

FORMAL LETTER

INTRODUCTION

- Say WHY you are writing and WHAT you are responding to (e.g. a advert, a prospectus, an announcement)
- Begin *Dear Mr Jones, /Dear Mrs Brown, etc.*
If you don't know the name of the person, write *Dear Sir/Madam,*
- Your opening sentence should clearly state why you are writing the letter - get to the point straight away:
 - 'I would like to apply for the position of ...'
 - 'I am writing to complain about the poor service we received at ...'
- Thinking about the purpose of your email/letter can also help decide on the correct level of formality. If you're planning a day out with friends, keep it friendly and lighthearted. If you're requesting information from a company you want to sound professional and polite. Keep in mind your reasons for writing and make sure that's reflected in the tone.
- Keep it organised: English works well with short, simple sentences.
- Break your email into paragraphs.

MAIN BODY (usually 2 paragraphs)

- Your letter needs to be precise and to the point.
- **TONE** (the way your letter sounds) is very important. The aim is to sound 'businesslike'. **Avoid** any language that seems casual or chatty.
- Think about the purpose of your letter and include all the relevant
- details to help the reader to respond. For example:

In a job application, include some specific details about why you are an ideal candidate for the role.

In a letter of complaint, include a summary of what has happened to prompt your complaint, with names, locations and dates, if necessary.



CONCLUSION

- Provide a clear course of action for the reader:

Making a complaint? Make it clear that you need a reply.

Applying for a job? End on a positive note and say that you are looking forward to hearing from them.

- Signing off will depend on how you started your letter:

If you used someone's name --> end with '*Yours sincerely,*' + Your own name

If you didn't use their name, you used 'Sir/Madam' instead --> end with '*Yours faithfully,*' + Your own name

- Don't forget to proofread your letter for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

REMEMBER

It's a formal piece of writing that means: use Formal, Neutral style, no contractions, no colloquial language, no direct questions, no informal punctuation, such as exclamation marks (!).

Addresses and names (if mentioned in the exam topic)

On the left hand side of the page (above Dear.....) comes the name and address of the person that you are writing to - the recipient of the letter.

Do NOT write your personal details (address, city etc).

In the end write your FULL Name.

Look at the sample letters on the last page to get an idea.



USEFUL EXPRESSIONS - FORMAL LETTER

- I am writing with regard to... (email subject)
- I am writing in connection with... (email subject)
- I am writing in reference to...

If you're writing an email to send information, you can start with one of the following sentences:

- I am writing to let you know...
- I am delighted to tell you... (if you're communicating good news)
- I regret to inform you that... (if you're communicating bad news)

If instead you're replying to an email you received, you can say:

- I am writing in response to...
- I am writing in reply to...
- I am writing to thank you for... (if you need to thank the recipient)

Based on the type of message you're sending, there are various ways to write a final invitation before ending the email, such as:

- I look forward to hearing from you soon
- Thank you in advance
- * • For further information, please do not hesitate to contact me
- Please let me know if you have any questions
- * • Thanks for your attention

** Not common in OCN exams.*

Layout for a formal letter

Recipient's address
Reference number if available

Dear..... (If name is unknown use Sir/Madam)

- It may be appropriate to start with a reference line
Re:.....
- Do not use contracted forms - write all words in full.
- Use formal standard English - no slang
- Keep sentences precise and get straight to the point
- Keep business letters focussed and do not waffle on!
- If complaining, be polite and use intelligent vocabulary.

Sum up your main point and state that you look forward to a response to your letter / query / complaint etc if appropriate.
Thank you, in advance, for taking time to respond to my

Yours faithfully – (if greeting is to Sir/Madam)
Yours sincerely – (if name is given)

Layout for an Informal letter

Dear.....

- You may have more than 2 paragraphs. Depending on who the recipient is you will have varying levels of informality.
- It is generally accepted that in informal letters contracted forms can be used: *can't* instead of can not; *haven't* instead of have not etc.
- You may also use a more colloquial language register – chatty tone that you might use in speech / mild slang words.
- Punctuation can be less formal: exclamation mark! used to signify shock or a joke; dashes - instead of commas; brackets used to separate additional ideas/references...

