



lingoda

From letters to emails

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_4043R_EN

LANGUAGE
English

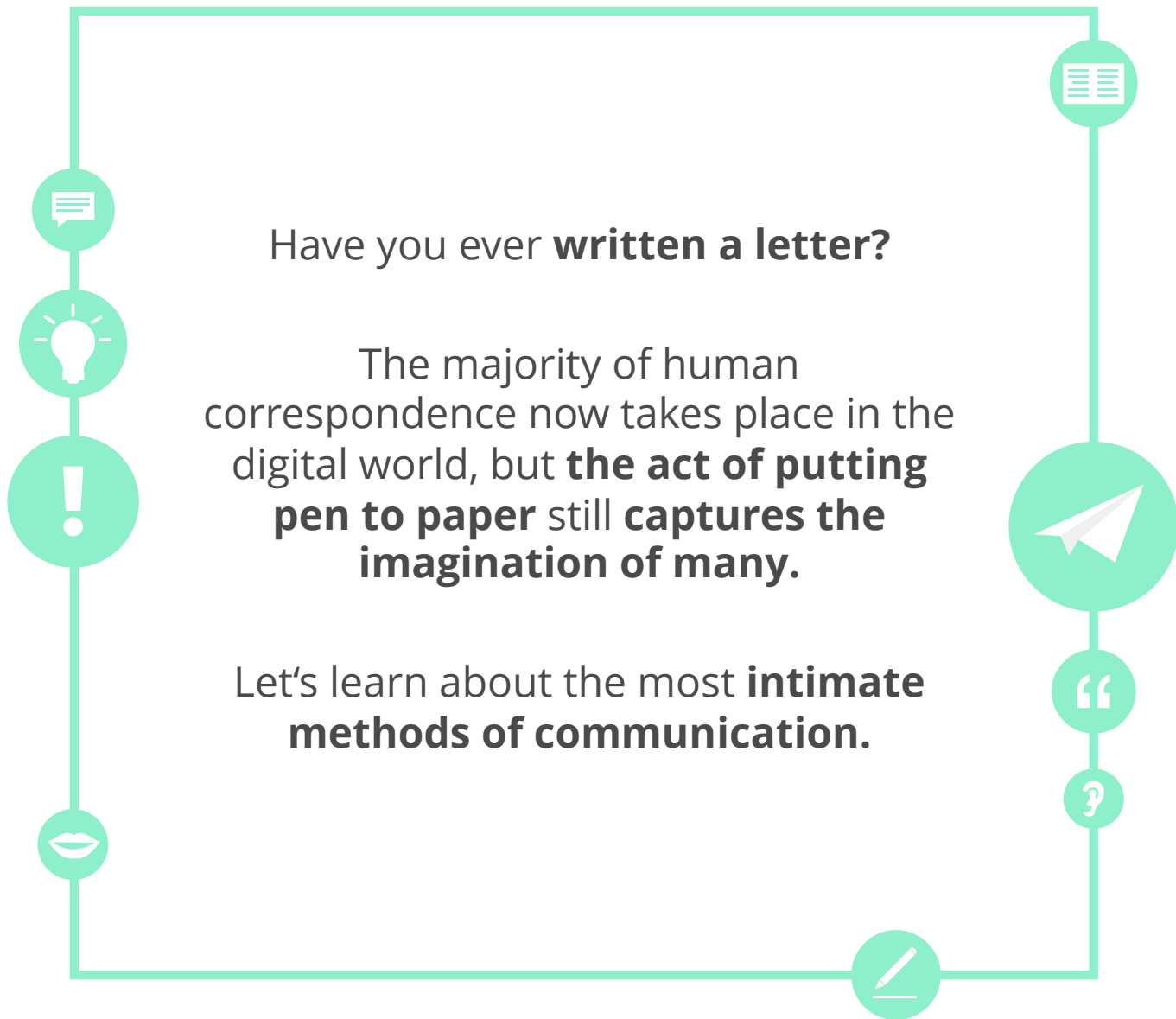




Goals

- Can read and understand a more complex text on the history of written communication.
- Can evaluate the pros and cons of letters and emails in depth.

