

Heritage Arabic eBook

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Title: You've Got Mail!

Domain: This activity develops the students' ability to progressively create with and comprehend different forms of language including words, phrases, sentences, questions, connected sentences, and paragraphs that are appropriate to their performance level (novice, intermediate, advanced). Some examples include:

- Writing short social media posts and responding to the posts of their peers
- Giving a formal presentation on a matter of importance to their local community

Modes of communication: Interpretative, Presentational

Proficiency/Performance Range: Novice-high to Intermediate-high

Objectives:

- (1) Students will be able to identify and produce different types of written genres, such as letters and emails.
- (2) Students will be able to create text types that correspond with their current proficiency level and then move to creating the next level of text type.

Pre-Class Preparation:

1. Prepare a few examples of different genres of written correspondence (texts, FB posts, blogs, job cover letter, e-mail etc.) to hand out to students during the activity. It is best to gather authentic examples in order to present register contrasts as realistically as possible. Make sure that when you prepare examples you carefully consider what type of register you would most likely use in each type of correspondence.

Step One: IN CLASS

1. In a large group, have students discuss in Arabic or English (depending on the proficiency level in spoken Arabic of your students) the different types of written correspondence there are, and what register(s) of Arabic are most appropriate for each. These may be text messages, FB posts and comments on social media, blogs, e-mails, postcards, letters, etc. It would be helpful if you could bring in as many different examples as possible to share with the students. Ask students: What factors help determine the preferred register? Does the register depend solely on text type, or does it also depend on who the recipient of the correspondence is? How?
2. Brainstorm and write on the board in Arabic the different types of written correspondence, and their corresponding registers. As you do this, ask the students what register is appropriate for each. As you write on the board, arrange the text types from most formal to least (i.e. job letter to text message) so the students can see the range and overlap of registers used for each.
3. Divide students into groups, giving each group a few examples (printed) of different genres of written correspondence (texts, FB posts, blogs, job cover letter, e-mail etc.)

4. Have students read them for comprehension, and pay attention to language, form, and register.

Step Two: AT HOME

1. Have students collect at least one example of written correspondence at home. This could be a letter from a relative or a friend, an e-mail, etc.
2. Have students read it for comprehension, preparing to discuss it in class. Some possible questions to address: What is the type correspondence? Which language register does it use? What are some characteristics of its style?
3. Have students write an e-mail in Arabic (the mixing of Formal and colloquial is appropriate here) to a family member or friend, and bring in to class.

Step Three: IN CLASS

1. Have students work in groups, reading the correspondence they brought from home, and discussing the type, register and style of each correspondence.
2. In the same groups, have them exchange the e-mails they wrote at home and read them for comprehension. As a group, have students respond in writing to each email.
3. Have them discuss how they could turn this e-mail addressed to a family member or friend into an e-mail addressed to a professor (or, as an alternative, a letter to their congressional representative or to their boss). What changes in language register are necessary? What conventions would need to be changed?
4. Have students work together to turn the e-mails addressed to family or friends into e-mails addressed to professors.

Step Four: AT HOME

1. Have students work on their more formal e-mails to a professor according to the conventions and norms you have been discussing in class (formal register).

Step Five: IN CLASS

1. Have students exchange and peer review the e-mails. Correct grammar, syntax, spelling, etc.
2. Have students make corrections on their e-mails.

Step Six: AT HOME

1. Have students edit their e-mails according to the corrections their peers have made.
2. Students should bring these to class for submission to the instructor.