

Writing Help

1 A Personal Letter (1) (page 17)

Layout

Your address
The date

Greeting

Hi Tania!/Dear Tommy,

1 Introductory questions

How are you? Have you decided where to go on holiday? Did your mum pass her driving test?

2 Describe where you are (the place/the weather)

Anyway, we're camping in the Isle of Skye. It has rained every single day ...

3 Say what you are doing

We're very busy. We go walking every day and ...

4 Mention the people in the group

Our news: Predictably, ...

5 Ending. Make up an excuse to stop writing.

Well, I must finish. It's my turn to cook tonight. Write back soon.

Say goodbye and sign your name.

*All the best,/Lots of love,
Janet.*

Useful Vocabulary

Weather: changeable, cloudy, cold, freezing, hot, rainy, sunny
Accommodation: cabin, campsite, farm, guest house, hotel, rented cottage, tent, youth hostel

Locations: in a forest, in the middle of nowhere, in the mountains, on the coast, near a river, near a town

Activities: canoeing, diving, horseriding, parachuting, rafting, sailing, skiing, snowboarding, trekking, windsurfing

Informal style

Involve the reader with questions: *How are you?/Can you believe it?/That skiing break sounds the best, doesn't it?*

Refer to the reader: *I hope the summer job is going well/Here's some news for you/So you can imagine what he's like/Tell me all your news!*

Linking

Begin sentences with informal linkers: *Anyway, we're .../ Luckily, we didn't .../Actually, there isn't .../Unbelievably, .../Predictably, .../But then we're .../And Tom has .../Well, I must finish ...*

Checking

Style: Have you used informal linkers, words and expressions?

Grammar: Check your letter for verb tenses.

2 An Adventure Story (page 29)

Layout

1 Set the scene

Write a few sentences to set the scene and introduce the characters.

It was a beautiful day in spring and the sun was shining. The night before, my cousin Sam, my boyfriend, Tom, and I had decided** to go canoeing down the river. We had arranged** to meet up at eight o'clock. When I arrived, Sam was waiting*.*

* To set the scene or say what was happening at a particular time, use the Past Continuous.

** To say what had happened before, use the Past Perfect.

2 Say what happened to start with

Begin narrating the main action. Include some dialogue. Use speech marks and reporting verbs (*say, shout, etc.*)
Suddenly, it started to rain heavily. Sam shouted, 'Look over there! It's Tom's helmet!'

3 Develop the story

Write what happened next.

We got out of our canoes and walked back up the rapids looking for Tom ...

4 Write the ending

Write a suitable conclusion to your story.

In the end, our parents came to collect us ... but we all felt very happy to be back home.

Useful Vocabulary

Weather: cloudy, foggy, freezing, rainy, sunny, wet, windy

Places: castle, forest, mountains, old house, park, river, valley, woods

Verbs: argue, crash, escape, fall, find, get back, get lost, hunt, hurt, meet, realise, recognise

Adjectives: afraid, amazing, awful, beautiful, exciting, frightening, strange, terrifying

Linking

After I had arrived, we started to get ready.

By the time I got to the bus stop, the bus had gone.

Before leaving, I had breakfast.

When we saw him, we rang the emergency services.

While we were having lunch, it started to snow.

My sister had an accident in the kitchen. Immediately, I rang for an ambulance. (very quickly)

I was sleeping. Suddenly, I heard a scream. (a surprise)

I arrived at school late and was coming through the door. Just then, I bumped into the head teacher. (at that moment)

I waited for him for hours. At last he came. (after a long time)

He had a lot of problems getting his driving licence. In the end, he passed the test. (finally)

I missed the bus yesterday. Luckily, Pat gave me a lift. (fortunately)

I was really tired after the first few kilometres of the walk.

Somehow, I managed to finish it. (with difficulty)

Checking

Grammar: Have you included examples of all the past tenses?

Linking: Have you included a few linking words and expressions?

3 A Report (page 41)

Layout

Heading		
To:	From:	Date:
Subject:		

1 General Description

Introduce the report with your aim and a general description of the place.

Beverley is a small town in the east of England. The aim of this report is to ...

2 List of good points

Give a list of things that you think are good about the place. There are several things tourists will find attractive ...

- a It has got ...
- b In addition, there is ...

3 List of bad points

Give a list of your criticisms of the place.

On the other hand, tourists might find some things disappointing.

- a There are not enough ...
- b Another thing is the ...

4 Conclusion

Finish the report with a brief summary of the main points and make suggestions.

