

# IIT Madras

## ONLINE DEGREE

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**English – I (Basic English)**

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**Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai**

**Lecture 74**

**A Business Trip**

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## WRITING



Hello, welcome to this the next session of the writing module in English. In this session, we are going to talk about yet another kind of business writing. A lot of the times we have to write business letters such that also include some personal details for instance when we visited business partner or when a business partner or a client or a customer visits us requesting or expecting some help then some personal details become inevitable. In this session today, we will talk about, what not to mention in communications of this kind and what must be said very clearly, explicitly in communications of this kind.

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## A BUSINESS TRIP

- Even in business writing, sometimes we have to share personal information.
- For instance, we travel to a new location, we have to tell our host about our stay, food etc.



Let us go next. So, for instance when we travel to another country or another city, a new location, a new place where we do not know what to see, where to stay, how to travel, what to buy for a gift, where to eat, then it is almost unavoidable that we request help from our clients, customers, partners, the service provider you name it. Here is a similar situation. Go ahead.

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- But a lot of people just casually mention some sightseeing preferences.
- It is important to mention even these personal things precisely and clearly.
- Many tests of proficiency in English have parts of this kind of writing in their tests.



A business writing ordinarily is meant to be a personal, nothing personal in it. But on these occasions, you have to mention, and it is better that you mention well in time, well in advance of your visit so that your business partner, client, customer, service provider knows about your preferences. Imagine you go to a particular city for business. Now, you work there for about 10

hours, maybe 9 to 6, 8 to 6, another 2 hours preparing to go for that meeting for that business and what do you do the remaining 10 hours, maybe you sleep for 7 or 8 wash, eat, you still have about 3 or 4 hours.

So, what do you do with that? A lot of people worldwide go sightseeing in a new place if you have time to spare. No matter where we are, we need to eat, we need to stay, we need to wash and quite often unless we are very hard-pressed for money. We also buy gifts for friends, for family while leaving, while coming back and in all of these situations in all of these cases we request help from our local friends, who know the place, who can tell you where you will get authentic stuff, where you will get food which is clean delicious and does not cost you the Earth. Who can help you book a hotel room, who can help you make arrangements for travel or who can even advise you how and where and when to go sightseeing.

So, it is better that we be clear in our head about these things rather than be casual rather than be unclear rather than be vague; it always helps. Imagine you reach a new city your business partner talks to you about business, and on your mind, you have this thing, when shall I ask him? What place is one goes to see here? You may not be able to give your total attention to the item on the agenda to the business on hand and then second hazard here is that if you tell your business partner after you reach there, you spring a surprise upon him can you come with me at 5 o'clock this evening, I want to go for dinner to a particular place.

Now, your friend is not prepared. It is all possible, he has a family, he has his own commitments, he has his own clients or customers, or she has her own compulsions then you know either she says no to you which will be difficult for her and difficult for you, or she says yes to you reluctantly, where you will continue to feel guilty, and she will be irritated all along. It is, therefore, best to ask for help well in advance so that your helper, your potential helper your possible helper can plan her own business so that he or she can keep themselves free for that day that week that evening so that they can give you help and you will not feel guilty.

You will get the best from your local partner because the local partner may have planned everything how you will travel, where you will go to, where you are likely to stay keeping your preferences in mind you can state your preferences too with your partner that look I you know this is not a great place I want to stay here, I want to stay in there, you can say all that in advance of course in a business-like manner not you know being romantic about it or being apologetic

about it or being vague about it, very business-like and in polite language, it is possible to be formal and polite, or it is possible to be polite and formal there is no conflict between these.

So, you know, it is important to mention even these things in a business-like manner precisely, clearly and writing in this manner also happens to be a part of many international tests of writing. IELTS or TOEFL or even in many universities you are expected to write in this on this kind of topic.

The idea is they want to check after you have done the lower-level skills after you appeared at the test of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation then the examiner wants to see if you can plan an answer if you can distinguish between trivial and important, if you can distinguish between significant and insignificant. So, these are the kinds of things that are being tested when you write something of this kind.

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In about 150 words, write a letter to a business partner abroad giving him the details of your forthcoming travel to meet him.

You can mention your personal preferences in room, food, etc during your stay there. You can also say if you would wish to see some tourist spots in that city and nearby.