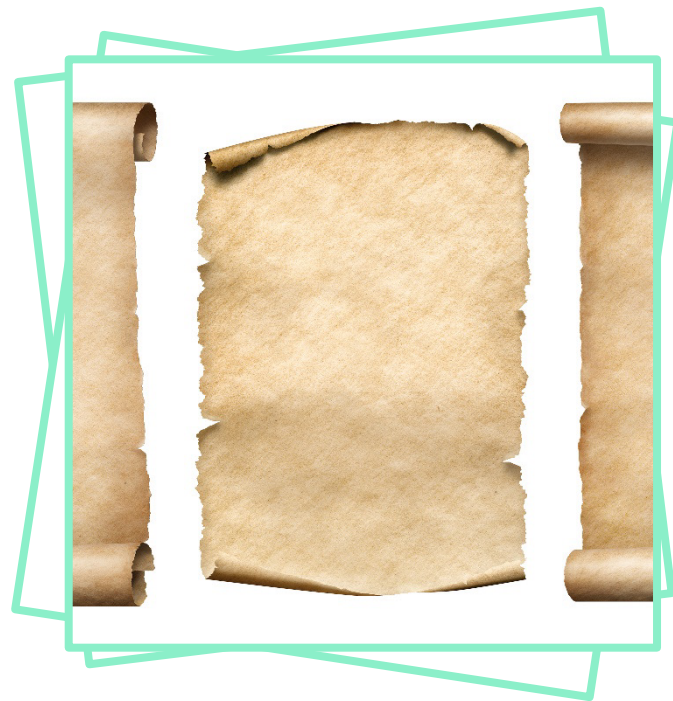






From letters to emails

What are some methods of communication which would now be considered **antiquated**?





Your opinion

Are there any situations where you would rather write a physical letter as opposed to an email? Discuss your thoughts.



To my darling...

Dear Mr Jones, I read your article in the newspaper and...

I hope you received this letter, I asked for international postage!



Letters versus emails



What are the pros and cons of emails and letters? Do you have a preference? Can you remember the last time you wrote a letter?



Vocabulary review for reading



I **lament** the day I left that job.

I could recommend a café by the river –
it is very **quaint**.



That corner store attracts all of the
eccentrics in the town.

Her style is **ubiquitous** in this city.





Vocabulary review for reading



The new games console has driven that system to **obsolescence**.

That model has been **superseded** by superior technology.



Even though I don't see Janet, we are sure to maintain **correspondence**.

Let's cut the **pleasantries** and get right to the point...





From letters to emails



Does anyone **lament** the written letter? Where once the form enjoyed **supremacy** amongst the cultured and educated as the sole means of communicating, this view now stands far back in the mists of time – a **quaint** relic of a bygone age. Like a great many other human practices, the act of putting pen to paper has been swept aside by the **relentless** march of technological progress.



From letters to emails



In contemporary times many view writing a letter as strictly confined to old-fashioned **eccentrics**, or the gushing romantics wanting to make an impression on their beloved. The real heir to the written letter is the **ubiquitous** email. Its rise to dominance in the world of human **correspondence** has had revelatory implications for the way humans live their lives.



From letters to emails

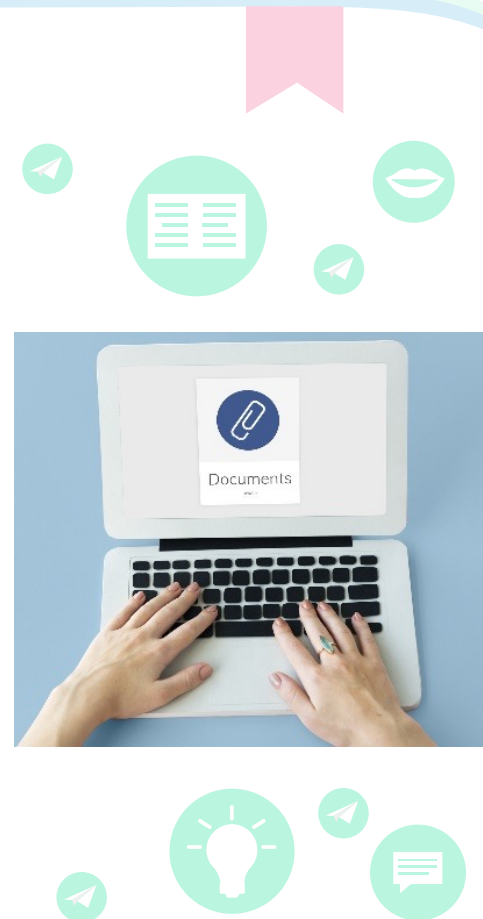
The written letter has existed in one form or another since the advent of writing in Ancient Sumeria in 2600 BC. It has been a central facet of the lives of humans for thousands of years, only being almost completely eclipsed in the last twenty years by email. However, the letter's fade into near **obsolescence** began many decades earlier.