*To sum up, ...
The council need to do something to ... They should ...*

Useful Vocabulary

Positive adjectives: cheap, clean, easy, excellent, free, frequent, punctual, safe

Negative adjectives: damaged, dangerous, dirty, expensive, inefficient, polluted, unsafe

Nouns: accident, museum, old buildings, pedestrians, pollution, public transport, shopping centre, traffic jam, train service

Linking

To list ideas:

*The old buildings are dirty and damaged.
The old buildings are dirty. Some of them are damaged, too.
The old buildings are dirty. Some of them are also damaged.
The old buildings are dirty. In addition, some of them are damaged.*

The old buildings suffer from dirt plus damage.

To contrast ideas:

*The buses are cheap but not very frequent.
Although the buses are cheap, they are not very frequent.
The buses are cheap. However, they are not very frequent.
On the one hand, the buses are cheap. On the other hand, they are not very frequent.*

Checking

Layout: Have you followed the layout above? Has your report got clear paragraphs?

Linking: Have you used the linking words in the list above?

Spelling: Use the Mini-dictionary to check spelling of words you are not sure about.

4 A Review of a film or TV drama (page 5)

Layout

1 Introduction

Give basic information about the film or programme. Say where and when it is set and give some background.

This episode of the historical drama 'Clifton Heights' was on Friday night at 7 pm on Channel Four. It is set in Bristol in the 19th century and is about the people who live in a beautiful square.

2 The plot

Briefly mention some of the main events – don't go into details. Use present tenses.

In this episode, Polly's daughter Charlotte gets lost when they are out shopping in the town centre. Luckily, Sebastian is there to save the day and takes her back.

3 The actors, characters and dialogue

Evaluate the performance of the main characters. Comment on the script and dialogue if you wish.

Gemma Harvey (Polly) is convincing as the absent-minded housewife with a secret fantasy life as an actress. However, the performance of Robert Martin (Sebastian), the local police officer is not so good.

4 Location, scenes, costumes

Evaluate the filming, locations, costumes. Mention one specific scene if you wish.

The old locations are very realistic, and the costumes are excellent.

5 Conclusion

Finish with a brief comment and make a recommendation.

To sum up, this episode was another example of a historical drama with fantastic locations and costumes but a rather dull plot. I certainly would not recommend you to watch it.

Useful Vocabulary

plot: locations exciting/gripping; predictable/boring; too much action/sex/violence; not enough dialogue/action

dialogues: realistic/funny; unnatural/tedious/dull

acting: a strong/outstanding/convincing performance

a weak/uninspired/unconvincing performance

filming: imaginative/unimaginative

costumes: beautiful/realistic/unrealistic

locations: spectacular/unspectacular/beautiful

dull - not interesting, too boring & last for all the time

Linking

To contrast ideas:

*Although the acting was good, the filming was poor.
The acting was good. However, the filming was poor.
The acting was good. Nevertheless, the filming was poor.
The film was good in spite of the poor filming.
Despite the poor filming, the film was good*

Checking

Layout: Have you followed the layout above? Has your review got clear paragraphs?

Vocabulary: Look at the adjectives you have used. Can you be more descriptive? Use the Useful Vocabulary and the Mini-dictionary to help you.

Mistakes: Check through your review for mistakes of grammar and spelling.

5 A Written Enquiry (page 65)

Layout

To: the name of the person or the company
From: your name and email address
Subject: specify the subject in one or two words

1 Introduction

Give your reason for writing and say where you saw the advert.

I am writing to ... which I recently saw ...

2 Initial questions

First, it says that ... Does that mean ... ? The advert also ... What exactly does that mean?

3 More questions

Another question I have is about ... I am also a bit worried about ...

4 Final questions

Finally, I am not sure what you mean by ... Could you tell me how ... ?

5 Ending

*I look forward to hearing from you.
Yours, (Your name)*

Useful Vocabulary

*size/length/height/weight/speed/power/clarity
how big/long/high/heavy/fast/powerful/clear?
easy to use/understand, difficult to carry/use
fully guaranteed, the guarantee covers accidents/loss/theft*

Linking

To list ideas:

First, it says ...; The advert also mentions ...; Another question is ...; I am a bit worried about ..., too; Finally, I am ...