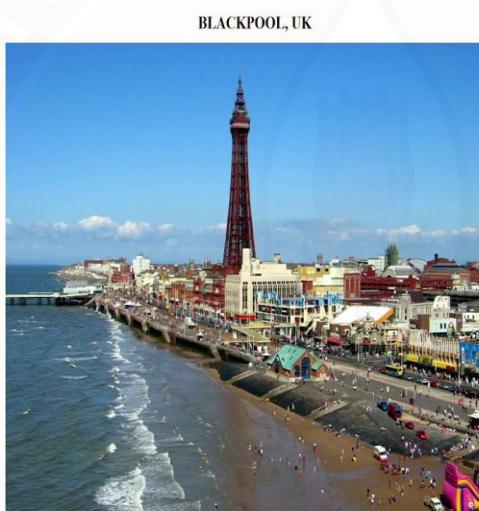
Let us look at a particular example. This is a typical question. You often get, or this is a typical situation as somebody has said a good language course gives you authentic experience, gives you authentic stuff and tasks that can happen in real life. So, this is a writing task that can easily happen in the life of any business executive, young or old, senior or junior.

Here, you are asked to write a letter to a business partner abroad, giving him the details of a forthcoming travel to meet him. You can also this is also part of that question, you can mention

your personal preferences in room, what kind of room would you like, what kind of food do you eat and if you would also like to see some tourist spots or if you like to do some shopping and that sort of thing.

You can say all that but remember you have only 150 words and as you looked, as you saw in an earlier session even in business writing, more so actually in business writing there is something called format. A particular kind of thing only in a particular place and number two, more important things first and not so important things next. So, this kind of order, this kind of formatting is integral to all sorts of business writing.

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Look at the example, imagine you have to go to an average, a small relatively a small the European city on business you are in the business of export and sometimes you have to go and talk to the client renegotiate your rates, your delivery schedule or there may have been complaints about the quality of products you export and you are about to lose that client, that business before that happens you decide to have a conversation, and this is how you go.

So, a personal trip to this city called Blackpool. Blackpool actually is a city on the Atlantic coast of the United Kingdom. You can look up Google and find more about it. It is a place worth visiting, very popular among students and young people because it is Lake District is nearby the city of Lancaster is nearby, and Scotland is next door. So, lot of it has also is an industrial city for its wool industry et cetera et cetera. Besides, it is a huge railway junction in addition to being

a popular place for people going for cross-country trekking, hill climb, rock climbing and tour of the Lake District, all those things.

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## ROUGH DRAFT



A Business Trip

Maya Lobo Prabhu,  
Konkan Exports Pvt Ltd  
Mangalore, India

To: Mr Peter P Sumner,  
# 36, Post Office Road,  
Blackpool, A27 GH 2L, U K

21 Jan, 2021  
Dear Peter,



Let us see, next, here is your letter many people write as I bring the letter to you may be surprised. How can anyone write like this sloppy, casual, vague, more words than necessary even in business writing you might wonder but, check in real life and you will find that actually a lot of people more than you and I might expect to write in this manner, which is not the best way to write a business letter even when you are making personal requests. So, look at this, the sender's address, the recipients' address date and the recipient address all that given.

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## A Business Trip

You will be happy to know that I am eagerly looking forward to my visit to your great country. I have heard so much about your country. I am very eager to visit it. So I have already booked my flight ticket, business class, and I am reaching Heathrow London at three a m on 17 March. And then I think I will take a train from there to reach your city some time in the afternoon. In London I may visit an Indian friend for a few hours.



Next subject is also described now see the opening. You will be happy to know that I am eagerly looking forward to my visit to your great country. What does it mean? I have heard so much about your country. What have you heard? I am very eager to visit it. So, I have already booked sorry I have already booked my flight ticket business class, and I am reaching Heathrow airport London at three in the morning on 17 March, and then I think I will take a train from there to reach your city sometime in the afternoon.

In London, I may visit an Indian friend for a few hours. How much of it? It is such that your friend needs to know. Your business partner needs to know, your friend may, but your business partner does your business partner need to know that you are very happy, very excited. Perhaps yes.

But, how does it make a difference to your business partner whether you have already booked the flight ticket and which class you are flying except that it is bad it is in bad taste maybe you did not mean it but your reader might say this writer is showing off rather than travel economy class she is perhaps for the first time travelling business class, and she wants the entire world to know that she is travelling business class, it anywhere does not speak well of you. If nobody is coming to receive you at 3 in the morning at the airport then what is the point telling them you come at 3 in the morning or 4 in the morning or 2 in the morning is your business and then the few hours that you have, whatever you like you can do in London. Why should your business partner in Blackpool be told wasting his time and wasting your time writing it, his time reading it?

