

FORMAL AND INFORMAL LETTERS

A good letter should consist of:

- a) an appropriate greeting (Dear Sir/Madam, Dear Kathy, Dear Mr Brown)
- b) an introduction clearly stating the reason you are writing
- c) a main body in which the subject is developed. Begin a new paragraph for each main point
- d) a final paragraph in which you sum up the topic or express your wish for something to be done
- e) an appropriate ending (Yours/Best wishes, + first name, Yours sincerely, Yours faithfully, + full name).

Style in Letters

The characteristic of formal style in letters are:

- The greeting (Dear Mrs Lee, Dear Sir,)
- Frequent use of the passive
- Formal language (complex sentences, non-colloquial English)
 - No abbreviated forms
- The ending (Yours sincerely, /Yours faithfully)

The characteristic of informal style in letters are:

- The greeting (Dear Alex, Dear Dad)
- Informal language and style (idioms, colloquial English)
 - Abbreviated forms, pronouns omitted
- The ending (Yours/Love/Best wishes/Regards,Anthony)

REMEMBER!!!

- Informal (friendly) letter have only one address (yours) whereas formal Letters have two (yours and the recipient's)
- Friendly letters begin with Dear + first name and end with Love/Yours/Best wishes + first name
 - Formal letters begin with:
 - a) Dear Sir/Madam and end with Yours faithfully + full name
 - b) Dear Mr/Mrs + surname and end with Yours sincerely + full name
- Semi-formal letters can begin with Dear Mr/Mrs + surname and end Best wishes/Yours + first name/full name

LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - reason for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - complaint(s) and justification

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - suggested action to be taken, Closing remarks

Full name

- Letter of complaint is normally written in a formal style.
- Letters should start with an appropriate greeting (e.g. Dear Sir, Dear Brown, etc)
- Mild or strong language can be used depending on the feelings of the writer or the seriousness of the complaint, but abusive language must never be used
- You should state the reason for the complaint in the first paragraph
- Start a new paragraph for each different aspect of the topic
- Any complaints you make should be supported with a justification
- Complaints and justification can be linked with appropriate linking words and phrases

Useful language for Letters of Complaint

Opening Remarks:

- I am writing to complain about/regarding/on account of/because of/on the subject of...
- I am writing to draw your attention to...
- I am writing in connection with...
- I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction with...
- I am afraid to say I have numbers of complaints about...
- I am sorry to say that I was very disappointed with...
- I was appalled at...
- I feel I must protest/complain about...

Useful phrases:

- We ought to discuss the matter...
- To make matters worse...
- I was very disappointed to find that...
- I would be grateful if you could...
- I should have been informed that...
- The first problem was... Another problem was... The most visible problem...
- I hope you will understand that I was very dissatisfied...
- I believe you can appreciate how disappointed I was when...

Linking words:

- Even though, however, furthermore, firstly, finally etc.

Closing Remarks:

- I would like to hear your explanation for the above problems...
- I would therefore be grateful if you could give me a full refund...
- I would like a full refund as soon as possible...
- I would like to have all or part of my money refunded...
- I am not satisfied with...
- I hope/assume you will replace...
- I trust the situation will improve...
- I hope the matter will be resolved...
- I hope we can sort this matter out amicably
- I look forward to hearing from you in your earliest convenience to offer me a complete refund

- I feel I am entitled to a partial refund in addition to an apology for the inconvenience caused
- I insist you replace the item at once...
- I demand a full refund...
- I hope that I will not be forced to take further action
- I look forward to hearing your early reply
- I look forward to receiving a prompt reply

LETTERS OF APOLOGY

- A letter of apology can be either formal or informal. It can be written when someone has made a mistake, has failed to perform a duty or is not able to fulfil a promise.
- The main body contains reasons for the inconvenience caused.
- In the final paragraph you can express your hope to improve the situation or promise to make up for any problems that have been caused.

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - reason for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - reasons to explain the inconvenience caused

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - express understanding/regret or promise to make up for the situation

Closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters of Apology

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- I am writing to apologise for...
- I must apologise for...
- Please accept my sincerest apologies for...
- How can I apologise enough for...
- I must apologise profusely...

Informal

- I hope you will understand when I say that...
- What can I say, except I'm sorry that...
- I'm sorry for...
- I owe you an apology...
- I'm so sorry if I upset you in any way...
- I can't describe how sorry I am and how guilty I feel...

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- Once again, sincerest apologies for...
- I hope you will accept my apologies...
- I hope my apologies will be/are accepted...

Informal

- I hope you believe me when I say how sorry I am...
- I can't tell you how sorry I am...
- I beg you to forgive me for...
- There is no excuse for ... and I hope you'll forgive me...

