

# FORMAL LETTER: LETTER OF APPLICATION

## USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

### OPENING PHRASE

- Dear Sir or Madam/Dear Ms/Mr Scott,

### INTRODUCTION

- I am writing in response to/in reply to/with regard to...
- I am writing in connection with...

### EXPRESSING INTEREST IN THE JOB

- I would like to express my interest in...
- I found the (advertised) post/position/job offer extremely interesting because...
- The (advertised) post/position/job fits my expectations of a perfect job/career for a young person/student.

### EXPLAINING WHY YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE JOB

- I would like to apply for this job because...
- My reason for applying for this job is that... (I am very hard-working/I like working with children)
- I have always been interested in.../enthusiastic about...

### DESCRIBING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- As for my experience/As far as my qualifications are concerned,...
- My professional experience includes...
- I worked for... as...

### MAKING FINAL REMARKS

- I would be happy to come to/attend an interview at your earliest convenience/at any time that is convenient to you
- I enclose my CV/references from my previous employers
- I look forward to hearing from you

### CLOSING PHRASES

- if the letter begins Dear Sir or Madam: Yours faithfully,
- if the letter begins Dear Ms/Mr Robinson: Yours sincerely,

## SAMPLE EXAM TASK

You saw this advertisement in a newspaper:

A fashionable modern hotel in the city center  
is looking for  
HOTEL RECEPTIONIST  
We offer a good salary, health insurance  
and flexible working hours.  
If interested, send an application letter  
to john@chelsealodge.com  
Include details of your former employment,  
give the names of two referees,  
explain why you would like to get the job  
and why you are a suitable candidate.

Write an application letter, including all the necessary details.

ADDRESS THE RECIPIENT IN  
A FORMAL MANNER.

Dear Sir or Madam

IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH WE  
USUALLY STATE THE AIM OF  
THE LETTER.

I am writing in response to your job offer concerning the post  
of a hotel receptionist which I found in the latest issue of  
Home News.

I believe this position fits my expectations of a perfect job.

As far as my qualifications are concerned, I have been working  
for about a year as a senior receptionist at the Eagle Hotel in  
Charing Cross Road, where I have gained a lot of valuable  
professional experience. In addition to this, I consider myself  
hard-working and career-orientated. I know very well from my  
experience that the post of a hotel receptionist requires both of  
these features.

I am ready to attend an interview at your earliest convenience.  
I am enclosing the names of two referees from the Eagle Hotel,  
whom you can contact for further information.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours faithfully,

Anna Katarova

FINISH THE LETTER WITH  
AN APPROPRIATE CLOSING  
PHRASE.

DO NOT USE  
ABBREVIATIONS,  
KEEP THE LANGUAGE  
SUITABLY FORMAL.

DEVOTE ONE PARAGRAPH  
TO ONE TOPIC OR ONE  
PIECE OF INFORMATION.

## A job application letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the position of part-time shop assistant at your computer shop advertised in the *Ashford Journal* last week.

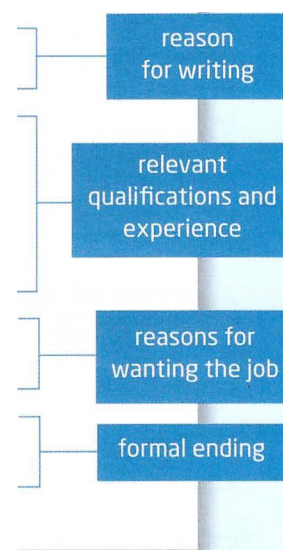
I am in my first year at sixth-form college and I will be doing my A levels next year (maths, physics and ICT). As well as studying ICT at school, I have done courses in computer programming and I can repair computers. I know all the latest models of computers and I can also speak some French. In the last two years, I have often worked in my uncle's clothes shop on Saturday mornings and because of that I have plenty of experience in dealing with customers.

I am interested in working for your shop in order to get more experience and I can also develop my computer skills. I would also like to do the job for fun as I love computers.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Tom Jones



## Contrast linkers

Page 87, Exercise 8

**although + subject + verb**

**Although** the plot is weak, it links together the songs in the musical.

The plot is weak **although** it links together the songs in the musical.

**however links two sentences**

The plot of the musical is weak. **However**, it links together the songs in the musical.

**despite + -ing forms/nouns**

**Despite** being weak, the plot links together the songs in the musical.

The plot links together the songs in the musical, **despite** being weak.

The musical is good **despite** the weak plot.

**Despite** the weak plot, the musical is good.

## An opinion essay

The television is a machine which transmits moving images and sound using radio waves. It was developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in various countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA. It is very popular nowadays and some programmes, like football World Cup finals, get several hundred viewers. However, there is still debate about the pros and cons of television.

On the one hand, television news programmes help us to see what is happening around the world. Other benefits of TV are educational and there are many documentaries about nature and science. As well as that, television is good for people who live on their own or who have mobility problems.

On the other hand, television has its drawbacks. According to some experts, we watch too much television and in the UK three hours a day is the average. Too much TV can affect our social lives and have bad effects on our health because we do not do enough exercise. Other critics are against reality shows and say that there is too much sex and violence on TV.

To sum up, the television has been a very successful invention although, in my opinion, we should not watch too much because of its negative impact on our health.



