

3

A FORMAL LETTER

A formal letter is a letter written to someone you don't know personally and it is usually of a business nature. Note the layout below:

The diagram shows a formal letter layout with the following components and callouts:

- Position of the person you are writing to and/or name of company (start one line below the date):** Points to the recipient's name and company: *The Personnel Manager, Waterstones Bookstore*.
- Address of the person or company you are writing to:** Points to the address: *103 Brunswick St, Canterbury, Kent KT20 68R*.
- Greeting: on the left-hand side of the page (leave a blank line before and after the greeting):** Points to the greeting: *Dear Sir or Madam, / Dear Mr Jones,*
- Signing off: on the left-hand side of the page, followed by a comma:** Points to the sign-off: *Yours faithfully, / Yours sincerely,*
- Your signature and your full name clearly written underneath:** Points to the signature: *Jake Thomas*.
- Your address: on the right-hand side of the page (without your name):** Points to the sender's address: *92 Park Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT18 2LR*.
- Date: below the address, leaving a blank line in between:** Points to the date: *18 June 20...*
- Paragraphing: You can indent (see informal letter unit 7) or write in blocked paragraphs leaving a blank line in between the paragraphs. Note that when using blocked paragraphs, everything begins on the left-hand side of the page, except your address and the date.** Points to the main body of the letter.

NOTE In a formal letter, when you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, begin with **Dear Sir/Madam** and end with **Yours faithfully**. When you know the name of the person you are writing to, begin with **Dear Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms/Dr + surname** and end with **Yours sincerely**. In American English, **Yours truly** and **Yours sincerely** are commonly used in both cases.

In the FCE and ECCE Examinations students are told not to write any addresses.

Greetings / set phrases / signature endings commonly used in a letter to the editor

Greetings	Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Sir/Madam, Dear Editor,
Set phrases for opening paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am writing with regard / in response to the article in your newspaper / magazine about... • I felt I should write to you to express my opinion. • I am writing to express my opinion about an article that I read in your newspaper/ magazine about...
Signature endings	Yours faithfully, Yours truly, Yours sincerely,

4

A STORY

Linking words/phrases:

Time	before, before long, when, as soon as, just as, the moment that, while, as, during, in the meantime, immediately, after, afterwards, after that, later, some time later, soon, then, next, in the beginning, at first, in the end, finally, eventually, at last, until, by the time
Concession - Contrast	although, even though, in spite of, despite, however, no matter how/what, whatever, but, while, whereas, nevertheless, regardless of
Result - Consequence	so... that, such... that, therefore, so, otherwise, for this reason, under the circumstances, consequently, as a consequence, as a result
Cause - Reason	because (of), as, since, due to, owing to
Emphasis	in fact, as a matter of fact, actually, to tell you the truth, strangely enough

Expressions/phrases commonly used in story writing

It was too good to be true. It was a sight for sore eyes. I couldn't believe my eyes/luck. As luck would have it ... I was in/out of luck. (Un)luckily ... I breathed a sigh of relief. I was out of breath.	My heart was beating furiously. It made me jump. I burst out laughing / into tears. It was a real shock. It was getting on my nerves. It was the best / worst ever. I was in a good / bad mood. I was left speechless.	All of a sudden / suddenly ... The next thing I knew ... I was taken by surprise ... To my surprise ... (Un)fortunately ... Without a doubt ... Beyond any doubt ... Without thinking ...
---	---	--

5

A SEMI-FORMAL LETTER BASED ON PROMPTS

- A semi-formal letter is written to a person you know but he/she is not a friend or relative of yours.
- In a semi-formal letter, begin with **Dear Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms/Dr + surname** or with **Dear + first name** and end with **Yours sincerely, All the Best, Best wishes** or **Yours + first name** or **full name** depending on the degree of familiarity.

6

AN ESSAY

You can use the following linking words/phrases to:

List points	firstly, to begin/start with, in the first place, finally, last but not least
Add more points	in addition to this, furthermore, moreover, what is more, also, apart from this, besides, another point worth mentioning is
Give an example	for example, such as, particularly, especially, take for instance
Emphasise	in fact, as a matter of fact
Express contrast	although, in spite of, despite, however, but
Express cause/reason	because (of), as, since, due to, owing to
Express result/consequence	therefore, in this case, for this reason, consequently, as a result
Sum up	in conclusion, to sum up, all in all, on the whole, taking everything into account
Give your opinion	in my opinion/view, personally, I believe, the way I see it, from my point of view, I am in favour of, my belief is that