LETTERS OF INVITATION

- Letters of invitation can be formal or informal depending on the situation and who we are writing to. They usually contain some additional information, for example: latest news, description of the event (party, wedding, etc.) place (hotel, house, etc.) and/or directions to the place.

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - reason(s) for writing (to invite)

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - details / directions

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters of Invitation

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- We would be honoured if you...
- I cordially invite you to...
- Your presence would be appreciated at...
- You are invited to attend...

Informal

- I'm writing to invite you to...
- I'd love it if you could come to...
- We're organising a ... and would love it if you could come

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- We would be grateful if you could...
- Please indicate whether you will be able to attend

Informal

- I hope you'll be able to make it...
- Hope you can come
- Looking forward to seeing you then
- Please let me know as soon as possible

Directions can be introduced by using some of the following expressions:

- In case you don't know the way...
- I'll give you some directions...
- I have included some directions...
- Here are a few directions so you don't get lost
- In case you do not know the exact of the...

Accepting an Invitation

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - thanks for invitation

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - acceptance of invitation, further comments

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters Accepting an Invitation

Opening Remarks:

Formal:

- I am writing to thank you for the kind invitation
- Thank you for the kind invitation which I would be honoured to accept

Informal

- Thanks for the invitation to ..., sounds lovely...

Closing Remarks:

Formal:

- I look forward to seeing you...
- We wait the event with great anticipation

Informal:

- See you then
- We're really looking forward to it

Refusing an Invitation

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - thanks for invitation

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - refusal of invitation, giving reasons

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters Refusing an Invitation

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- We thank you for your recent invitation to ... but...

Informal

- Thank for the invitation, but...
- Thanks for inviting me to ..., but I'm afraid I can't come

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- I am sorry to miss the opportunity of...
- Thank you again for the invitation...
- I hope we will have the opportunity to meet

Informal

- I hope we can get together some other time
- I'm really sorry we'll have to miss it

LETTERS OF APPLICATION

- A letter of application may be written when we apply for a permanent/temporary job or educational course
- It is important to include only the information that is relevant, and to use a suitable style, formal or semi-formal
- The first paragraph mentions the reason for writing. It can also include the name of the job/course you are applying for and where you saw it advertised
- The main body paragraphs can include:
 - what you are doing now
 - what work experience you have
 - your academic qualifications
 - the personal qualities which make you suitable for the job or course
- In your final paragraph, you can:
 - summarise the points in the main body
 - thank the person for considering your application
 - ask the person to consider you for the job/course
 - mention the possibility of further communication
- Present tenses are normally used but some past tenses can be used to describe your past experience. You may also use future constructions

Applying for a Job

Introduction

Paragraph 1

- reason for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2 - 3 - 4

- qualifications/training - previous experience/ qualities and skills

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters of Application (for a Job)

Opening Remarks:

- I am writing to apply for the post/job/position of/which I saw advertised in...
- I am writing with regard to your advertisement...
- I am writing in response to your advertisement...

Reference to experience:

- ...for the last/past year I have been working as... since/for
- I have had experience of...
- Two years ago I was employed as...
- I worked as... before...

Closing Remarks:

- I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience...
- Please contact me regarding any queries you may have...
- I enclose my CV and I would be glad to attend an interview at any time convenient to you...

- If you wish me to attend an interview, I am available at any time...
- I look forward to hearing from you in due course...

Applying for a Course

Introduction

Paragraph 1

- reason for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2 - 3 - 4

- qualifications / reasons for wanting to take the course

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters of Application (for a Course)

Opening Remarks:

- I would like to apply for admission to the ... beginning
- I would like to be considered for...

Reference to experience:

- I hold a certificate/degree in
- I am due to take examinations in...
- I have taken/passed the ... examination...
- I hold the following qualification...
- I have completed the following courses/degree course
- My degree is in English...

Closing Remarks:

- I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience...
- I look forward to meeting/hearing from you
- Please contact me regarding any queries you may have
- I enclose further details of my education and qualifications to date...
- I hope that you will consider me for entry
- I look forward to receiving your response in the near future

PRZYKŁAD LISTU:

Letter of application

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to apply for a place on the History MA course which commences this September at Winston University.

I am 25 years old and I have completed a History degree at Macbriney University, where I received first class honours. Prior to this I was a pupil in grammar school, where I obtained 9 GCSEs and four A levels in History, English, Mathematics and Geography.

Since the completion of my BA I have spent one year working as assistant historian. This work was extremely enjoyable and I am now anxious to specialise by gaining further qualifications before embarking on my chosen career in this field.

I enclose details of my education and qualifications in the hope that you will consider me for entry. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
XYZ

ASKING FOR/GIVING ADVICE

Letters asking for or giving advice can be formal , informal or semi-formal depending on the situation.