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## A book review

Key  
linking expressions  
useful expressions

*Jane Eyre* was written by Charlotte Bronte in 1847, is set in 19<sup>th</sup> century England and is partly autobiographical. It was successful when it came out and since then many films have been made of the book.

The story is about the life of Jane Eyre, whose parents die when she is young and who is later sent away to a horrible school. After leaving school, she goes to work in a big house, where she falls in love with the owner, Edward Rochester. They are going to get married when she finds out a terrible secret.

The plot is full of both action and drama and the two main characters are brilliant. Edward Rochester is an experienced man though he is rather selfish. Jane is not only kind and sensitive but also intelligent. Although she is poor, she fights to be independent. *Jane Eyre* has become one of the most important books in English literature as well as important reading for modern feminists.

To sum up, the book is the fascinating story of one woman's life and her great love. If you like great literature, I would definitely recommend reading this classic story.

introduction/  
background

description of  
the plot

character  
and plot

conclusion and  
recommendation

## A Book Review

### Paragraph 1

**Give some basic information about the book.**

'Possession' by A.S. Byatt won the Booker Prize in 1990. Since its first publication in 1990, the book has not only won many readers but has also been filmed starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

### Paragraph 2

**Give a brief summary of the plot.**

Two main characters in the book are young scholars who are researching lives of two Victorian poets. As they uncover their letters, journals and poems, they unexpectedly come across a story of mystery and great passion.

### Paragraph 3

**Give your opinions and present good and bad things about the book.**

The book is a fascinating love-story which combines two historical settings in a very clever way, contemporary and Victorian. However, its complexity may discourage some readers.

### Paragraph 4

**Conclusions and recommendations.**

The book is certainly worth reading. It will appeal both to readers who like contemporary literature as well as those who prefer a good traditional Victorian novel.

## Style

Most of your review should be written using present tenses:  
*The novel is set in both the nineteenth and twentieth century.  
One day he comes across a piece of paper stuck between the pages of an old book.*

You should aim for a neutral style, not too formal and not too colloquial:

*Although the book is rather long, you won't find it lacking in tension and surprising turns of action.*

## Useful Vocabulary

*The book is set in the 1950s / in the seventeenth century / during the Victorian period.*

*Its main characters are two young students.*

*The plot is organised around one important event: losing and recovering a family treasure.*

*The climax comes when all the people involved in the mystery get together late at night in the cemetery.*

*The book is written in a complex / simple / modern / traditional / poetic / realistic style.*

*One of the book's great strengths is characterisation: heroes and heroines may seem larger than life but they are also so deeply human.*

*The book's weakness / most controversial aspect is its length. It is worth reading.*

*It can be recommended to people who want good fun.*

## Linking

### Summarising the plot:

*One day, Roland comes across a mysterious letter.*

*After that, he finds himself spied on by a rival scholar.*

*Eventually, he realises that the spy is in fact his best friend.*

*In the end, they fall in love with each other.*

### Giving examples:

*There are some truly exciting moments, especially when they discover the journal hidden in the doll's house.*

*The book contains Victorian texts, such as the poems written by the two poets.*

### Contrasting:

*Although the book is rather long, the reader finds it gripping from the first to the last page.*

*'Possession' is about a specialist study of literature. However, it is never boring.*

*Despite being about a specialist study of literature, it is never boring.*

### Adding points:

*Apart from being a fascinating novel, the book is full of beautiful Victorian poems.*

*Roland and Maud are both scholars interested in the same type of literature. What's more, they are also quite similar as people.*

### Concluding:

*All in all / All things considered / To sum up, the book is a real masterpiece.*

## Checking

**Layout:** Have you followed the suggestions for paragraphs?

**Linking:** Have you included a variety of linking words?

# A Letter of complaint

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you about my holiday last month at the Superb Hotel organised by Fun Tours.

First, as the tour bus had mechanical problems, the trip took over ten hours. Then, when we finally arrived there was no food available at the hotel.

In your advertising, you mention 'clean accommodation' but I couldn't sleep due to the cockroaches in our room. There was no en-suite bathroom and because of that I fell over one night because I had to walk down the corridor to the bathroom and it was so dark. Because breakfast was just some fruit, I felt hungry all morning.

When I complained about the hotel, the manager was very unhelpful. I would be grateful if you could give me a full refund of my money within the next two weeks.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Thomas More

reason for  
writing

problems

false  
advertising

what you  
want



# A Letter Of Complaint

**Your address and the date**  
**Write your address with correct punctuation. Do not write your name here.**

24 Market Street,  
Middleton,  
Manchester, M24 6HD

June 16, 2003

## The company's name and address

Computer World,  
17 Tower Road,  
London, SW12

## Greeting

Dear Mr Scott, (if you know the person's name)

Dear Sir / Madam, (if you don't know the person's name)

## 1 Introduction

**Give your reason for writing and specific information about the product or service, including where and when you bought it.**

*I am writing to you about ... which I bought from ... on ...  
I enclose copies of the guarantee and the receipt.*

## 2 Reasons for the complaint

**Write one or two paragraphs saying:**

**a) why the advertising for the product was misleading,**

*In your advert you claim that the watch is waterproof. /  
The advert gave the impression that the jacket would last a lifetime.*