7

AN INFORMAL LETTER BASED ON PROMPTS

An informal letter is a personal letter usually written to a friend, a relative or an acquaintance. Note the layout below:

The diagram shows a template for an informal letter with the following elements and callouts:

- Greeting:** "Dear Betty," is placed on the left-hand side of the page. Callout: "Greeting: on the left-hand side of the page (e.g. Dear Bill, Dear Mum). Put a comma after the name."
- Address:** "92 Park Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT18 2LR, 18 June 20...." is placed on the right-hand side of the page. Callout: "Your address: on the right-hand side of the page (not always necessary)."
- Date:** "18 June 20...." is placed below the address. Callout: "Date: below the address."
- Body:** Several horizontal lines represent the main text of the letter. Callout: "Indent paragraphs: start the first line of each paragraph under the comma."
- Signature:** "Take care, jill" is placed towards the middle of the page. Callout: "Signing off: towards the middle of the page (e.g. Yours, Best wishes). Don't forget the comma followed by your first name written underneath."

In the FCE and ECCE Examinations students are told not to write any addresses.

Greetings/ phrases/ signature endings commonly used in informal letters

Greetings	Set phrases for opening paragraph	Set phrases for closing paragraph	Signature endings
Dear Tom	How are you (keeping)?	Well, I think that's about it.	Yours
Dearest Jane	I hope you're fine.	Well, that's all for now.	Best wishes
Dear Mum	What have you been up to?	Well, I'd better finish off here.	All the best
Dear Aunt Sue	I haven't heard from you for ages.	I must go now.	Take care
Hi Karen!	It was nice to hear from you.	Write soon.	Bye for now
Hello Bill!	Thank you / Thanks for your letter.	Waiting for your letter.	
NOT:	Sorry I haven't written for so long.	I'm looking forward to hearing from you.	
Dear brother	It's taken me ages to reply, but ...	See you soon.	
Dear friend	I've been meaning to write back, but ...	Keep in touch.	
Dear cousin	Just thought I'd drop you a line.	Give my regards to everyone.	

You can use the following words/ phrases to:

ask for information	I'd like to know... I was wondering about... I want to find out... Could you tell me...
----------------------------	--

express agreement	I agree that... You are right about...
--------------------------	---

give information	I want to tell you... About the information you asked for... You should know... I have to say that...
-------------------------	--

offer to do something	I could... I'd be more than glad to... If you don't mind, I'll...
------------------------------	---

8

A BOOK REVIEW

Expressions/phrases used in a review of a book

Introduction	Main Part	Conclusion
<p>This book is a best seller.</p> <p>The book is/was written by...</p> <p>It is a novel / a classic / a mystery, etc.</p> <p>It came out in...</p> <p>It was published in/by...</p>	<p>The book tells the story of...</p> <p>The story is set in...</p> <p>The book is about...</p> <p>The story begins...</p> <p>The plot portrays / revolves around / is based on...</p> <p>The plot becomes interesting/complicated when...</p> <p>At some point in the story...</p> <p>The hero/heroine of the story...</p> <p>The main character is...</p> <p>This book is badly/well written.</p> <p>The opening chapters are so appealing that you want to keep on reading.</p> <p>The book contains detailed/vivid descriptions of the characters.</p> <p>The book is very descriptive and informative.</p> <p>The plot is weak/confusing/slow in development.</p> <p>It is full of suspense.</p> <p>You'll be impressed by...</p> <p>It's long/boring/interesting/tiring/moving/original/scary, etc.</p> <p>Certain parts are funny/amusing.</p> <p>The ending is (un)predictable/disappointing.</p> <p>It has a surprising ending.</p> <p>The most powerful theme is...</p>	<p>It's popular/ a favourite with...</p> <p>I was highly disappointed by...</p> <p>It's great for... fans.</p> <p>All in all / Overall, I found it...</p> <p>I definitely recommend it.</p> <p>It's (not) worth reading.</p> <p>It was better than I expected.</p> <p>It's suitable for both children and adults.</p> <p>You will find it hard to put down.</p> <p>If you haven't read it, make sure you get a copy.</p> <p>There is no question why this book is considered a classic/masterpiece/best seller, etc.</p> <p>It is a big let-down from start/beginning to finish/end.</p> <p>It's worthwhile.</p> <p>I found the book boring/exciting.</p> <p>It's a masterpiece of its kind.</p> <p>It appeals to all ages.</p> <p>It's (un)suitable for children.</p>