To express result:

It's so heavy that you can't carry it. (so + adj + that + clause)

*It's such a fast computer that you can use the Internet easily.
(such a(n) + adj + noun + that + clause)*

It is not big enough to type with. (not + adj + enough + infinitive)

It is too big to put in my school bag. (too + adj + infinitive)

Checking

Style: Have you used formal language? (e.g. no contractions, no informal expressions)

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

6 Describing a Person (page 77)

Layout

Paragraph 1

Introduce the person and give a bit of background, e.g. where he/she was born, where he/she lives now, his/her job, his/her dislikes.

I'm going to write about my grandfather. He's called Dennis and he lives on his own in a little cottage in the country. He used to work as an engineer but now he is retired though he still does some consultancy work.

Paragraph 2

Describe the person's physical appearance (but not too many details), personality and character.

Dennis has not got very much hair and what he has is white. He's got a large nose and a very round red face. He's a rather eccentric man and likes being on his own. He can be irritable especially in the early morning but he is a very generous person.

Paragraph 3

Give some examples of the person's behaviour or relationships with other people.

He's very well-known in the village where he lives because he is often out walking his dog, an old labrador called Einstein. He gets on with most people but is very impatient with children, particularly when they come and knock on his door at Halloween.

Useful Vocabulary

Hair: long/short/shoulder-length, black/blond/brown/dark/fair/grey/red/white, curly/straight/wavy, pony tail, plaits

Age: in his/her (early/mid/late) teens, twenties, thirties, elderly, middle-aged, young

Face: beard, chin, eyebrows, freckles, lips, moustache, wrinkles
shape: long/narrow/round/thin/wide

General: good-looking, overweight, short, slim, tall, well-built

Personality: bad-tempered, cheerful, creative, disorganised, dynamic, generous, hard-working, helpful, honest, insensitive, kind, lazy, materialistic, mean, moody, nervous, outgoing, relaxed, reliable, selfish, shy, sociable, strong, stubborn, sympathetic, tolerant, weak

Likes/Dislikes: animals, chess, collecting things, computers, playing/listening to music, playing/watching sport, reading, travelling, watching videos

Linking

To give examples:

She loves animals, especially dogs.

She hates junk food, such as hamburgers.

She is helpful. For example, she often baby-sits for people in her street.

They often argue, particularly about politics.

Checking

Spelling: Use the Mini-dictionary to check your spelling (especially adjectives).

Style: Check that the description is quite informal (e.g. with contractions) but make sure there are no very informal words or expressions.

7 A 'For and Against' Essay (page 89)

Layout

Introduction

Introduce the essay. Begin with either some **personal information** or some general **social** or **historical background** related to the topic.

Every year, thousands of students take important exams which can decide their future.

Arguments 'for' the title

List one or two arguments that agree with the title and give examples if you can.

On the one hand, exams seem fair. The questions are the same for all students. Also, ...

Arguments 'against' the title

Now list arguments that disagree with the title and give examples if you can.

On the other hand, there are some drawbacks with exams. Despite some students ...

Your conclusion

Summarise the arguments very briefly and then give your personal opinion.

To sum up, exams are not the ideal way of testing students ... In my opinion, the best system would be ...

Useful Vocabulary

Subjects: traditional subjects: *foreign language, geography, history, information technology, literature, maths, science;* alternative subjects: *cooking, do-it-yourself, driving lessons, self-defence;* after-school activities: *chess club, choir, drama club, photography club*

School holidays: *free time, school trips, summer job, work experience*

Discipline: *code of conduct, monitors, punishments, rules, vandalism, warnings*

Linking

To list ideas (addition):

Students also need more time to study.

Furthermore/In addition/Moreover, students need more time to study.

Students need more time to study, too.

To contrast ideas:

On the one hand, students are prepared for university. On the other hand, students are not prepared for work.

Students are prepared for university but they are not prepared for work.

Students are prepared for university. However, they are not prepared for work.

To give examples:

Exams are important – for example, university exams.

Exams, such as university exams, are important.

Conclusion

To sum up, exams are not the ideal way of testing.

In my opinion, a student's work during the term should count.

Checking

Introduction: Does this get the interest of the reader?

Layout: Have you organised paragraphs according to the plan?

Linking: Have you included linking words?

Punctuation: Check your writing for capital letters, commas and full stops.

8 A Letter of Application (page 100)

Layout

Your address
The date

Name and address of the company

Greeting

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ..., (if you know their name)

Dear Sir/Madam, (if you don't know their name)

Paragraph 1

Simply state your reasons for writing.

I am writing to you with reference to ...

I am interested in applying for the job/position of ...

I enclose a copy of my CV.

Paragraph 2

Explain why you are interested in the job.

I would like to work for you because I am very interested in ...

I would also like to learn about ...