**b) what went wrong with the product.**

*However, the first time I went swimming, the watch stopped working. /  
However, after only one wash, the colour had faded.*

## 3 Reactions to your complaint

**Say what happened when you took the product back or complained about it the first time.**

*When I took the ... back to the shop, the assistant said it was my fault and I hadn't read the instructions carefully.*

## 4 Your demands

**Say clearly what you want the company to do. State further action that you will take if your demands are not met.**

*I would like you to refund my money.  
Unless I receive a satisfactory reply, I will write to the Consumer Association.*

## 5 Formal ending

**The most common ending for a formal letter is:**

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

## Signing off

*Yours sincerely, (if your letter starts with Dear Mr Scott)*

*Yours faithfully, (if your letter starts with Dear Sir / Madam)*

**Sign your name and print it clearly.**

*P. Lowe*

P. LOWE (MR)

## Style

Write a letter in a formal style:

- do not use contractions:

*I'm writing to complain about ...*

*I am writing to complain about ...*

- use formal linking words:

*Moreover, the picture was not clear.*

*However, the first time I used it ...*

## Useful Vocabulary

**Products:** guarantee, receipt, serial number, date of purchase

**Criticisms:** arrived late, poor quality, poor service, poor workmanship, rude employees, it was so ... that I ... / it was not ... enough / it was too ...

**Demands:** pay compensation, refund money, replace the product

**Threats:** go to court, go to the Consumer Association, take legal action, write a letter to the local newspaper

## Linking

*He spoke to me as if/as though I knew nothing about it.*

*However, it didn't work.*

*Despite following the instructions, it didn't work.*

*Although I followed the instructions, it didn't work.*

*Not only did it lose time, but also the alarm didn't work.*

*As well as the zip breaking, the heel fell off!*

*Just as/As soon as/When I switched it on, it made a funny noise.*

*Unless you refund my money, I will take legal action.*

## Checking

**Style:** Check your letter for style. Make sure that it is not too informal or does not sound too aggressive.

**Linking:** Have you used linking expressions? Can you add any linking words to join sentences or link ideas?

**Grammar and spelling:** Check your essay for mistakes of grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

**Check this:**

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*I look forward to hear from you.*

# FORMAL LETTER: LETTER OF ENQUIRY

## USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

### OPENING PHRASE

- Dear Sir or Madam,

### INTRODUCTION

- I am writing in connection with.../to ask/enquire about...
- I have read/found your advertisement in... and would like to...

### EXPRESSING INTEREST

- I am interested in.../I have been looking for...
- I am planning to... and that is why I found this advertisement /offer/text interesting/important

### EXPRESSING DOUBTS

- I have read the advert/about your services and/but I am not sure if...
- I cannot understand if...
- It is not clear to me if...

### ENQUIRING ABOUT THE DETAILS

- I would like to know more details about...
- I would like to ask for further information about/concerning...
- I am still not sure about one thing/problem, namely...

### ASKING FOR INFORMATION

- I would be (very) grateful if you could...
- I wonder if you could...
- I would like to ask if/when/where/why...

### MAKING FINAL REMARKS

- I look forward to your answer/to hearing from you...

### CLOSING PHRASES

- if the letter begins Dear Sir or Madam: Yours faithfully,
- if the letter begins Dear Ms/Mr Robinson: Yours sincerely,

## SAMPLE EXAM TASK

You saw this advertisement on the Internet:

*Are you looking for a good English course  
at the Proficiency level?  
The Cambridge School of English  
has the best English courses in town!  
Affordable prices, best teachers, free Internet,  
delicious meals at the school's cafeteria!  
Write to [info@cseed.edu.uk](mailto:info@cseed.edu.uk)  
and we'll answer all your queries!*

Write a letter to the school in which you ask about the details of the course. Include the following points:

- explain why you are writing
- ask about payment forms and enrolment requirements.

## ADDRESS THE RECIPIENT IN A FORMAL MANNER.

IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH WE  
USUALLY STATE THE AIM OF  
THE LETTER.

DO NOT USE ABBREVIATIONS,  
KEEP THE LANGUAGE SUITABLY  
FORMAL

FINISH THE LETTER WITH  
AN APPROPRIATE CLOSING  
PHRASE.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in connection with an advertisement for your Proficiency course in English. I am an eighteen-year-old student from Slovakia. For some time I have been looking for a course in English at a higher level, and that is why I found your course very interesting.

However, I am not sure if the course is for Slovakian students only, or for other Europeans, too. I would like to ask for more details on this matter. I would also be very grateful if you could inform me if there is a choice of meals at the cafeteria: I am allergic to some foods. Finally, I would like to ask if I can pay for the course with a credit card and what kind of documents I need to be enrolled.

