

Writing a note to your Math Buddy

Your notes to your Math Buddy should have a general form:

Start Response with Praise & Prompts Personal Closing Signature

Friendly Start

(1 short paragraph)

Start notes to your Math Buddy with a greeting; use their name and a friendly opening sentence. Let them know you are going to give them something to do (the purpose of the letter). If they got the answer right you can say good job, but let them know you have questions or things you'd like them to work on. If they got the answer wrong, you can say something like "good start", "you are almost there" or "thanks for working on the problem" then let them know you have some ideas or hints for them that will help them get the right answer. This lets them know right away if they are wrong so they keep on reading.

Problem Solving Response

(1-2 short paragraphs *per problem* student attempted; 2-3 if they just did one problem)

Use the "Problem Solving Analysis" approach on the back of this paper to write notes to yourself about your buddy's work. This will help you figure out what you want to focus on. Prioritize your comments. For example, it is pointless to ask them to fix an arithmetic error when they don't understand the problem and their work will not lead them to the correct solution anyway. Include both Praise and Prompts in your letter.

Praise

What did your Math Buddy do that was good and we want to encourage them to continue? **Try to address their mathematics here, not just their handwriting or picture drawing.**

Prompts (Suggestions and/or Questions)

What will help them move forward? Refer to your scores to find the most important things to focus on. It is ok to refer to their scores, but always be positive and don't make that the main focus.

Personal

If they sent you a note and asked questions, feel free to respond to them here. Possibly ask a new, brief question to keep the dialogue going.

Closing (1 short paragraph – 1 sentence is OK)

Close with an encouraging phrase. For example: "I am excited to read your continued work on the Points Keep Adding Up".

Signature

Sign your name

Problem Solving Analysis

- 1. Score each problem using the State Scoring Guide. Use the attached scoring sheet to help organize your thoughts. The teachers have requested that we not be too lenient!**
- 2. As you score make notes about each of the Dimensions (see ideas listed below).**

Making Sense of the Task

- Can you tell if they fully understand the mathematics and the problem?
- What does the student understand?
- What are the student's main problems?

Representing and Solving the Task

- Can you see if they used a strategy that relies on skill, not luck?
- If they used models, pictures, diagrams, and/or symbols, are they effective in helping find the solution and are they complete?

Communication and Reasoning

- Did they tell all of the important steps taken to solve the problem?
- Is there anything you're wondering about?
- Explains the steps that they do explain in such a way that another student would understand
- Is the solution clearly identified?

Accuracy

- Is the solution supported by the work?
- Did they make few mistakes of consequence?
- Did they use largely correct vocabulary?
- Did they use units correctly whenever they used units?

Reflecting & Evaluating

- Does the solution make sense in the context of the problem?
- Are the calculations and strategies reviewed and justify the solution?

- 3. Use your notes to create a list things the student did well (praise) and of questions and suggestions (prompt) for your own reference. Some ideas are listed below.**
 - Create a list of questions that might help the student to learn something past what s/he already knows.
 - If the student answer is wrong, write a few questions that will lead the student in the correct direction using their own strategy if possible.
 - If the student answer is correct, write a few questions that will help improve their explanation or extend their knowledge.
 - Be specific and clear! For example: "Please explain more" is not as useful as "Where did the 11 in your problem come from?" or "Is there a calculation you can show me to explain how you got 16?"

Buddy:		Score	Comments
MS	Making Sense (What?)		
RS	Representing and Solving (How?)		
CR	Communicating Reasoning (Path?)		
RE	Reflecting and Evaluating (Defend!)		
ACC	Accuracy (The Answer)		
Buddy:		Score	Comments
MS	Making Sense (What?)		
RS	Representing and Solving (How?)		
CR	Communicating Reasoning (Path?)		
RE	Reflecting and Evaluating (Defend!)		
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