So, this entire page has nothing but irrelevant, trivial, non-essential details of a very personal, of a very private nature nobody else other than maybe your family maybe your friends who are close to you even need to know. So, this is an example of bad writing and what you have got is a redundant, confused, vague all the three.

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On reaching your city, I will go to the hotel. Please tell me the name of the hotel you are going to book for me. It will be a joy to see you at the railway station, but why take unnecessary trouble. I will take a taxi and go to the hotel directly from the railway station. I hope you have good hotel in your city. Kindly tell them that we in India take only vegetarian food, so I would like to have good vegetables and fruits and milk with rice and sambhar.



Next, the details that you should have given or not given here on reaching your city I will go to the hotel. When do you reach his city? The intended city? Do you expect your business partner to come to the railway station to receive you? Please tell me the name of the hotel you are going to book for me. It will be a joy to see you at the railway station, but why take unnecessary travel. I will take a taxi and go to the hotel directly from the railway station. I hope you have a good hotel in your city. What are you talking about, you know you can as well check if there are hotels, kindly tell them that we in India take only vegetarian food. Do you mean to say that anyone in the hotel industry does not know what kind of food people in India eat, and is it correct to say that all Indians take only vegetarian food?

And then you further say so I would like to have good vegetables and fruits and milk with rice in sambhar, God is your friend going to cook all this for you, why does your friend have to know anything beyond the fact that you know we must definitely stay in a hotel or we must go to a restaurant that offers vegetarian food.

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Are there good tourist places in your city? Then please tell me about them and I may also like to visit them. Since my husband is not coming with me, I should bring some gift for him. Can you please advise me which shops I should go to so that I get good discounts and good quality materials at a very cheap rate? Thank you very much.

Please reply.

Yours sincerely,  
M L Prabhu (243 words)



Next, similar to it, are there good tourist places in your city. You can as well check with Google. But okay no harm then please tell me about them, and I may also like to visit them welcome since my husband is not coming with me. What are you telling your business partner? Are you giving him make some suggestion? It might easily be misled, I should bring some gift for him, can you please advice me which shops should go to, would you, is it important for you to know the name of the shop now particularly when you are going to go only after going to go to that shop only after you reach Blackpool.

All that is unnecessary, I get a good discount. What is a good discount of 2 rupees out of 98 or 98 rupees out of a 100? And good quality materials at a very cheap rate, thank you very much. Actually, this entire communication says little about the particulars of your trip when you are reaching, where you are reaching, what you will eat, where would you like to go and see, what kind of shopping you might want to do and where none of those details are clear.

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## COMMENTS



- The first draft has 100 words more than the limit for this letter.
- It has many items of unnecessary information.
- In vital details, it is vague.
- Inaccurate and redundant words can confuse the reader .



Are there good tourist places in your city? Then please tell me about them and I may also like to visit them. Since my husband is not coming with me, I should bring some gift for him. Can you please advise me which shops I should go to so that I get good discounts and good quality materials at a very cheap rate? Thank you very much.



Please reply.

Yours sincerely,  
M L Prabhu (243 words)



Go to the next. Actually, the first draft is about how many words can come back 243 words in place of 150, go next almost a 100 more than the limit for this letter at a test you may severely lose marks in vital details, sorry, it has many items of unnecessary information, and in vital details, it is vague, inaccurate and redundant words are many in this text, and they can have a very undesirable effect. They can confuse the reader and let us look at some examples again.

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## COMMENTS



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## A Business Trip

You will be happy to know that I am eagerly looking forward to my visit to your great country. I have heard so much about your country. I am very eager to visit it. So I have already booked my flight ticket, business class, and I am reaching Heathrow London at three a m on 17 March. And then I think I will take a train from there to reach your city some time in the afternoon. In London I may visit an Indian friend for a few hours.



On reaching your city, I will go to the hotel. Please tell me the name of the hotel you are going to book for me. It will be a joy to see you at the railway station, but why take unnecessary trouble. I will take a taxi and go to the hotel directly from the railway station. I hope you have good hotel in your city. Kindly tell them that we in India take only vegetarian food, so I would like to have good vegetables and fruits and milk with rice and sambhar.