I look forward to your answer.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Kováč

DEVOTE ONE PARAGRAPH  
TO ONE TOPIC OR ONE  
PIECE OF INFORMATION



# A Discursive Essay

## Layout

### 1 Introduction

**Introduce the topic. Give some background about the situation in your country/area. Then mention the possible reasons for the situation.**

*Crime is one of the most important issues ...*

*In the last few years, crime has been going up/down.*

*The most common crimes are ...*

*The most worrying trend is the increase in ...*

*One of the reasons for this is possibly the fact that unemployment has risen ...*

*Another reason is that ...*

**Note that if you are 'for' something, put the arguments 'against' first.**

**If you are 'against' something, put the arguments 'for' first.**

### 2 A list of arguments 'for'

**Express the attitudes and reasons to support this point of view. Provide examples and facts where possible. (see Style below)**

### 3 A list of arguments 'against'

**Express the attitudes and reasons to support this point of view. Provide examples and facts where possible. (see Style below)**

### 4 Conclusion

**Finally, give your own personal opinion about the topic.**

*In my opinion, ... / All things considered, I believe that ...*

## Style

In a discursive essay it is important to list the points of view of both sides of an argument as objectively as possible. Only in the conclusion can you express your own point of view. Notice the use of report structures (e.g. *feel that*), passives and formal linkers (e.g. *moreover, furthermore*) in the sentences below.

### Listing arguments:

*Many people feel that* harder sentences should be brought back.  
*The American system of 'three strikes and you're out' has* supporters in Britain.

*Moreover, some people say* that conditions in prisons are too soft.

*There are arguments for* the restoration of the death penalty.

*The wishes of victims' family and friends possibly need to be taken into account.*

*There are arguments against* harder sentences and capital punishment.

*One of the arguments against* longer prison sentence *is that* the prisons are already full.

*Other people disagree and think that* prisons should reform offenders.

*It is strongly felt by many people that* capital punishment is the equivalent of judicial murder.

*Others point to* the possibility of judicial errors and the risks of executing innocent people.

*Furthermore, the death penalty is seen as* savage and an affront to human dignity.

### Giving reasons, examples and facts:

*Some people think that one of the benefits of* harder sentences *would be to* keep more dangerous criminals off the street.

*Another advantage would be to* give people a greater feeling of personal security.

*This would be the best way of* reducing crime caused by a small group of professional criminals.

*For example, many crimes are committed by people leaving prison. Other people feel that there would be many disadvantages to giving harder sentences, because there would be less chance of integrating prisoners into society afterwards.*

*Research has shown that ...*

**Describing statistics and figures:** → Lexicon 9, page 155

## Useful Vocabulary

**Crime and punishment** (also see Lexicon 9, page 155):

**crimes:** burglary – burglar, drug dealing – drug dealer, mugging – mugger, murder – murderer, rape – rapist, shoplifting – shoplifter; to commit a crime, to be arrested, to be sentenced, to be given a soft/hard sentence, to be locked up, to be let off with a fine, to be let out of prison, to deter young people, to take into account the wishes of the victims, to restore (bring back) capital punishment, to commit judicial murder

**the law:** the courts, the judges, the judicial system / the legal system, the law, judicial mistakes

## Linking

### Cause / Result:

*The consumption of drugs has gone up. Consequently, there has been an increase in violent crime.*

*The amount of violent crime has gone up due to an increase in consumption of drugs.*

*The number of cases of violent crime has increased as a result of the rising consumption of drugs.*

*The consumption of drugs has risen. Because of this, there has been an increase in violent crime.*

*Because of the rise in consumption of drugs, there has been an increase in violent crime.*

*The increase in violent crime is just because of the rising consumption of drugs.*

*So much money has been spent on prisons that they are now like luxury hotels.*

### Reason:

*We need to reform prisoners so that they can go back into society. We need to reform prisoners in order to help them go back into society.*

### as / like:

*It was a very interesting article as it was about the arrest of a group of drug dealers. (as = because)*

*My father works as a prison officer. (works as = is)*

*Capital punishment is like any other kind of murder. (like = similar to)*

*Because of his record he was treated as a dangerous criminal. (as = in the same way as)*

*It is due to social problems, like poverty and unemployment. (like = for example)*

*It is due to social problems such as poverty and unemployment. (such as = for example)*

*It is not as easy as people think. (comparison)*

## Checking

**Layout:** How well does your essay flow? Use the paragraph diagram above to check the structure of your argument.

**Linking:** Have you used linking expressions? Can you add any linking words to join sentences or link ideas?

**Style:** Check the style of the essay. Make sure you have only put personal opinions in your conclusion.

**Grammar and spelling:** Check your essay for mistakes of grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

# A Discursive Essay

## 1 Introduction

**A short paragraph to introduce the topic. Give some background. This may be historical or personal.**

*Tobacco was introduced to Europe after the discovery of America. My parents smoke and they have both tried to give up many times.*

**Note that if you are 'for' something, put the arguments 'against' first.**

**If you are 'against' something, put the arguments 'for' first.**

## 2 A list of arguments 'for'

**Choose two or three main points. Give examples where possible.**

*Firstly, it costs a lot of money to treat smokers who get diseases, such as heart disease or lung cancer. Secondly, ...*

## 3 A list of arguments 'against'

**Choose two or three main points. Back up your arguments with examples.**

*On the other hand, if they banned smoking, the government would lose a lot of money from taxes on cigarettes.*

## 4 Conclusion

**Give your own personal opinion about the topic.**

*In my opinion, ...*

*All things considered, I believe that ...*

## Style

Most essays are written in a formal or neutral style:

- use formal linkers for listing arguments 'for' and 'against' the title:  
*A smoke-filled room is also bad for non-smokers who have to breathe in the smoke. Moreover, the smell of smoke ... / Furthermore, people who smoke ... / Finally, ...*
- use formal vocabulary and phrases:  
*Cigarette smoke stinks the place out.* (too colloquial)  
*It is unpleasant to be in a smoke-filled room.*  
*Some people smoke like a chimney.* (too colloquial)  
*Some people chain-smoke.*
- use passives when appropriate (see also Module 4):  
*They introduced tobacco to Europe after they discovered America.*  
*Tobacco was introduced to Europe after the discovery of America.*

## Useful Vocabulary

**Adjectives:** addictive, anti-social, dangerous, dirty, glamorous, unhealthy

**Nouns:** ashtray, bronchitis, cigarette, heart disease, lung cancer, nicotine, no-smoking areas, public places, tobacco

**Issues:** cost of health treatment, dangers in pregnancy, individual freedom of choice, passive smoking, smell on clothing and furniture, sports sponsors, starting fires, tax revenue

## Linking: Contrast linkers

*Although/Even though they know the dangers, many people still smoke. (Although/Even though + clause, + main clause)*

\* Note: *Even although*

*Despite/In spite of knowing the dangers, many people still smoke. (Despite/In spite of + '-ing', + main clause)*

*Despite/In spite of the dangers, many people still smoke. (Despite/In spite of + noun, + main clause)*

*Despite the fact that / In spite of the fact that they know the dangers, many people still smoke. (Despite the fact that / In spite of the fact that + clause, + main clause)*

'However' and 'On the other hand' are used to begin a new sentence that contrasts what came before.

*Many people know the dangers of cigarettes. However, they still smoke.*

*Many people know the dangers of cigarettes. On the other hand, they still smoke.*

'Whereas' is used to contrast two examples which are closely linked.

*My parents both smoke, whereas none of their children does.*

*You can't smoke in hospitals, whereas you can smoke in other public places, such as ...*

*Some people spend all their money on cigarettes, whereas I prefer to spend my money on CDs.*

## Checking

**Layout:** How well does your essay flow? Look at the paragraphs again and check the structure of your argument.

**Style:** Have you used words or expressions that are too colloquial? If so, try to express the same ideas in a more formal way.

**Linkers:** Have you used linkers and linking expressions? Can you add any linkers to join sentences or link ideas?

**Grammar and spelling:** Check your essay for mistakes of grammar and spelling.

## A Description Of A Place

### Paragraph 1 Introduce the place.

*After living for many years in an old country house, I've just moved to the city. Now I live in a modern flat which ...*

### Paragraph 2 Give a general description of the place.

*It is spacious and full of light. There are two rooms downstairs, ...*

### Paragraph 3 Focus on one room / one special feature in more detail.

*My study upstairs has got a very relaxed atmosphere.  
My favourite piece of furniture is ...*

### Paragraph 4 Give a final/personal comment on the place.

*Although I sometimes miss my old house, there are many things about my new home that I really like, such as ...*

## Style

For this type of composition, you should write in a neutral style. Below are examples of different styles.

**Formal style:** *The house, with numerous rooms and an extensive garden, is situated in the country.*

**Neutral style:** *She has just moved into a big house in the country with a huge garden.*

**Colloquial style:** *Her new house is massive with a great big garden.*

## Useful Vocabulary

**House features:** armchair, bookshelf, carpet, clock, coffee table, curtains, cushions, fireplace, lamp, lampshade, mantelpiece, mirror, painting, rug, sideboard, sofa, stove, tiles

**Describing a place/object:** cluttered (with), comfortable, cosy, covered (with), enormous, fair-sized, huge, marvellous, massive, old-fashioned, relaxing, spacious, tasteless, warm, wooden

## Linking

**Result:** *Her desk is so cluttered with papers that she cannot find her computer mouse. (so + adj. + 'that' clause)  
The house has got such lovely views of the countryside that it is a wonderful place to be in. (such + adj. + noun + 'that' clause)  
It is too big for one person to live in. (too + adj. + 'to' infinitive)  
The kitchen is big enough to eat in. (adj. + enough + 'to' infinitive)*

**Comparison:** *It is not as big as other rooms.  
The living room is a bit smaller.  
It is a lot bigger than her previous house.  
One of the biggest attractions is a huge garden.*

**Giving examples:** *The house is full of old features, such as ancient fireplaces.  
It is a perfect place for people like you and me.  
It is full of light, particularly early in the morning.  
It can be used for many purposes. For example, it can be turned into a spare bedroom.*

## Checking

**Layout:** Have you followed the paragraph plan?

**Linking:** Have you included linking words and expressions?

**Useful vocabulary:** Have you included adjectives describing particular features of the place?

## A Film Review

### Paragraph 1 Give some basic information about the film.

*'Dances With Wolves' won an Oscar in 1990. It was directed by Kevin Costner.*

### Paragraph 2 Give a brief summary of the plot.

*He is sent by the army to live on the edge of Indian territory.*

### Paragraph 3 Give your opinions – good and bad things about the film.

*The film is very realistic in the way it shows us the everyday life of the Indians.*

### Paragraph 4 Conclusion and recommendation.

*It is a historical film with an obvious message. It speaks to people of all ages.*

## Style

Most of your review should be written using present tenses:

*It is set in the nineteenth century.*

*One day he meets an Indian.*

You should aim for a neutral style, not too formal and not too colloquial.

