

# Letters to Winter

**Grade Level:** Grades 1 -5

**Language Arts Skills:**

*Florida Sunshine State Standards:*

*Grade 1: LA.1.4.2.4*

*Grade 2: LA.2.4.2.4*

*Grade 3: LA.3.4.2.4*

*Grade 4: LA.4.4.2.4*

*Grade 5: LA.5.4.2.4*

**Description:** Students will learn how to write a friendly letter and then submit their letter to Winter via e-mail to receive a special reply.

**Materials:**

- “The Tale of the Tail: Winter’s Story” story
- “Letters to Winter” worksheet
- Computer access

**Additional Materials:**

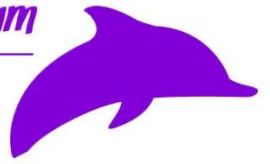
- Book – “Winter’s Tale” by Joanne Benazzi Friedland – available for purchase online (optional)
- Book – “Winter’s Tail” by Juliana Hatkoff, Isabella Hatkoff, and Craig Hatkoff – available for purchase online (optional)
- Activity Book – “Winter: The dolphin who lost her tail” – available free online (optional)
- Video – “Winter: The Dolphin that Could” – available for purchase online (optional)

**Preparations:**

Make enough copies of the “Letters to Winter” worksheets for each student to have.

**Procedures:**

- 1) Discuss with students the parts of a friendly letter (heading, greeting, body, closing, signature, and postscript) and what each part is composed of.
- 2) Familiarize students with Winter the dolphin and her story. You may use any of the books listed in the additional materials, or the story “The Tale of a Tail: Winter’s Story” included within the lesson plan.
- 3) Pass out the “Letters to Winter” worksheet.
- 4) Read aloud or have the students read aloud the letter from Panama to Winter, located on Part One of the worksheet.
- 5) Re-read the letter, having students identify and label each part of a friendly letter.
- 6) Have the students complete Part Two on an individual basis.
- 7) If students choose to type their letter and have internet access, have them send their friendly letter via e-mail to [Winter@CMAquarium.org](mailto:Winter@CMAquarium.org) for a fun response video from Winter the dolphin!



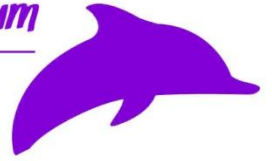
# *The Tale of the Tail: Winter's Story*

On the calm waters of Mosquito Lagoon one December morning, a crab trap buoy floated gently on the surface of the water. Beneath the buoy was a long rope and tied to the long rope was a crab trap. To a young dolphin calf, it looked like the perfect toy! The dolphin calf grabbed the rope in her mouth and began to play. She swam back and forth, up and down, twisting and turning around the rope. Suddenly, she realized that the rope was tangled all around her body. It was twisted around her fin on top, called a dorsal fin. It was twisted around her fins on the side, called pectoral fins. Most tightly, it was twisted around her tail, called her flukes. The young dolphin needed help and quick!

Luckily, a fisherman nearby saw the crab trap buoy bouncing around on the top of the water. He directed his boat closer and saw the little dolphin all wrapped up in the line of the crab trap. He called for help and waited until a rescue team arrived. The rescue team saw that the little dolphin would need the care of an animal doctor, called a veterinarian, and took her all the way across the state of Florida to Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Once she was at Clearwater Marine Aquarium, the young dolphin was named Winter after the season in which she was found. The veterinarian and the animal care team at the aquarium realized that Winter's tail was very damaged from her experience with the crab trap – so damaged that she would never be able to use it again. Sure enough, her tail slowly began to fall off until it was completely gone.

Winter didn't let her missing tail slow her down. She learned how to swim side-to-side, like a fish swims. But the animal care team at CMA knew that swimming like that could hurt Winter's back – a dolphin's tail is supposed to move up and down! They worked with a group of people from Hanger Prosthetics, a company that makes artificial legs and arms for people. The doctors at Hanger designed a new tail for Winter. When Winter wears it, she can swim like a normal dolphin does – up and down!



# Letters to Winter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part One Directions:** Read this letter from Panama to Winter. Use the words from the word bank to identify the parts of a friendly letter.