I feel that ... is extremely important.

Paragraph 3

Give examples to show your qualities.

I think I am a ... person. For example, I have ...

I also feel that I can ..., Last year I ..., Finally, I am familiar with ...

Paragraph 4

Write about your qualifications and practical skills.

I think I would be a good ... due to my ...

I am fluent in spoken and written ...

Formal ending

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely, (when you know the person's name)

Yours faithfully, (when you don't)

Signature (+ print your name clearly)

Useful Vocabulary

Reasons: *get experience, learn about, find out about, interested in*

Personal qualities: *committed, hard-working, reliable, determined, enthusiastic, creative*

Experience: *voluntary work, holiday jobs, participation in activities*

Qualifications: *hold a certificate in ..., passed exams in ..., completed a course in ...*

Practical skills: *fluent in (language), driving licence, cooking, carpentry, first aid*

Linking

To give reasons:

I would like to work for you mainly because I am very interested in environmental and development issues, but also due to my interest in the problems caused by flooding.

I am familiar with problems of flood control, since I have lived all my life in a farm on Holland below sea level! I have a clean driving licence. I am a capable mechanic, as I have completed a three-year course of evening classes.

Checking

Style: Make sure you use formal words or expressions. Don't use contractions.

Grammar: Check your letter for grammar mistakes.

9 A Personal Letter (2) (page 113)

Layout

Greeting

Dear ...

Paragraph 1

Say hello, ask a few personal questions and/or make a few chatty comments.

How are you? Did you pass the exam? I hope so. The weather here is really bad at the moment. Last week, I went to ...

Paragraph 2

This is your main reason for writing. Answer questions your partner asked.

Anyway, I'm writing to ...

Paragraph 3

Talk about some of your plans for your exchange partner's visit to your country.

We'll probably visit ...

Paragraph 4

Finish the letter with an excuse to stop writing.

Well, I have to go now because ...

Say goodbye and write your name

See you soon/Write back soon/Lots of love

Useful Vocabulary

Presents: *book about Britain, box of chocolates, CD of traditional music, ornament, perfume*

Music: *classical, folk, heavy metal, jazz, rock, techno*

Clothes: *gloves, jeans, jumper, raincoat, shorts, suit, swimming costume, trainers*

Places to go: *art gallery, cinema, club, football match, gym, museum, park, party, restaurant*

Linking

To give more information:

You can go wherever you like.

We can go and see whoever we want.

You can buy whatever you like.

You can make a cup of tea whenever you like.

Checking

Layout: Have you organised your letter correctly?

Punctuation: Check your letter for full stops, capital letters and apostrophes in contractions.

Spelling: Check your spelling – use your dictionary.

Content: Have you answered the questions?

10 A Description (page 125)

Layout

Paragraph 1

Introduce the place and give a bit of background, e.g. what it is (e.g. castle/football stadium/a place of natural interest); where it is; when it was built (or set up); its size and what it looks like

Niagara Falls is without doubt one of the most impressive places I have ever been to. It was developed as a tourist resort in ...

Paragraph 2

Describe what there is to see and do in the place.

There is plenty to do in Niagara on both the American and Canadian sides of the border. The views of the falls are absolutely fantastic and as well as that, ...

Paragraph 3

Describe the surroundings and what to do there.

Around the town there are lots of places to visit. There are several theme parks in the area plus museums which show ...

Paragraph 4

Sum up why you like the place.

I think Niagara impressed me so much because of the scale of the falls themselves and the number of activities round them.

Useful Vocabulary

Opinion adjectives: *austere, beautiful, breathtaking, charming, dramatic, grand, historic, impressive, magnificent, monumental, spectacular*

Descriptive adjectives: *bare, glass, granite, huge, stone, tiny, ornamental, wooded*

Buildings: *entrance, dome, facade (front), fountain, roof, ruins, stairway, tower*

Nature: *forest, glacier, hill, lake, pond, waterfall, wood*

Expressions: *Without doubt, it is the most important ..., What strikes you (about it) is the ..., ... is well worth visiting, ... is surrounded by ..., ... impressed me so much because of ...*

Linking

To list ideas:

It is extremely large. In fact, it is the biggest church in Spain.

To compare ideas:

It is very crowded in August. In contrast, in February there is hardly anyone ...

Checking

Style: Have you followed the paragraph plans?

Vocabulary: How many opinion or descriptive adjectives have you used? Can you add more?

Spelling: Use the Mini-dictionary to check the spelling of the words you are not sure about.