*Despite being very long, there isn't a dull moment. (neutral style)*

## Useful Vocabulary

*It is set in the 1920s / in the sixteenth century / during the French Revolution.*

*It is based on a story/play/book by ...*

*The special effects are impressive/disappointing.*

*The scenery is often breathtaking with wonderful photography.*

*The dialogue is often excellent/weak.*

*X plays the part of ... / X is magnificent/unconvincing in the role of ...*

## Linking

### Summarising the plot:

*One day, Costner finds himself being watched by ...*

*After that, the plot begins to get complicated.*

*Eventually, he manages to convince the chief he is not dangerous.*

*In the end, they move north to Canada.*

### Giving examples:

*There are some sad moments, especially when ...*

*The director pays great attention to details, such as the authentic costumes.*

### Contrasting:

*Despite being very long, there isn't a dull moment.*

*I'd recommend the film for everyone, although some scenes are quite violent.*

### Adding points:

*Their family life is very realistic. The hunting scenes are also very convincing.*

*The scenery is beautiful. Moreover, the background music is perfect.*

### Concluding:

*All things considered, this is a real masterpiece.*

## Checking

**Layout:** Have you followed the suggestions for paragraphs?

**Linking:** Have you included a variety of linking words?

## A FORMAL LETTER

Address

18 Mill St,  
Ludlow, SH3 4RM  
6 February 2005

Date

**Salutation** *Dear Sir or Madam (Sir/Madam),*

### 1 Introduction: reason for writing

*I am interested in coming to your resort in Barbados.  
However, I have a few questions ...*

### 2 Questions: time of year/activities/weather

*First, when is the best time of year to come? I am thinking  
of coming in February. What is the weather like then?  
Secondly, do you have any facilities for windsurfing?*

### 3 Questions: accommodation/restaurants, etc.

*Another question I have is about a place to stay. Could  
you recommend ...?*

### 4 Questions: prices

*Other questions I have are about prices. How much would  
a five-day stay at the resort cost? Do you give any  
discounts for ...*

### Ending

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Yours faithfully,  
..... [Name]*

## Useful Vocabulary

**Questions:** *When is the best time to come? What is the  
weather like in June? What facilities are there for playing  
tennis, golf, etc.? What other activities are there? Could  
you recommend a good place to stay/to eat out at/to go  
out at night?*

*Are there any discounts for students? How much does it  
cost to go by bus to the hotel/to rent a motorbike/to  
have tennis lessons? How much is accommodation, food,  
etc.?*

## Linking

**Addition:** *First*, when does the resort open for skiing?  
*Secondly*, do you have ...? *Thirdly*, what is the weather  
like ...? *Another question* I have is about ... *Other*  
questions I have are about ... *Finally*, how much ...?

**Contrast:** *I am interested in coming in December but I  
would like to know more about the resort./I am interested  
in coming in December. However, I would like to know  
more about the resort.*

## Checking

Have you used formal language? (e.g. no contractions)

Have you included some of the linking words and  
expressions above?

Have you checked your work for spelling?



# A Formal Letter

**Your address and the date**  
17 Orchard Rise,  
London, NW12  
January 15, 2002

## Greeting

Dear Mrs Smith, (if you know the person's name)  
Dear Sir / Madam, (if you don't know the person's name)

## Paragraph 1

**Give your reason for writing the letter. Say where you saw the advertisement. Give some information about you and other people interested in the holiday.**

*I am writing to ask for more information about the 'Amazonian Adventure' holiday which I saw advertised in The Mirror. My sister and I are both university students. We are interested in the holiday but I would like some more details.*

**Divide your queries about the holiday into two or three paragraphs, e.g. conditions on holiday, health and safety, price.**

## Paragraph 2

*Firstly, I would like to know more about the sort of conditions on the holiday. Could you tell me more about the accommodation provided ...*

## Paragraph 3

*Secondly, I am slightly worried as I have never been on this sort of holiday before. Could you please send me information about the diseases and health risks in the Amazon area? I would also be grateful if you could give me information about health and accident insurance.*

## Paragraph 4

*Thirdly, you say that the price includes everything except certain extras. Could you possibly give me details about what extras there might be?*

## Formal ending

**Most formal letters end with this sentence. Learn it!**  
*I look forward to hearing from you.*

## Signing off

*Yours sincerely, (if your letter starts with Dear Mrs Smith)*  
*Yours faithfully, (if your letter starts with Dear Sir / Madam)*  
**Sign your name and print it clearly.**  
R. S. Wilson  
R.S. WILSON (MS)

## Style

### Formal written requests for information:

*I would be grateful if you could give me more information about the accommodation.*

*Could you please send me information about the accommodation?*

*Could you possibly tell me what ...*

*I wonder whether you could possibly send me details about health insurance.*

*You mention the need for vaccinations. Does this mean that you organise them?*

### Stating preferences:

*I would prefer to have a single room, if possible.*

*I would also like to stay on for another two days, if that is at all possible.*

## Useful Vocabulary

### Reservations:

*I would like to reserve a place / to make a reservation / to confirm a reservation / to cancel a reservation / make a group booking*

### Price:

*What is included in the price? / Do you offer discounts for groups? / Do you give reductions for students? / Are there any special offers?*

