

Formal letter structure

1 Opening

Address your letter to *Dear* + the name or job title of the person you have been asked to write to, then start a new line for the opening paragraph. *Note:* although it is good practice to teach and expect students to put dates and addresses on formal letters, and to sign them appropriately, these features are not required and not rewarded in the exam.

2 Paragraph 1: Introduction

Why are you writing? Give the general aim and minimum information only, e.g. to complain, apply, request, disagree, and an indication of what you are responding to, e.g. a recent holiday or a letter in last week's newspaper.

3 Paragraph 2: Details of situation

Give previous history of event or your background or experience. Say what happened exactly if you are making a complaint, or focus directly on the text you are arguing with. This section should include specific data such as names, dates, facts and details.

4 Paragraph 3: Further development

Give further support to your claim or request. Summarise the current situation and why you should be given consideration, e.g. other problems which occurred with your holiday accommodation, how well you fulfil the job requirements.

5 Final paragraph: Future action

Say what you wish to happen next, e.g. that you look forward to being called for interview or expect to receive some compensation as soon as possible. Suggest, firmly but politely, what may happen if you do not receive a response to a complaint.