

Letter from Chief Seattle Writing Assignment



Directions

Using the letter from Chief Seattle as a model, write a letter to an authority figure (Mr. Thennis, Mayor Smith, Governor Bullock, President Obama, etc.) about an ill in society you believe exists. Your letter should be at least 600 words long and contain specific grievances about the state of the institution you wish to criticize.



The purpose of the letter, though, is not just to criticize a particular policy, but to look at broader cultural values. For instance, if you write about the example of the hat policy at Helena High, you could also criticize the value structure of the school that makes such a rule necessary.

The most challenging part of the assignment will be matching Chief Seattle's tone. He rarely uses direct, angry language, but instead relies on a subtle critique that builds over the piece. His strategy is to sound reasonable while delivering a cutting blow to the American government for its abuse of Native lands and peoples. Your goal is to do the same.

Your letter should be an attempt to educate, not criticize.

Your letter should include the same rhetorical and literary devices that Chief Seattle used, including:

- Rhetorical questions
- Symbolism
- Imagery
- Tone