From letters to emails

Communication technology made great leaps forward with the invention of the telegraph, which allowed messages to be transmitted across great distances using electrical signal. Over the course of the twentieth century, the letter was **superseded** by the invention of the **facsimile**. Fax allowed an image to be transmitted across the telephone network like a photocopy or scan. The proliferation of the internet introduced a range of new communication platforms. Instant messaging services made free, swift and relatively painless communication the norm. Following this, email swiftly became the dominant medium of communication.



snail mail

Snail mail is a **retronym** that refers to letters and conventional post. It was termed after the popularisation of email and refers to the speed of traditional post compared to digital correspondence.



Did you get your copy of the magazine yet?
Not yet. My subscription is delivered by **snail mail**.



Definitions

Categorise the reasons why you believe email was so successful upon its inception.

a more economical
choice

letters were
unreliable

benefit of receiving
correspondence
instantly

everyone had a
computer

people are lazy

you don't have to
be as literate to
write an email

quicker to
compose

people hated
writing letters

Likely

Unlikely



Thoughts?

Discuss the below and then write short responses to the questions.

Would you ever write a letter nowadays?

Have you ever had a pen pal?

Do you think that email will eventually become obsolete?

A vertical notepad with a blue binding on the left and horizontal lines for writing. The notepad is currently blank.



Choose the best answer

1. The letter seems a _____ relic of a bygone age.

- a. quantitative b. quaint c. quail d. qualitative

2. Email's rise to dominance in the world of human _____ has had revelatory implications for the way we communicate.

- a. coronation b. corroborate c. correspondence d. correlation

3. The _____ allowed messages to be transmitted across great distances using electrical signal.

- a. telegraph b. teleport c. teleprompter d. terraform

4. Instant messaging _____ made free, swift and relatively painless communication the norm.

- a. parallels b. platforms c. plethora d. panacea



Rewrite these passages from the text

...it now stands far back in the mists of time – a quaint relic of a bygone age.

...had revelatory implications for the way humans live their lives.

... the letter was **superseded** by the invention of the **facsimile**.

The real heir to the written letter is the ubiquitous email.

...strictly confined to old fashioned eccentrics or gushing romantics...

The letter's fade into near obsolescence began many decades earlier...



From letters to emails

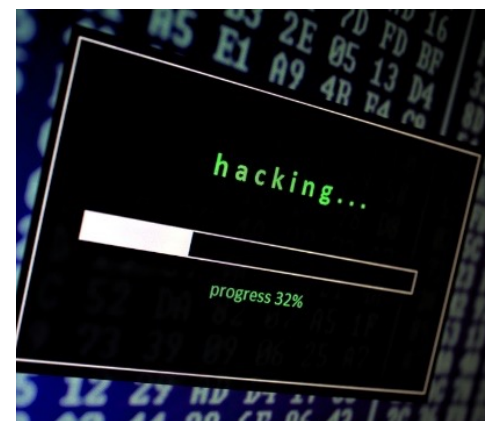


Despite their significant decline in everyday use, letters still carry some benefits over digital communication. Official communication is still often relayed via **snail mail**. Physical addresses have a greater sense of permanence, making letters appear to be more reliable. In the same way, a physical letter can be kept much easier for records or bookkeeping. Letters also forego much of the digital baggage that comes along with email – **malware**, viruses and waves of spam do not tend to travel by post.



From letters to emails

There is also a greater sense of security sending **correspondence** by post, at least in the contemporary imagination. Media reports of large scale data **breaches** have heightened public awareness of the security risks associated with the digital world. If presidential candidates' emails can be hacked, why can't yours? Mail theft seems **quaint** by comparison.





Discuss

Pick one of the statements below. Prepare some points for discussion about how this technology influenced communication.

Telegraph

Facsimile

Telephone



Write a response

Media reports of large scale data breaches have heightened public awareness of the security risks associated with the digital world. Are you concerned about online tracking and surveillance? Discuss your answer and write a brief response detailing your reasons.





