

Letters:

➤ Formal letters (recommendation letters, cover letters, resignation letters, legal correspondence, company communications, etc.);

➤ Informal letters (e-mail, letters to friends, etc.).

Typically, a business letter is reserved for only the most important of job-related or other professional communications

Since it's such a formal mode of communication, you'll want to make sure you have all of the formatting in place correctly. That's especially true if you're sending a hard copy to the recipient rather than an email. In English there are a number of conventions that should be used when writing a formal or business letter. Furthermore, you try to write as simply and as clearly as possible, and not to make the letter longer than necessary. Remember not to use informal language like contractions.

Addresses:

1) Your Address

The return address should be written in the top right-hand corner of the letter.

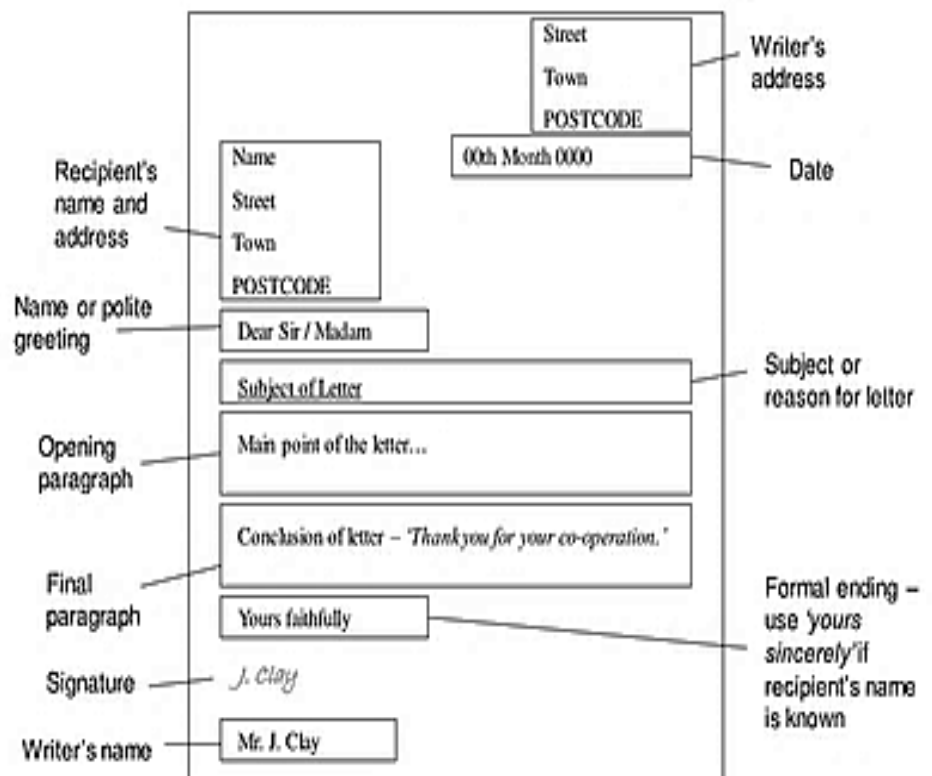
2) The Address of the person you are writing to

The inside address should be written on the left, starting below your address.

Date:

Different people put the date on different sides of the page. You can write this on the right or the left on the line after the address you are writing to. Write the month as a word.

Formal Letter Writing



Salutation or greeting:

1) Dear Sir or Madam,

If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use this. It is always advisable to try to find out a name.

2) Dear Mr Jenkins,

If you know the name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) and the surname only. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, you can use Ms, which is for married and single women.

Ending a letter:

1) Yours Faithfully

If you do not know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

2) Yours Sincerely

If you know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

3) Your signature

Sign your name, then print it underneath the signature. If you think the person you are writing to might not know whether you are male or female, put your title in brackets after your name.

LETTERS OF REQUEST

Useful language for the letters of request

• To begin letters:

ask if you would be so kind / generous as to ...

I am writing to / request your assistance concerning the matter of ...

I wonder if you could possibly/if it would be possible for you to help me ... I would (greatly) appreciate it if you could ...

I would be most grateful if you could ...

I am writing to ask / enquire if / whether you could possibly tell / inform me ...

I am writing to	ask if / whether I might (perhaps) be permitted / allowed to ... request your (kind) permission for ... / (for me) to ...
-----------------	---

I wonder if I might ask you for / request your valuable advice on / concerning ...

• To end letters:

I hope that my request will not inconvenience you too much.

I must apologize for troubling you with this matter.

I hope that you will forgive me for, taking up your valuable time.

I look forward to hearing from you / receiving your reply as soon as possible.

Thank(ing) you in anticipation of your / in advance for your kind cooperation.