Word Bank					
Heading	Closing	Signature	Body	Greeting	Postscript

*Winter Dolphin*  
*Winter Zone, Clearwater Marine Aquarium*  
*249 Windward Passage*  
*Clearwater, FL 33767*  
*September 21, 2011*

1: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Winter,

2: \_\_\_\_\_

*Hello! I knew you would be very busy today with all of your interviews and autograph sessions, but I wanted to drop you a line to say congratulations on the premiere of your big movie! I can't believe I get to share my tank with such a big movie star!*

*Of course, I played a pretty big role in the movie too. As your closest friend and adopted family member, they had to give me some credit – I did help raise you after all. I hope that they give me plenty of time on the big screen and shot me from all the right angles. I hear the camera adds ten pounds for humans. I hope the same isn't true for dolphins – I already weigh over 500 pounds!*

3: \_\_\_\_\_

*Good luck today with the big premiere. Nicholas and Hope both send their love and best wishes as well. We're all so proud of you!*

4: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your best friend,*

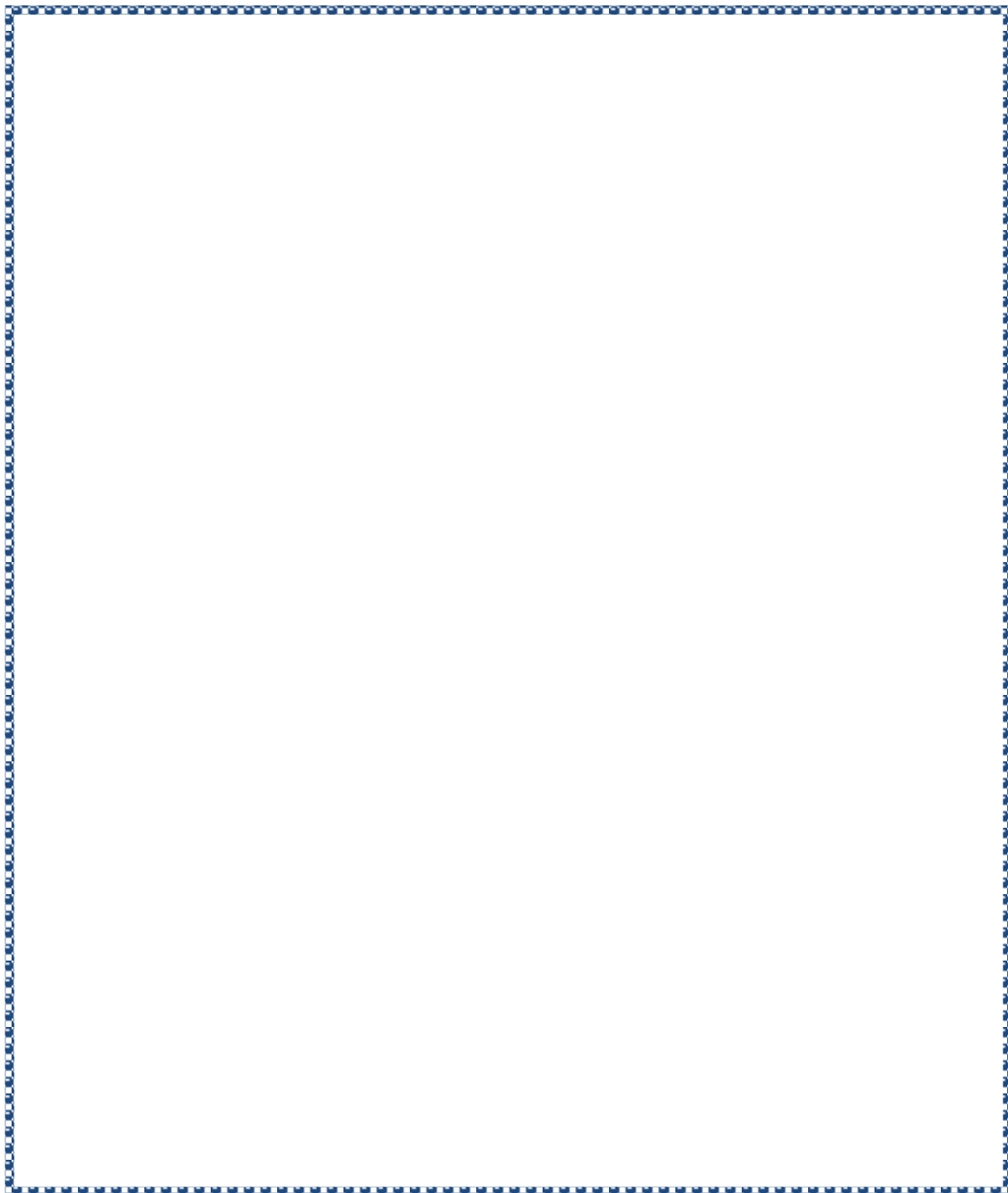
*Panama*

5: \_\_\_\_\_

*P.S. If anyone wants to interview me, have them set it up with my trainers. Thanks!*

6: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Two Directions:** Now, write your own friendly letter to Winter! You can write it on the space provided below, on a separate piece of paper, or type it on a computer. Remember to include a heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature! You can add a postscript too if you wish!

A large rectangular box with a decorative blue and white checkered border, intended for writing a letter. The box is empty and occupies most of the lower half of the page.