A letter asking for advice can be sent to a friend, a consultant or an advice column in a magazine. Details of the problem should be mentioned.

A letter giving advice should contain suggestions introduced with appropriate language.

Asking for Advice

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - reason(s) for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - description of problem(s)

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters Asking for Advice

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- I am writing to ask if you could help me with
- I would appreciate it if you could give me some advice about
- I am writing to ask for your advice
- I would be grateful if you could offer your advice
- Could you possibly offer your advice
- I wonder if you could help me with a problem

Informal

- I'm writing to ask for your advice
- Can you give me your advice
- I've got a problem and I need your advice

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- I would appreciate it if you could give me your advice as soon as possible
- I look forward to receiving your advice
- It would be of great help if you could advise me

Informal

- What do you think I should do?
- Please let me know what you think I should do
- Please tell me what to do

Giving Advice

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - thanks for letter/express understanding of problem

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - suggestion(s) + reason(s)

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Useful Language for Letters Giving Advice

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- Thank you for your letter requesting
- I am writing in reply to your letter asking for advice about
- I hope the following advice will be of some help to you

Informal

- I just got your letters and I think I can help you
- I was sorry to hear about your problem. Here's what I think you should do

Suggestions can be introduced with expressions such as:

Formal

- I strongly recommend that
- I would suggest that
- I believe the best course of action is
- I would advise you to
- You should/You ought to/If I were you I would

Informal

- Why don't you
- It would be a good idea to
- What you should do is
- How about.../I thin you should
- The best advice I can give you is

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- I trust you will accept this advice
- I hope this will be of help
- I would very much like to know if this was helpful

Informal

- Hope this has helped
- Let me know what happens

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS FOR LETTERS GIVING INFORMATION

Opening Remarks:

Formal

- I am writing in reply to your letter asking for information about
- I am writing to inform you about
- In reply to your query

Informal

- This is what I found out
- Remember the information you wanted?
- You wanted me to tell you a few things about

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- I hope that I have been of some assistance to you
- Please inform me if I can be of any further assistance
- I hope I have answered some of your questions
- Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information

Informal

- I hope this will help you
- Let me know if you need any more help

ASKING FOR INFORMATION

Introduction

- where advertisement seen
- reason for writing

Main paragraph

- time of coming
- length of staying
- price
- children facilities

Main paragraph

- ask for more information

Main paragraph

- facilities
- sport available

Conclusion

Closing remarks - ask for a reply

Full name

Greetings and endings:

- if you don't know the name:

G: Dear Sir/Madam

E: Yours faithfully

- if you know the name:

G: Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ...

E: Yours sincerely

Useful phrases:

- With reference to your advertisement in...
- I am writing to ask for more information about
- I would be grateful if you could tell me

- Could you also give me some more information about
- I would also like to know if there is
- Could you tell me how many
- I look forward to hearing from you

MAKING A REQUEST

Introduction

Paragraph 1 - reason for writing, thanking

Main Body

Paragraphs 2-3 - describe our problem/ask for help

Conclusion

Final Paragraph - closing remarks

Full name

Opening remarks:

Formal

- I am writing to inquire about/in connection with

Informal

- I want you to tell me
- Can you let me know

To introduce first request:

Formal

- Could you possibly send
- I would be grateful if you could
- Would it be possible for you to tell/send me
- I would appreciate some information about

Informal

- Can you send/tell me
- I want to know

To introduce further request:

Formal

- Could you also please send me
- Another matter I need information on is
- I would also like some information on

Informal

- Can you also find out
- I also want to know

Closing Remarks:

Formal

- I look forward to receiving
- I would appreciate it if you could inform me as soon as possible