### Accommodation:

*What sort of accommodation do you provide?*

*What kind of facilities has the hotel got?*

*Types of accommodation: cabin, campsite, tent, hotel rooms (single/double room, suite), self-catering flat*

### Food:

*What is the local food like? / Is the water drinkable? /*

*Do you offer full or half board? /*

*Are there any facilities for self-catering?*

### Transport:

*Kinds of transport: balloon, boat, camel, canoe, cruise, excursion, tour, transport/shuttle service to and from the airport, trek, trip*

### Baggage / Luggage:

*What is the weight limit? How much does excess baggage cost?*

*Kinds of baggage/luggage: backpack, holdall, overnight bag, rucksack, suitcase, pack*

### Clothes:

*anorak, diving suit, swimsuit, trainers, walking boots, waterproof jacket*

## Linking

### Conditions:

*It is not clear if/whether your company only arranges flights from London.*

*I would like to reserve a room, as long as/provided that it has a modern shower and toilet facilities.*

*I would prefer not to share a cabin unless/except if I have to.*

### Listing:

*Firstly, I would like to ... / Secondly, could you ... /*

*Thirdly, I would be ... / Finally, I would like to ...*

*In addition to that, could you ...*

*Another query I have is about ...*

*Something else I would like to ask about is transport from the airport.*

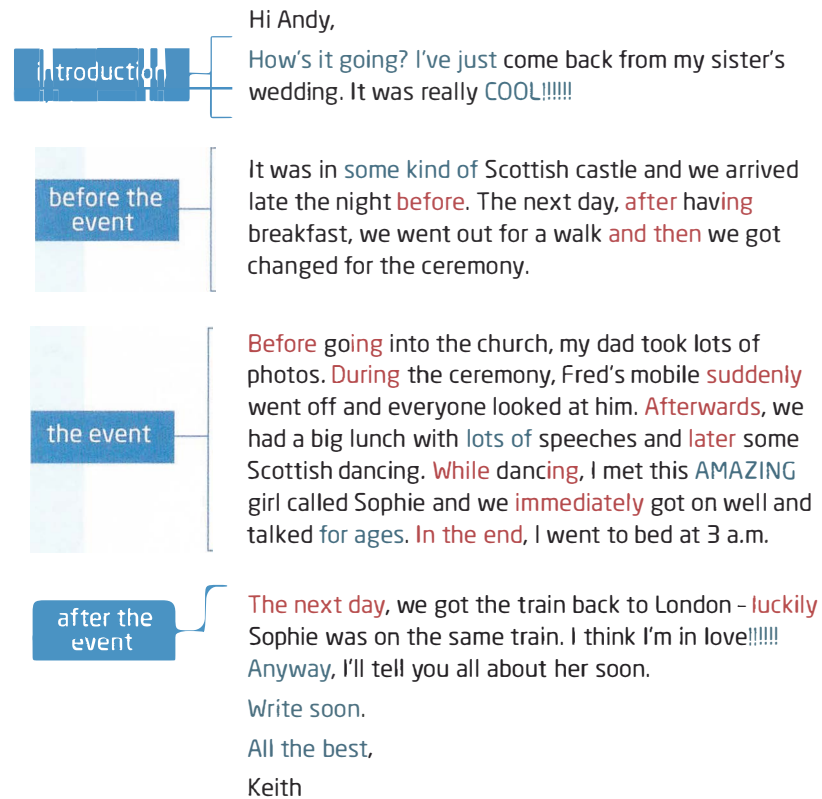
## Checking

**Style:** Check your letter for style, e.g. starting, finishing the letter, polite requests.

**Grammar:** Check whether all your questions are grammatically correct.

## Informal letter

Key  
informal style  
story linkers



Hi Sam,  
Thanks for the invitation. I'm afraid I can't come as I'm going to be in London. Hope you have a great time - I'll be in touch when I get back.  
Take care,  
Lucy

Hi Sam,  
Thanks for the invite. I'd love to come but can I bring a mate of mine? It's because an old friend is staying with me.  
Cheers,  
Tim



# INFORMAL LETTER

## USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

### OPENING PHRASE

- Dear Peter/Greg,

### INTRODUCTION

- I hope you're fine.
- How are you?/How are you doing?
- It was good to hear from you/Thanks for your letter!

### GIVING INFORMATION

- I'm writing to tell you...
- I wonder if you remember/have heard...
- As for my latest news, ...

### WRITING ABOUT YOUR PLANS

- First/Secondly, we're going to...
- The plan includes...

### MAKING A REQUEST

- I'm writing to ask you for your help/advice...
- I wonder if I could ask you to/for...
- Could you tell me...
- I'd be really grateful if you could...

### EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

- I'm writing to thank you for...
- Thank you so much!
- It was (so/really) very kind of you to...

### APOLOGISING

- I'm writing to tell you how sorry I am to.../about...
- I'm really sorry that...
- It will never happen again.
- Sorry for (any) trouble/bothering you (again).

BEGIN YOUR LETTER WITH A SHORT INFORMAL PHRASE.

WRITE THE FIRST SENTENCE, USUALLY ADDRESSING THE RECIPIENT OF THE LETTER.

DEVOTE ONE PARAGRAPH TO ONE TOPIC OR TO ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION.

