

67 I can write a formal letter

A Useful phrases for formal letters

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Phrase	Use/Meaning
Opening a letter	
I am writing to inform you that I will be leaving at the end of June. I am writing to inform you of my intention to terminate my lease.	used for giving information. intention (to do sth) a plan to do sth terminate sth end or stop sth. lease a legal agreement for renting a property.
I am writing to enquire whether . . .	used for asking a question or making a request.
I regret to inform you that . . .	used for giving bad news.
I am delighted to inform you that . . .	used for giving good news.
I am writing in response to your appeal for aid in . . .	used for replying to an advertisement, etc. appeal for sth an urgent or sincere request for people to give money, help, etc.
Please accept my sincere condolences.	used for expressing apologies, sympathy, etc. sincere expressing what you really think or feel. SYN genuine . condolences the things you say to show sympathy when sb has just died.

Opening a reply to a letter	
Further to our meeting last week. . . Following our conversation on 5 May. . . In reply to your letter of 7 July. . . With reference to your letter of 3 June. . . Thank you for your letter concerning . . .	used to refer to a previous conversation with the receiver, or a letter/email from them. concerning about. SYN regarding .

Referring to something in a letter	
Please find enclosed a copy of . . . As you will see from my CV, I . . .	used to refer to sth in the body of the letter or included with it.
I would like to draw your attention to . . .	used to refer to sth in the body of the letter, or sth that is relevant to the subject of the letter.

Closing a letter	
Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.	commonly used at the end of a formal letter or offer (<i>should</i> here is a more formal equivalent of <i>if</i>).
I would be grateful if you could contact me as soon as possible.	used to make a request, or ask for action to be taken.
I look forward to meeting you. I look forward to hearing from you .	used to end a formal letter (hearing from you is used when you expect a reply).

1 Circle the correct word(s).

- 1 Please accept my sincere condolence/condolences on the death of your father.
- 2 As you will see/read from my CV, I have extensive experience in marketing.
- 3 I am delighted/delighted to inform you that your application has been successful.
- 4 I look toward/forward to hearing from you.
- 5 Following/Following to our earlier conversation, I have now looked at the plan.
- 6 Thank you for your letter concerning/concerned the sale of your property.
- 7 Would/Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.
- 8 I am writing in response for/to your appeal for assistance at Longhurst Farm in July.

2 Write a more formal word or phrase with a similar meaning to the words in italics.

- 1 I am writing to ask / _____ whether there has been any progress with my application.
- 2 I am sorry / _____ to tell / _____ you that the International Sustainability conference has been cancelled.
- 3 I am writing to inform you of my plan / _____ to end / _____ my lease.
- 4 If / _____ you need / _____ any more / _____ information, please feel free / _____ to get in touch with / _____ me.
- 5 After / _____ our chat / _____ yesterday, it would be good / _____ if you could send me the details about / _____ the proposed changes.

3 One word is missing from each sentence. What is it, and where does it go?

- 1 I am writing in to your article about supermarket packaging. _____
- 2 We look forward hearing from you. _____
- 3 I am writing reply to your letter of 17 October. _____
- 4 Thank you for your letter the pre-service training course at CDQ. _____
- 5 Please enclosed a copy of my birth certificate. _____
- 6 I am writing in reply to your for donations following the tsunami disaster. _____
- 7 Please accept my sincere on the death of your grandfather. _____
- 8 I would like to your attention to the final clause of the lease. _____
- 9 As you see from my CV, I have extensive experience in sales and marketing. _____
- 10 With to your letter of 17 May, I am enclosing the documents you requested. _____

4 Write sentences suitable for formal letters.

- Ask a customer to get in touch with you before the weekend.
I would be grateful if you could contact me before the weekend.
- 1 Start a letter explaining that you saw an advertisement for a receptionist in yesterday's paper.

 - 2 Point out that you have included a photocopy of your driving licence in the envelope.

 - 3 Mention a conversation you had with your client yesterday, and tell them that you now have the necessary documents.

 - 4 Say that you are happy to give any more information needed about your qualifications if they are needed.

 - 5 Say that you would like the company to send you a brochure and price list.

 - 6 Explain to an interview candidate that they have been given the job.



B Advice on writing formal letters

When writing a formal letter, firstly **state** your purpose in the opening paragraph in a **straightforward** manner. The **body** of the letter should contain one or more paragraphs, each dealing with a separate aspect of the **subject matter**. The final paragraph should **spell out** what you want to happen next.

It is crucial to adopt a suitable **tone**. Be clear, **concise**, and **to the point**, avoiding **superfluous** matter, but not too **blunt** or **abrupt**. Keep the language **plain** and simple where possible. Refer to **sample** letters on the internet for further guidance.

Glossary

state sth	write or say sth clearly or firmly.	to the point	relevant and without any extra information. SYN pertinent .
straightforward	uncomplicated and easy to understand. OPP convoluted .	superfluous	unnecessary.
body	the main part of a book, article, text, etc.	blunt	saying what you think even if it offends or upsets people.
subject matter	the ideas or information in a book, letter, painting, etc.	abrupt	speaking or acting with few words and in a way that seems unfriendly or rude. SYNS brusque , curt .
spell sth out	explain the details of sth in a simple, clear way.	plain	without unnecessary detail: clear.
tone	the general attitude or feeling expressed in a piece of writing.	sample	an example, or small amount, of sth to show what all of it is like.
concise	expressed clearly and without using any unnecessary words.		

5 According to the text above, are the following positive (P) or negative (N)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 The information was superfluous. _____ | 6 I thought his email was quite abrupt. _____ |
| 2 She writes in plain English. _____ | 7 The information was pertinent. _____ |
| 3 The letter sounds curt. _____ | 8 The tone was brusque. _____ |
| 4 It was to the point. _____ | 9 It was written in a convoluted way. _____ |
| 5 His style is very straightforward. _____ | 10 Her response was very blunt. _____ |

6 Complete the dialogues with a suitable word.

- Did he say what he needed? ~ Yes, he _____ it very clearly.
- Her tone is rather brusque, isn't it? ~ Yes, I find it rather _____.
- Did you find some model letters? ~ Yes, I found some _____ letters on a website.
- He should tell her the problem clearly. ~ That's right; he's got to _____ it out.
- Did you enjoy the programme? ~ No, I wasn't interested in the _____ matter.
- Was the complaint in the introduction? ~ No, I put it in the _____ of the letter.
- Is that detail really necessary? ~ No, it's _____.
- Is the letter easy to follow? ~ Yes, it's very _____.

7 ABOUT YOU AND YOUR COUNTRY Is the advice in the text similar to the advice you would give for formal letters in your own language? Where is it the same, and where does it differ?