INFORMATIVE LETTERS

A letter giving information is a formal piece of writing related to a particular situation. Its main purpose is to give information, usually when this has been requested by someone else. It may also provide suggestions, request help, give an opinion, etc.

• Each point should be presented in a separate paragraph containing a clear topic sentence supported by examples and / or justification.

Useful language.

To begin letters:

I am writing to inform you that / advise you of / let you know that...

I regret / am delighted / would like / feel obliged to inform you ...

I am writing	in response to in reply to with regard to	your letter requesting information about ... your enquiry about ...
--------------	---	---

	in connection with	our telephone conversation concerning ...
--	--------------------	---

I am writing (to you)	on behalf of ... in my capacity as ...
-----------------------	--

• To end letters:

I hope that this information will be of some assistance ...

I hope / trust that I have been able to answer all of your questions ...

I would be pleased / happy to provide you with any additional information ...

I look forward to	being able to help you again in the future, answering your queries.
-------------------	---

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you	require further information, have any further questions.
---	--

OPINION LETTERS

A formal letter of advice is usually written in response to a request or enquiry, whereas a letter making suggestions offers an opinion and suggestions on a particular situation. Each point should be presented in a separate paragraph containing a clear topic sentence supported by examples and / or justification.

Useful Language

To begin letters:

I am writing in reply / response to your letter requesting advice about ...

Thank you for your letter requesting advice about ...

I hope the following advice / suggestions will be of (some) help to you ...

Advice / Suggestions:

It might / would be useful / to your advantage (if you were) to ...

I feel / believe (that) the / your best course of action would be ...

I would like to offer one or two suggestions concerning ...

I would (strongly) suggest / recommend + -ing / (that) ...

You should / ought to ...

To end letters:

I hope that these suggestions	will (prove to) be of some assistance, have been useful / of use
-------------------------------	--

I hope / trust that you will accept / follow this advice ...

I would be pleased / happy to offer any additional advice you may require.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions / queries / problems.

LETTERS MAKING SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

In this type of letter you are usually requested to express your opinion on a certain matter and also to provide suggestions supported by expected results / consequences. You can introduce suggestions with: **To begin / start with, Firstly, Secondly, Additionally, Finally, etc.** It is advisable to use the following linking words

in order to introduce the expected result: **thus, as a result, consequently, therefore, as a consequence e.g. I would also suggest advertising in the local newspaper; as a result, you would attract more attention to your new range of special offers.**

LETTERS TO THE AUTHORITY / EDITOR

Letters to the authorities / editor are formal pieces of writing. They express a person's concern about and views on a certain matter and usually contain suggestions on how to tackle a problem. You need to state the nature of the problem and its causes and effects. Each point should be presented in a separate paragraph containing a clear topic sentence supported by examples and/or justification.

Useful Language for Letters to the Authorities / Editor

• To begin letters:

I am writing to	draw your attention to ... / bring ... to your attention ... / you on behalf of ... you in my capacity as ... / express my approval / disapproval of / support for ... / protest about ...
-----------------	--

• To state your opinion:

In my opinion / view, I feel / believe / think, It seems to me that, I tend to think that, I am totally opposed to / in favour of, It is my firm belief / opinion / conviction that, I am convinced that

• To express cause:

because / owing to the fact that / due to the fact that / on the grounds that / since / as / In view of / Because of / Owing to / For this reason / Seeing that

• To express effect:

thus, / therefore, / so / consequently, / as a result, / as a consequence, / for this reason

• To end letters:

I look forward to hearing from you.

I hope you will give this matter your urgent consideration/attention.

I hope (that) you will give this matter careful / further consideration.

Letters to the editors of magazines and newspapers are written when:

a) we wish to express our approval or disapproval of something which is of interest to the general public or;

b) when we wish to reply to letters or articles previously published and on which we have strong views.

Letters of this type tend to contain a combination of formal and informal language such as idioms, phrasal verbs and rhetorical questions. This is done in order to have a more persuasive effect on the readers.

When writing a letter to the editor it is necessary to refer to what other people may think of the subject we are expressing our views on.

LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

A formal letter of complaint is written to complain about a problem which has arisen (**e.g. faulty merchandise, rude staff, inaccurate information, etc.**). It should explain the reasons for the complaint, and usually includes a suggestion / request / demand concerning what should be done (**e.g. refund, compensation, etc.**).

Mild or strong language can be used depending on the writer's feelings and the seriousness of the complaint, but abusive language must never be used, e.g.

Mild Complaint:

I am writing to complain about a factual error in yesterday's newspaper.

I hope that you will give this matter your prompt attention.

Strong Complaint:

I am writing to express my strong disapproval concerning the offensive behaviour of an employee at your company's Winchester Road branch.