FINISH THE LETTER WITH AN APPROPRIATE PHRASE.

### INVITING

- I'm writing to invite you to...
- I'm having... (a party)
- Would you come to...?
- I hope you'll be able to join us/to make it

### CLOSING PHRASES

- I must be going now
- Bye for now
- See you
- Say hello to...
- Love from.../Love, Viktor
- Have a nice trip
- All the best

## SAMPLE EXAM TASK

This is a part of an email you received from your American friend Greg.

*I am really looking forward to visiting you on Friday. Is there anything I should remember about? Would you like me to bring anything from the USA? I am really excited about the visit, I am really curious about what things you have planned for the weekend!!*

Write an email answering your friend's questions.

Hi Greg!

How are you doing? I wonder if you're ready and packed? By the way, I hope you remember about the packet from Aunt Anna - she'd be really mad if you forgot to take it.

Oh, and a friend of mine has just asked if you could bring *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac. I hope you don't mind.

Well, I'm also getting ready for your stay. Plans for the first day include a quick tour of my town and a party with all my friends. And as for lunch, my mother wants to know whether you prefer fish or chicken. Let me know!

Oh, and another thing! In case you've forgotten where we meet at the airport, it's Terminal A, next to the newspaper stand. If I'm late, you can check what's making headlines in Slovakia!

Have a nice journey,

Viktor

USE ABBREVIATIONS AND APPROPRIATE PUNCTUATION (E.G. EXCLAMATION MARKS), TYPICAL OF AN INFORMAL STYLE.

## A PERSONAL LETTER

Dear ...,	street number + name name of city + postcode date
<b>1 Introduction</b> Thank the other person for their letter/postcard. Ask how he/she is, etc. Include some chat, e.g. about family or friends. <i>Thanks for your letter. How are things? Have you repaired your motorbike? My dad still won't let me have one.</i>	
<b>2 Main paragraph</b> Give your reason for writing. Give news about your life and interesting things you are doing in your free time. <i>Anyway, I'm writing to tell you about what I'm doing at the moment. I'm in the school play – we're doing 'Hamlet'...</i>	
<b>3 Reason to finish</b> Give a reason (or excuse!) to stop writing. <i>Well, I must finish now because I've got a test tomorrow.</i>	
<b>Sign off</b> <i>All the best, Jack</i>	

### Useful Vocabulary

*This is .../I think the last time we .../Do you remember ...?/Do you still ...?/At the moment I'm .../Write back soon/Tell me all your news*

### Linking: Informal Words and Expressions

*Send me a letter soon – right?/Anyway, how are you? My dad said it was great, so I am sure you had a great time./... and guess what – we're going out together!/Well, I must finish now because I have to take the dog out./By the way, Dad's getting better./You know, I think I'm in love .../She likes surfing, too./Another thing, I'm going out with ...*

### Style

Write personal letters in an informal style, e.g. use informal linkers, contractions, e.g. *I'm sorry*, exclamation marks to add emphasis: *I'm going out with this amazing guy!!*, dashes to explain: *I'm so busy – you know what it's like* and colloquial vocabulary: *my mates* (friends); *it's cool* (great)

### Checking

Have you followed the paragraph plans?  
Have you included some informal linking words?  
Have you used contractions?

## A STORY

### Setting the Scene

Describe the time, place, weather. Say what the main character was doing.

*One Saturday afternoon, I was taking Patch, my dog, for a walk by the river. It was a beautiful, sunny day. Some people were fishing and others were sunbathing. I was watching some children playing on the bridge. Suddenly, a little boy fell in the river.*

### Development of the Narrative

Describe the main action.

*I knew I had to do something. First, I gave my dog to a woman. Then, I jumped into the water and swam towards the boy. Meanwhile, somebody phoned for the emergency services. When I grabbed the boy, he pulled me down so I let go of him. As I was swimming to the side, I saw Patch jump into the water and pull the boy to safety!*

### Conclusion

Describe the scene at the end and mention the main character's feelings.

*While they were taking the boy away in an ambulance, I could see people pointing at me. In the end, a police officer came up to me and thanked me. A few days later, I went to the police station and they gave me a certificate for bravery – and Patch got one, too!*

### Linking (Sequence)

*One Saturday afternoon I was .../Suddenly, a little boy fell in the river./First, I gave my dog to a woman .../Then, I took off my shoes .../Meanwhile, somebody phoned .../When I grabbed him, he pulled me .../While they were taking the boy away .../In the end, a police officer .../A few days later, I went ...*

### Useful Vocabulary

**People:** emergency services, fire fighter, lifeguard, nurse, police officer

**General:** ambulance, bravery, certificate, crash, fire, flames, rope, smoke

**Adjectives:** afraid, brave, desperate, frightened, injured, proud, trapped, unconscious

**Verbs** burn, blow up, climb, crash, drag, drown, explode, hold your breath, jump, pull, push, reach, rescue, save, scream, shout, throw, tie

### Checking

**Paragraphs:** Has your story got clear paragraphs?

**Past tenses:** Have you used the Past Continuous (for longer, background activities) and the Past Simple (for past events that interrupt them)? Have you checked any irregular verbs? (in the Mini-dictionary)

**Linking words:** Have you used linking words? Can you add any more?