The upsides to snail mail

**Snail mail still has many positives over digital correspondence.
Discuss each of the points below.**

intimacy

more exciting to
send and receive

deeper
immersion in
language

secure



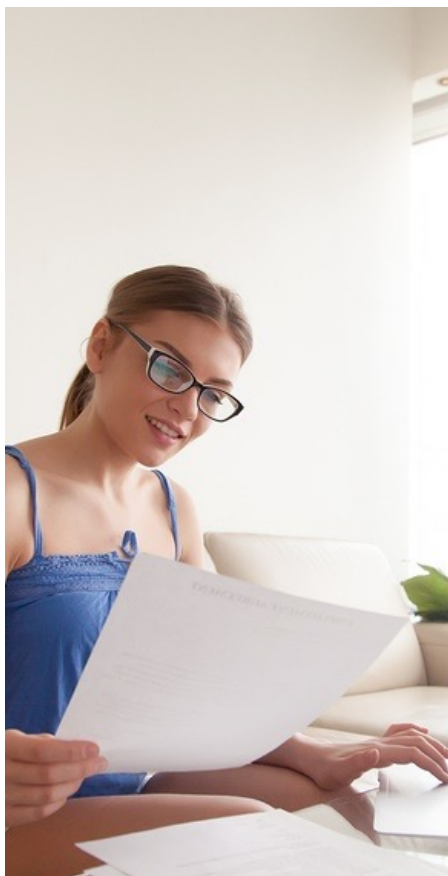
A comeback for the letter?

Do you think there will ever be a resurgence in writing letters?

Do you think the cost and time it takes to write a letter is what keeps people from doing it?



From letters to emails



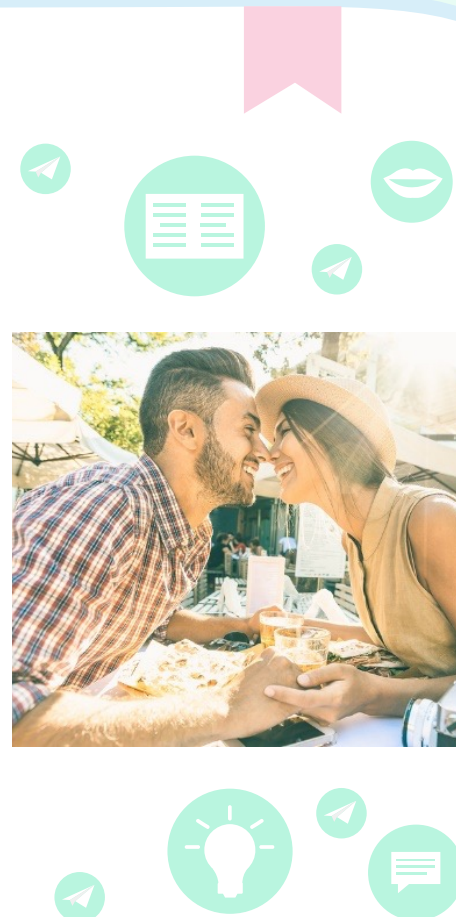
It is not just for reasons of efficiency that people stick with letters. The time, craft and consideration that goes into the composition of a letter gives it a different quality to that of an email. The very advantages that make email such an efficient and widespread medium are also its most limiting. Email cuts the **pleasantries** and gets to the point with little fuss. Efficiency is the priority. Of course letters are often written with a purpose in mind, but they take their time getting there. Rather than being composed in the blink of an eye, a letter takes time to craft. Some workers might easily send one hundred emails in a week, yet compose less than that number of letters in their entire life.



From letters to emails

The frame of mind promoted by slow communication prompts a different kind of dialogue and a richer investment with language. Letters can become extensions of the psyche and produce **florid** and **lyrical** prose which would seem out of place in an email.

While communication technology has provided us with immeasurably useful tools, it is worth keeping familiarity with the more human-centric approach of slow writing, before it drifts away completely. In the **tumult** of our increasingly noisy lives, a revival of the practice might rekindle some relationships. For as those who have had the pleasure know, there is nothing more exciting than reading a letter written just for you.





English class!

You are an English teacher and your class is studying how to write a letter. Tired of the moans and groans of your teenage cohort, you have decided to convince them of the importance of the letter in contemporary times.

Gather your arguments. Write a short speech which will convince the teens!