I demand a full, written apology or I will be forced to take legal action.

The nature of the complaint should be clearly stated in the first paragraph. Each aspect of the topic should be presented in a separate paragraph containing a clear topic sentence. Each complaint should be supported by clear justification.

Useful Language

To begin letters:

Mild complaint

I am writing to	complain about / draw your attention to (the problem of) ... express my disappointment / dissatisfaction with ...
-----------------	--

Strong complaint

I (must) insist on ... / insist (that) / demand ... / warn you that ...

Unless this matter is resolved ... / Unless satisfactory compensation is offered ... I will have no choice but to / I will be forced to take further / legal action.

Linking words:

I purchased the camcorder only a month ago **but** the rewind button does not function properly.

I purchased the camcorder a month ago. **Nevertheless, / However,** the rewind button does not function properly.

The rewind button does not function properly **in spite of / despite the fact that**

I purchased the camcorder only a month ago.

Although / Even though I purchased the camcorder only a month ago, the rewind button does not function properly.

LETTERS OF APOLOGY

If you have received a letter of complaint, it is polite to reply to it. The purpose for writing a letter of apology is to explain the reason(s) for the problems stated in the letter of complaint and to ensure that the situation will be resolved / improved. You may also offer some form of compensation.

A letter of apology is written in a formal style and requires a dignified and polite tone. You should deal with each aspect of the complaint in a separate paragraph.

Useful Language

• Opening remarks:

I am writing to apologize for ... / offer my apologies for ...

Please accept my / our sincere / profuse apologies for (the unavoidable delay, etc.) I must / would like to apologize for (the unfortunate confusion, etc.).

- **To introduce new points:**

With regard to / As regards ...

As far as ... is / are concerned ...

Firstly / First of all / Secondly / Finally, ...

- **To emphasize what you say:**

Clearly / Obviously / Needless to say, ...

- **To express reality:**

In fact / As a matter of fact / Actually / Indeed, ...

- **Making amends:**

Please allow me to offer / suggest ... as compensation (for ...).

I insist on (+ -ing) to make up for your loss / inconvenience, etc.

- **Closing remarks:**

Once again, my / our sincere(st) apologies for the inconvenience caused.

I hope that you will accept my apologies / that my apologies will be accepted.

I hope that you can forgive / overlook this regrettable error.

LETTERS OF APPLICATION

A formal letter of application is written when applying for a job or a place on an educational course. A job application usually includes educational / professional qualifications, details of previous experience as well as the applicant's qualities and skills. Previous experience should be presented in a clear order using linking words such as: currently, before this, subsequently, prior to this, following, whereupon, etc.

Useful Language: Applying for Jobs

- **To begin letters:**

I am writing to apply for the post / position of... advertised in yesterday's ...

I am writing in connection with / with regard to the vacancy in your Sales Department, as advertised in The Times on / of 14th October.

- **Experience / Qualifications:**

I am currently / At present I am employed / working as ...

I was employed as (position) by (company) from (date) to (date) ...

During this time, I held the position of ... / was responsible for ... / my duties included ... / I have received training in ... / completed an apprenticeship, etc. ...

My qualifications include ... / I am presently studying / attending a course ...

I am due to take my final examinations in June ...

I have / hold / obtained / was awarded a degree / diploma / certificate in ...

I have successfully / recently completed a course in (subject) at (place).

- **To end letters:**

I enclose / Please find enclosed my CV / references from ...

I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience / as soon as possible.

I would be available for an interview at any time / until the end of June / etc.

I would be pleased / happy to supply you with any further information / details ...

Please contact me should you have any further questions / queries

USEFUL VOCABULARY



FORMAL AND INFORMAL LETTERS

	FORMAL	INFORMAL
Name	Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms Dupuis Dear Mary	Hi/Hello Mary Mary,....(or no name at all)
Previous contact	Thank you for your e-mail of... Further to your last e-mail,.... I apologise for not getting in contact with you before now.	Thanks for your e-mail. Re your e-mail,.... Sorry, I haven't written for ages, but I've been really busy.
Reason for writing	I am writing in connection with... I am writing with regard to... In reply to your e-mail, here are... Your name was given to me by... We would like to point out that...	Just a short note about... I'm writing about... Here's the...you wanted. I got your name from... Please note that...
Giving information	I'm writing to let you know that... We are able to confirm that... I am delighted to tell you that... We regret to inform you that...	Just a note to say... We can confirm that... Good news! Unfortunately,...
Attachments	Please find attached my report. I'm sending you ... as a pdf file.	I've attached... Here is the...you wanted.
Asking for information	Could you give me some information about... I would like to know... I'm interested in receiving/finding out...	Can you tell me a little more about... I'd like to know... Please send me...