting:	Dear school
Example:	<i>My favourite place, the school library, has been closed for more than 3 months for renovation. I wish I <b>could visit</b> it now but I know it will reopen with a wider variety of books and more space for us after renovation.</i>

Theme:	♥ Love Our Family and Friends
Greeting:	Dear Bobby (a late pet)
Example:	<i>The time we spent with each other was scarce. I wish I <b>had spent</b> more quality time with you.</i>

## Your turn!

Complete Part 3 of the writing plan.



# Tip #5 – Utilising visual aids

Visual aids can be a powerful tool to facilitate expression of ideas and emotions. Through artwork in various forms, we can:

- ♥ recall shared memories and create resonance;
- ♥ summarise the key message(s) in the letter; and
- ♥ enhance understanding



*Your artwork must be original.*

# Reminders

**Deadline** 8 March 2024 (Friday)

**Requirements**

The submission should include:

- ♥ a completed Entry Submission Form and a word count;
- ♥ a letter (with a Saying of Wisdom as part of the content); and
- ♥ a piece of 2D artwork (as a visual representation of the key message(s) of the letter)

**For more information**

The soft copy of the Entry Submission Form and the Entry Cover Page can be accessed [here](#) or on the webpage: [http://www.edb.gov.hk/sow letter writing](http://www.edb.gov.hk/sow_letter_writing).



# A checklist for your submission

## Content

- Start with a clear greeting showing the recipient(s)
- Opening: State the source of inspiration and/or purpose of writing clearly
- Body: Explain the special relationship you had with the recipient(s) effectively
  - Strategy 1: Recounting memorable experiences you had with the recipient(s)
  - Strategy 2: Reflecting on the recipients' influence and impact on your life
  - Strategy 3: Making commitment & expressing hope and good wishes for your recipient(s)
- Ending: Express your gratitude and good wishes to your recipient(s)
- Include a Saying of Wisdom
- Sign off with a closing and your name

## Language

- Writing with a heartfelt tone
- Use quotes (e.g. SOW)
- Include creative use of English (e.g. similes and metaphors, parallelism, personification & sensory language)
- Use varied language patterns (e.g. rhetorical questions, emphatic structures, conditionals & subjunctive mood)

## Organisation

- Organise the letter systematically

## Visual aids

- Include a piece of 2D artwork to present key message(s) in the letter visually