

THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

Resource based on the activity created collaboratively by
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Kewenn-Performing Languages – B1/B2



THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

Level: intermediate/advanced level B1/B2; No of participants: 15; Time: 30/40'

General Objectives:

1. To use the past tense in order to describe a past action.
2. To practice writing formal/informal letters in Italian.
3. To understand and use idiomatic Italian.
4. To raise awareness about language and style: rhyme, assonance, alliteration, metaphor.
5. To acquire new lexis in order to describe feelings/emotions.
6. To check listening comprehension abilities.

Intercultural objectives: (It will much depend on the nature of the audience.)

1. To raise awareness about body language.
2. To see what movements or gestures are made while speaking or showing emotion.

Material and tools

Their bodies, some paper/post-it, pen, a classroom.

Activity description

- a) The tutor shows the students the picture with the letterboxes, asking *Che cos'è?* And he/she will then invite them to answer in Italian. Once the difference between *buca della posta/ cassetta della posta* or *casetta/ cassetta* have been pointed out, the poem can be read as a spur to the imagination as well as to encourage understanding and usage of a wider vocabulary and expressions. The meaning gets unpacked and discussed, then checked with the synonyms matching exercise. Depending on the specific student audience and interests the style and characteristics of the proposed poem can be analysed.
- b) Then 3 students pretend to have received a letter and act it out showing their specific emotional reaction. After this each of the remaining students is to write down the 3 different letter versions of what happened, describing in 3 separate letters the content of what was acted out. Each of them will be invited by their tutor to write 3 short (1 to 3 sentences) letters in total, i.e. one letter for each of the sketches acted out.
- c) Students swap letters (better if similar level students exchange their work among themselves) and take it in turn to read out someone else's work to the whole group.
- d) Then they should analyse the feelings behind the 3 versions of the letters which were enacted earlier as well as justify their choices.

After this activity is over the tutor can point out grammar inaccuracies or problems of lexis that might impair communication.

Homework: students take home the letter they read in class (not their own one) and look at ways of improving style, lexis, content. They can expand it to a maximum of 50% more words. They bring it back, read it and act it the following week.

Extended activity: students could then be offered the option to write an answer to the initial letter adding to the plot... They could come back and enact their newly written letter or even transform the activity into an ongoing project building up a story to represent as a drama activity at the end of term.

Reggersi a galla

Uno dei momenti più tristi
delle mie giornate senza sosta
è quando apro la cassetta della posta,
allora, come impetuosa cascata
si riversa su di me ogni cosa arrivata,
bollette d'ogni razza e colore
si affollano nel mio dolore
aumentando il triste bagaglio di disperazione
e, intanto, cresce la confusione.
Confusione mentale
di un mondo triviale
dove sono solito navigare
in un mare di debiti da pagare.
Ma la mia barca affonda
lontana è la sponda,
cerco di nuotare,
nuotare e pagare...
chissà se a riva potrò mai tornare?
Quando stanco mi fermo faccio il morticino e...
alla meno peggio...galleggio.....

(adattata da L Boscaini; autore: F De Cesi)

Collegiamo i sinonimi:

D'ogni razza e colore	rozzo scurrile
Triviale	diversissimi
bolletta	che si spinge avanti con forza, veemente, violento
Impetuoso	conto da pagare
Reggersi	di un morto (piccolo o animale o dim)
A galla	tenersi, mantenersi
Il morticino	sulla superficie dell'acqua
Sponda	in qualche modo, più male che bene
Alla meno peggio	galleggiare
Reggersi a galla	riva

Tra la posta cosa c'era? (Era posta piacevole o seccante?)

◇ una minaccia ◇ un messaggio d'amore; ◇ una richiesta di denaro; ◇ un invito a nozze

Quali potrebbero essere delle lettere felici? Quali tristi?