Role play

Swap roles. You are a student in your teacher's class. Conduct a role play arguing the contrary to your teacher. What is the purpose of writing a letter when technology will do? Try to incorporate as many of the below suggestions.

instant
messaging apps

uncool

even mum and
dad don't write
letters – why
should we?

it's a waste of
good trees

we write
enough in
school

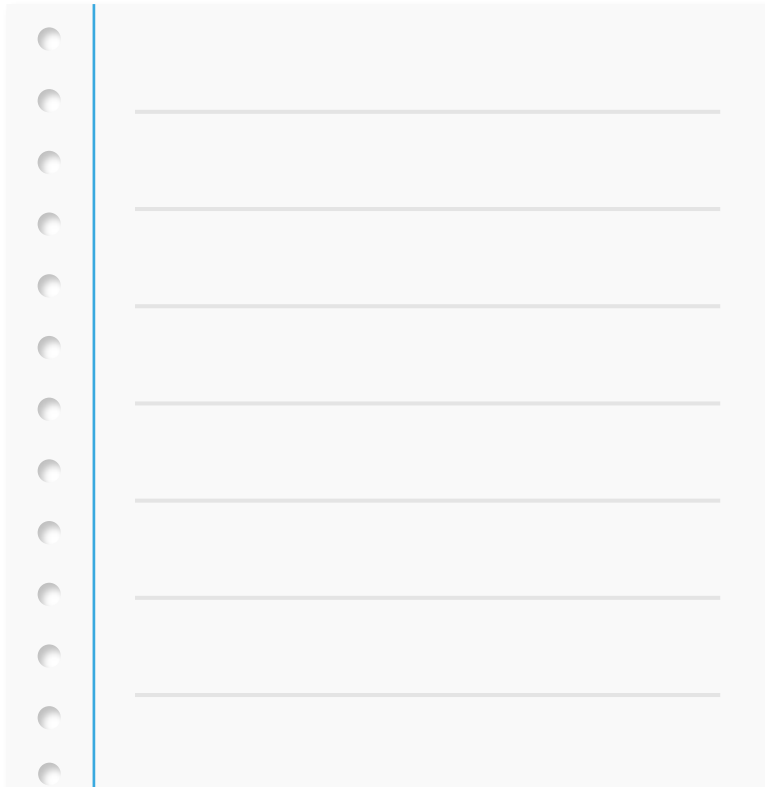
most of your
friends would
laugh at you
and not reply

A blank sheet of lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side, intended for writing a role-play script.



Context

Letters can become extensions of the psyche and produce florid and lyrical prose which would seem out of place in an email. In what scenarios would a written letter be more effective than an email?





Conventions

Written letters follow certain conventions. Below are some suggestions. Does the layout of a letter differ from country to country?



Layout – address, return address, date, salutation or greeting, sign off etc.

First paragraph – in most cases usually states the purpose of the letter and is relatively succinct

Content – follows on from the first paragraph. Usually ends with an invitation to reply.



Write a letter

Write a letter to an old friend. Be sure to express your curiosity, as well as inform them about your own situation. Use the conventions on the previous page to help structure your letter. Does your letter differ from if you would have sent them an email?

Who knows, maybe you can post the letter after the lesson?