Degree of intimacy with recipient will determine the way you sign off:
Best wishes / Kind regards / Yours truly / *With love...*

Sample: Application Letter

1720 Magnolia Circle
Mount Olive, NC 28365
May 5, 2004

Ms. Jody Jobhunt, College Recruiter
Enterprise-Rent-a-Car
P.O Box 1735
Wilmington, NC 28403

Dear Ms. Jobhunt,

I am writing to express my interest in the Retail Management Trainee position you listed recently on the MOC Job Network. I have reviewed Enterprise Rent-a-Car's web page and am very impressed with your company's commitment to excellent customer service and your employee development training program. I will be graduating from Mount Olive College in August and am actively seeking a retail management position.

As you will note in the enclosed resume, I have had meaningful practical experience in both retail sales and customer service. My positions at The Gap and Belk's have given me the ability to work with a wide variety of clientele. In addition, I have completed several courses in management while pursuing my baccalaureate degree in business administration. My experiences as Secretary of the Mount Olive College Phi Beta Lambda (national business organization) and as a member of the MOC softball team have also helped my leadership and organizational skills.

I would like to explore the Retail Management Trainee position with you further. I will be in Wilmington the week of February 4th and would love to have the opportunity to speak with you at that time. I will call next week to see if we might identify a mutually convenient meeting time. ~~Should you need additional information, please call me at (910) 658-1234.~~ I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lee

⊗ you explain what the name means or the type of the company in a parenthesis (.....)

EMAIL

Have in mind:

- Who are you writing to? Is it a friend, a family member or a classmate?
- What is the purpose? Maybe they're asking for suggestions, advice or favour.
- What is the topic or theme? A holiday, party, cinema trip or city recommendation?
- Make sure you spend a couple of minutes to consider the content of your informal email/letter.

Opening

Dear Peter,

Hello/Hi Peter,

Introductory sentence

The opening is normally followed by an introductory sentence. This sets the tone of the email, shows your interest in the reader or refers back to a previous correspondence.

How have you been? /How are things?

Thanks so much for your last email/letter.

Main Body

Phrases you could use for making suggestions:

It's great to hear that...

You must/should tell them to ...

Why don't sb do sth...?

Sb should definitely go to...

I'd really recommend (+ verb ing or subject + base infinitive)

Final paragraph

I hope....

Let me know if....

I look forward to +ing (eg hearing from you again soon) .

I can't wait to....

Closing

Best wishes,

Your name

Take care!

Your name

All the best,

Your name

Answer this question.

You are going to spend a weekend with your friend from Scotland called Chris Stewart. Read the email you have just received from Chris and the notes you've made. Write a reply to Chris using all the notes (in red). You should write approximately 150 words.

New message from Chris Stewart

Subject: Coming to Glasgow

Hi,

I'm really happy that we'll see each other next weekend! A friend of mine plays in a band and they're going to play a small concert on Friday evening. Would you like to go and see my friend playing with her group?

We need to decide what to do on Saturday. We could either take a trip down the River Clyde in a boat (I'm sure you'd love the beautiful scenery) or we could go and see a football match. Can you tell me which activity you'd rather do?

I wanted to ask your advice about something. I've just started to learn Italian but I only have one hour of lessons every week. Can you give me some advice on how to improve my Italian as quickly as possible?

Just one final thing. You told me in your last message that you have a new skateboard. Could you bring it with you to Scotland? I'd love to have a go on it.

All the best,
Chris

Great idea!

Give some advice.

Tell Chris.

Not possible. Say why.

not in own exams

To: Chris Stewart
Subject: Re: Coming to Glasgow

Hi Chris,

Thanks for your email. It's great to hear from you. I can't wait to come and visit!

So, about Friday ... I'd love to see your friend's band! What kind of music do they play? I'm thinking of starting my own band so it'll be good to meet your friends and ask them about it.

On Saturday, I'd prefer to go on the boat trip on the river. I'm not really a football fan to be honest. The boat trip sounds much more chilled out!

So, you're learning Italian? I'm impressed! Why don't you try and find an Italian to practise speaking with? If you find someone who's learning English, you could do a language exchange. It's the best way to learn. You should try to read some books in Italian as well.

You asked about my skateboard. I'm sorry but I can't bring it with me to Scotland. I've got loads of stuff and it's too big to fit in my suitcase.

I'm really looking forward to seeing you!

Best wishes,

Sira