

Language Detective

Aims: To decipher an unknown letter by considering and discovering a specific language and culture.

Level: Primary 2 (age 9-11)

Duration: Two school hours (one hour is 45 min.)

Source: http://jaling.ecml.at/pdfdocs/suppots/slovenia/language_detective.pdf Author: Tanja Korošec. The teaching material has been modified and adapted to the Nordic/Baltic context with the kind permission of ECML.

Cross-curricular links: Languages, social sciences.

Objectives:

- To motivate students to find out from where the mysterious letter came and in what language it is written;
- To make students notice some cultural and linguistic features of a particular country;
- To motivate students translating and comparing the words circled in the letter;
- To help students find out which letters do not exist in the alphabet of their language of schooling (for instance ä, ü, ö, ß, w, å, æ, ø, etc.);
- To help students find their ways when looking for information;
- To motivate students to gather information from different sources;
- To motivate students to use dictionaries and learn how to use them;
- To motivate students to use the index in the atlas to find the country(ies) of interest.

Suggested procedure:

Preparation: The teacher brings an »authentic letter« from another country than the students' own and prepares a dossier for every group to fill in. Each group has a map of the world or an atlas and a dictionary.

Activities:

1. Students work as a whole class, in groups and individually. They try to help solve the mystery of a strange letter their teacher received the day before from an unknown sender. In groups, the students fill in their dossier, i.e. they gather information about the country from which the letter came and find out the meaning of the circled words in the letter.
2. Each student tries to briefly answer the questions in the letter in one or more foreign languages of their choice using an online translation tool or a dictionary, thus creating an own mysterious (plurilingual) letter.

Extra activities/Further development: We recommend to integrate other languages in this activity, that are relevant in your context, including minority and regional languages, e.g. languages represented in your classroom.

Task – A mysterious letter*

* This letter is one of a series of letters that the teacher receives from a mysterious sender.

Dear receiver

My name is Maja. I am eleven years old.

In my spare time I like to play football and I also play the piano. I have been playing the piano for the past three years. I also like to be with my friends and my family. My mother works as a dentist and my father is a cook. When I grow up I want to be an actor.

On Sundays my brother, sister, parents and I go riding our bikes in the forest. We have beautiful nature in our country. Almost every summer holiday we go travelling. Last year we went to France and saw The Eiffel Tower. It was very beautiful with all the lights.

My favorite dish is lasagne and I love chocolate and sweets.

I like to watch cartoons because they are really funny, especially the Disney ones. My favorite cartoon character is Goofy. How are you doing in your country? Are you a boy or a girl? How old are you?

Hugs and kisses

Maja

Kære modtager

Mit navn er Maja. Jeg er elleve år gammel.

I min fritid spiller jeg fodbold, og jeg spiller også klaver. Jeg har spillet klaver i de sidste tre år. Jeg kan også godt lide, at være sammen med mine venner og min familie. Min mor arbejder som tandlæge, og min far er kok. Når jeg bliver voksen, vil jeg gerne være skuespiller.

Om søndagen cykler min bror, søster, forældre og jeg i skoven. Naturen er smuk i vores land. Næsten hver sommer tager vi ud at rejse. Sidste år tog vi til Frankrig og så Eiffel Tårnet. Det var meget smukt med alle lysene.

Min yndlingsret er lasagne, og jeg elsker chokolade og slik.

Jeg elsker at se tegnefilm, især Disney. Min yndlings tegneseriefigur er Fedtmule.

Hvordan har du det i dit land? Er du en dreng eller pige? Hvor gammel er du?

Kys og kram

Maja

Kära mottagare,

Mitt **namn** är Maja. Jag är elva år gammal.

På fritiden gillar jag att **spela** fotboll och jag spelar också piano. Jag har spelat piano i tre år. Jag gillar också att vara med mina **vänner** och min **familj**. Min mamma jobbar som tandläkare och min pappa är kock. När jag blir stor vill jag bli skådespelare.

På söndagarna brukar min **bror**, min **syster**, mina föräldrar och jag cykla i skogen. Vi har så vacker natur i vårt land. Vi brukar resa någonstans nästan varje sommarlov. Förra året åkte vi till Frankrike och såg Eiffeltornet. Det var så fint med alla sina **lampor**.

Min favoriträtt är lasagne och jag älskar **choklad** och godis.

Jag gillar att titta på tecknad film för att de är så roliga, speciellt Disneyfilmerna. Min favoritseriefigur är **Långben**.

Vad brukar du göra där du bor ? / i ditt land? Är du en pojke eller flicka? Hur gammal är du?

Kram,

Maja

Hyvä vastaanottaja,

Minun nimeni on Maija. Olen 11-vuotias.

Vapaa-aikana pelaan jalkapalloa ja soitan pianoa. Olen soittanut pianoa viimeiset kolme vuotta. Tykkään myös viettää aikaa perheeni ja ystäväni kanssa. Äitini työskentelee hammaslääkärinä ja isäni kokkina. Isona minä haluan näyttelijäksi.

Sunnuntaisin veljeni, siskoni, vanhempani ja minä menemme metsään ajamaan polkupyörillä. Maamme luonto on todella kaunis. Lähes joka kesä matkustamme ulkomaille. Viime vuonna menimme Ranskaan ja näimme Eiffel-tornin. Se oli todella kaunis valoineen.

Lasagne on lempiruokaani ja rakastan karkkia ja suklaata.

Tykkään katsoa piirrettyjä, koska ne ovat hauskoja, erityisesti Disneyn. Lempihahmoni on Hessu Hopo.

Mitä sinulle kuuluu? Oletko tyttö vai poika? Kuinka vanha olet?

Terveisin,

Maija

Dear receiver

My name is Maja. I am eleven years old.

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