Informal

- Please, let me know
- Send me the details
- Tell me soon

LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

Personal opinion:	In my opinion, / In my view, / To my mind, / To my way of thinking, / Personally I believe that / It strikes me that / I feel very strongly that / I am inclined to believe that / It seems to me that / As far as I am concerned, / I think that the world would be a much better place without nuclear power.
To list advantages and disadvantages:	<p>One advantage of / Another advantage of / One other advantage of / A further advantage of / The main advantage of / The greatest advantage of / The first advantage of travelling to work by bicycle is that it is cheap; you don't have to pay for fuel.</p> <p>One disadvantage of / Another disadvantage of / One other disadvantage of / A further disadvantage of / The main disadvantage of / The greatest disadvantage of / The first disadvantage of travelling to work by bicycle is that you have no protection from the wind or rain.</p>
To list points:	Firstly, / First of all, / In the first place, / Secondly, / Thirdly, / Finally, / To start with, people who live in the country suffer far fewer health problems than those who live in the city.
To list points in a specific sequence:	<p>BEGINNING- First, / To start with, / To begin with, / First of all, wash the wound with cold water.</p> <p>CONTINUING- Secondly, / After this/that, / Afterwards, / Then, / Next, wrap a bandage around the cut.</p> <p>CONCLUDING- Finally, / Lastly, / Last but not least, place the patient in a comfortable position and allow them to rest.</p>
To add more points on the same topic:	<p>What is more, / Furthermore, / Apart from this/that, / In addition (to this), / Moreover, / Besides (this), / ...not to mention the fact that cars are extremely expensive to maintain.</p> <p>Cars are also extremely expensive to maintain.</p> <p>Cars are extremely expensive to maintain too.</p> <p>Not only are cars harmful to environment, but they are extremely expensive to maintain as well.</p> <p>Cars are both harmful to the environment and expensive to maintain.</p>
To refer to other sources:	With reference to / According to the article in yesterday's Guardian, the unemployment rate is falling in Britain.
To express cause:	<p>The government decided not to fund the scheme because / owing to the fact that / due to the fact that / on the grounds that / since / as it seemed likely to fail.</p> <p>In view of / Because of / Owing to the scheme's high chances of failure, the government decided not to fund it.</p> <p>The scheme is likely to fail; for this reason the government has decided not to fund it.</p> <p>Seeing that the scheme is likely to fail, the government has decided not to fund it.</p> <p>The government has decided to fund the scheme now that its planners have redesigned it.</p>
To express effect:	He passed his exams; thus, / therefore, / so / consequently, / as a result, / as a

	consequence, / for this reason, he was able to go to university.
To express purpose:	The government decided not to introduce the death penalty for fear (that) innocent people would die. The government decided not to introduce the death penalty so that innocent people would not die. The government decided not to introduce the death penalty so as to / in order to avoid the deaths of innocent people. The government decided not to introduce the death penalty in case it resulted in the death of innocent people.
To emphasise what you say:	Clearly, / Obviously, / Of course, / Needless to say, if everyone were allowed to carry a gun, the crime rate would rise considerably.
To express reality:	It is a fact that / In effect, / In fact, / As a matter of fact, / The fact of the matter is (that) / Actually, / In practice, / Indeed, / To tell you the truth, a crash helmet would be quite useless in the event of a serious motorcycle accident.
To express the difference between appearance and reality:	Initially, / At first, / At first sight, his injuries seemed minor, but when the doctors examined him, they discovered he had fractured his skull.
To give examples:	For instance, / For example, by reducing your intake of red meat you can decrease your chances of having a heart attack in later life. By reducing your intake of foods such as / like beef and lamb you can decrease your chances of having a heart attack in later life. If you want to decrease your chances of having a heart attack in later life, you should reduce your intake of meat, particularly / in particular, / especially red meat.
To make general statements:	As a general rule, / Generally, / In general, / On the whole, people who exercise regularly suffer fewer stress-related problems than who's who don't.
To make partially correct statements:	Up to a point, / To a certain extent, / To some extent, / In a sense, / In a way, this is true as women in society are far less likely to use physical violence than men.
To express limit of knowledge:	To the best of my knowledge, / As far as I know, there is no firm proof of the existence of aliens.
To state other people's opinion:	It is popularly believed that / People often claim that / It is often alleged that / Some people argue that / Many argued that / A lot of people think that / A lot of people believed that the earth is the only planet in our solar system that has ever supported life. Contrary to popular belief, the earth is not the only planet in our solar system to have supported life.
To make contrasting points:	It is a known fact that smoking causes cancer, yet / however / nevertheless, / but / at the same time / even so, / still, / nonetheless, millions of people around the world continue to smoke. Although / Even though / Regardless of the fact that / Despite the fact that / In spite the fact that / While it is a known fact that smoking causes cancer, millions of people around the world continue to smoke.
To express balance (the other side of the argument):	Dogs are good pets in that they provide companionship; however, / but / on the other hand. / Although / yet, / at the same time, / in contrast, feeding and grooming a dog can be expensive and time-consuming.

<p>Negative addition:</p>	<p>Neither the prime minister nor his deputy knew anything about the experiment.</p> <p>Neither of them knew anything about the experiment.</p> <p>The prime minister didn't know anything about the experiment; nor / neither did his deputy.</p> <p>The prime minister didn't know anything about the experiment and his deputy didn't either.</p>
<p>To express exception:</p>	<p>He read all the books but / apart from / except (for) one: "Oliver Twist".</p>
<p>To clarify / rephrase:</p>	<p>In other words, / That is to say, / To put in another way, if people made more of an effort to protect the environment, the world would be a much healthier place to live in.</p>