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

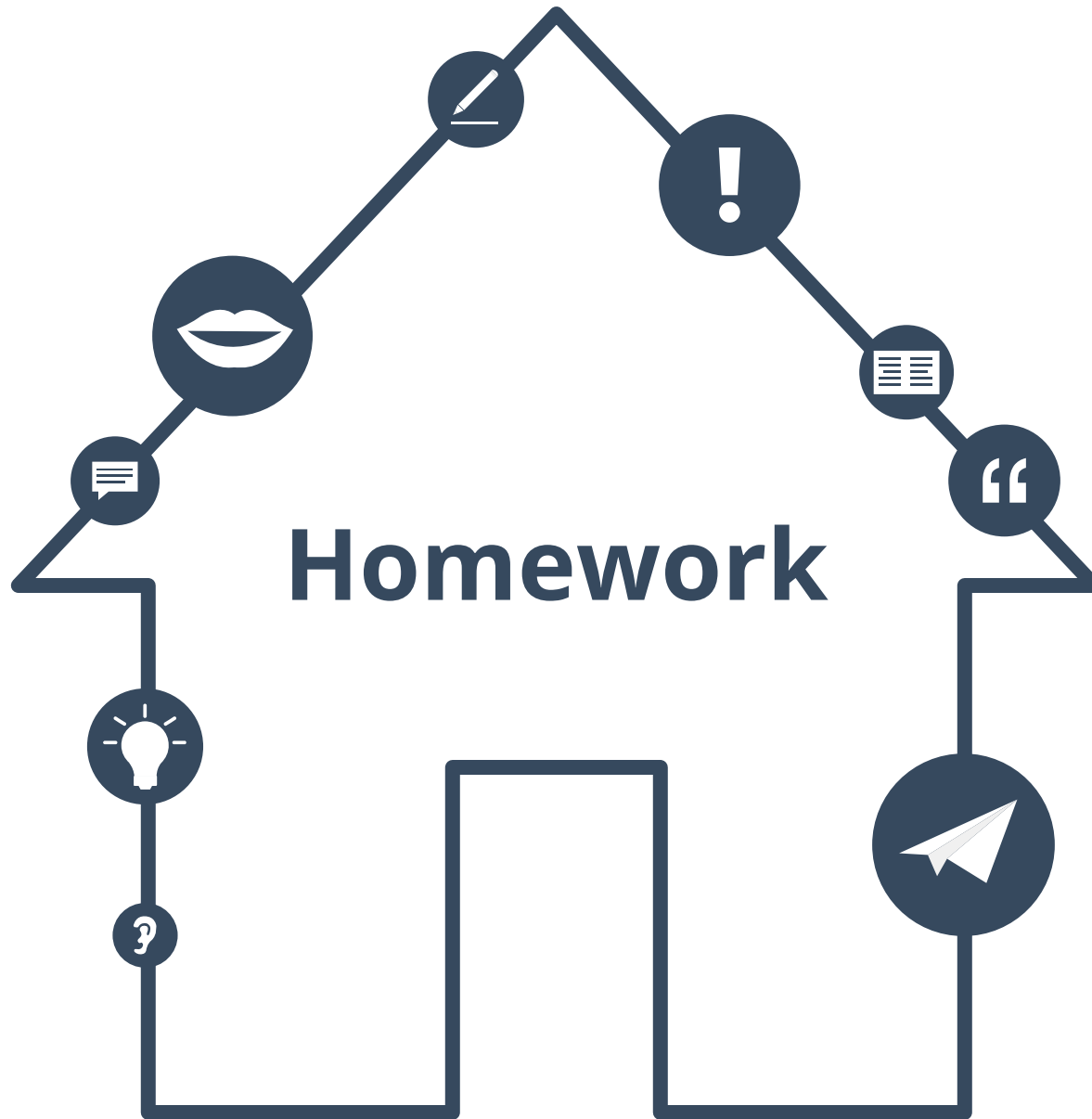




Answer key

1B, 2C, 3A, 4B

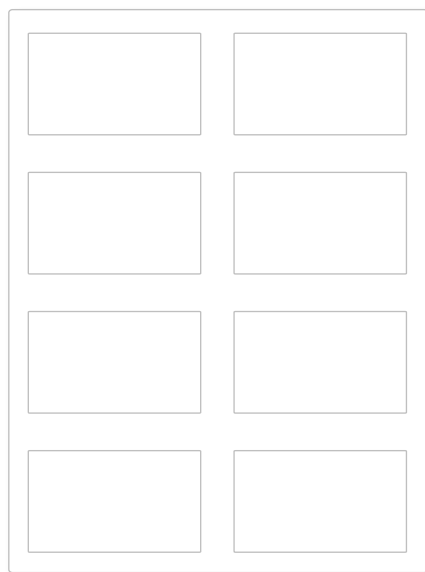
Activity P. 16





Vocabulary flashcards

**Create flashcards of the new vocabulary in this lesson.
Be sure to include the definition on the reverse side.**





Pen pals

Write an email to your friend suggesting you begin correspondence by snail mail. Be sure to persuade them with good reasons why you should communicate in this way.

	-	□	×
To: _____			
Subject: Fancy becoming pen pals? I hope you have plenty of stamps!			
Dear _____			



About this material

Find out more at
www.lingoda.com

This material is provided by

lingoda



lingoda Who are we?



Why learn English online?



What kinds of English classes do we offer?



Who are our English teachers?



How do our English certificates work?



We also have a language blog!