Let's look at some examples, how unnecessary words irrelevant details, you will be happy to know I am reaching 3'o clock et cetera et cetera redundancy, words that are really not necessary. So, I have already booked my flight ticket business class, why do you need to say all they redundant. I am reaching Heathrow London at 3 a.m. on 17 March; this is also redundant.

When do you reach, perhaps where you reach might be important through some stretch of the imagination but when do you reach there does not help anyone except you on reaching your city I will go to a hotel, of course, you are not going to your client's home. Please tell me the name of the hotel you are going to book for me it will be a joy to see you at the railway station, what are you suggesting.

But why take unnecessary trouble then do not say that. I will take a taxi and go to the hotel directly, of course, how else would you go with luggage et cetera, you cannot walk, and there are no auto-rickshaws in Blackpool, no horses, no bullock carts. So, that is about the only way you can travel. I hope you have a good hotel in your city what do you mean what is the definition of good unless you define that then whatever your friend finds for you should be acceptable to you, these are the points.

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## FINAL DRAFT



Maya Lobo Prabhu,  
Konkan Exports Pvt Ltd,  
Mangalore, India

To: Mr Peter P Sumner,  
# 36, Post Office Road,  
Blackpool, A27 GH 2L, U K

21 Jan, 2021

Dear Peter,

Forthcoming trip to the U K



I will reach Blackpool by the 4:30 train from London on 17 March. I can take a taxi from there to the hotel, and can call you after checking in. We can meet the following morning in your office.



Please, help me get a room with a window. Vegetarian food, I believe, is not a problem in the U K. And some tea and ordinary water should be enough for drinks for me.

Time permitting, I may join a conducted tour of the Lake District. But can I, please, invite Mrs Sumner and you to join me for a walking tour of a nearby village one afternoon, and then we may have some quiet dinner in a local restaurant. With Mrs Sumner's help I may also buy for my husband some memento from a local shop.

Looking forward to see you,

Yours sincerely,  
Maria (152 Words)



Go to the next, next, next, look at the final draft. See how you can see the same thing better—same address dear Peter subject given. Next, the very first sentence should say when you arrive in that city? No matter whatever else you had done before in London in Bombay from where you started or Chennai or Singapore or Taiwan or Hong Kong does not matter where you started from when do you reach your destination, where your business partner lives. So, the first thing should be there; I will reach Blackpool by 4:30. What way, what mode of transport? Taxi, aircraft, boat or plane? Plane sorry train.

I will reach Blackpool by the 4:30 train, which train? London to Blackpool train. Which date? 17 March. So, in one sentence, you have told your reader when to expect you and how to expect you

that you are arriving there by train and you are arriving at a certain time, and then from there, you will go to the hotel if their friend does not have to worry. He does not have to come to the station to receive you your friend or business partner does not have to come to the railway station to receive you because you also assure that partner that you will meet him the following day in his office, equally clear though.

Look at the next look at the remaining part of the letter; this is how personal details are also given in the business letter. Everything must be said with the greatest possible clarity, and in a rank-ordered manner that is important things first, less important things next and in things of no importance or little importance can come towards the end if word limit permits, if it does not, forget it. Come back.

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## ACTIVITY

In about 150 words write a mail or a letter to:

1. Your host with whom you are going to stay for six weeks during your internship in Edinburgh
2. Your friend who will receive you at an airport in New York.
3. A librarian in the British Library, London, requesting her to help you find a paying guest accommodation near by so that you could stay there during your three month long research fellowship there.



Next, all of us have to write this kind of letters, emails, texts because all of us are in some kind of business and all of us travel and all of us need help. So, you must keep that in mind. Now, that is best learnt. Writing things of this kind is best learned through practice. I have given you some examples, some as something for activities. Imagine you are going to do an internship at Edinburg University, and you have found a host who will keep you as a paying guest for those six weeks. You can tell your host about your preferences in food and drink and in accommodation, they will, of course, try to do their best and if they can help you, I am quite sure, no matter which culture all hosts like to be of help to their visitors.

So, ditto with New York, So, a friend is coming to receive their or at a librarian at a big library, making some requests for accommodation, all of these things follow the same principles, the principle of strict formatting and relaxed adherence to the sequence. What is important, first? What is less important, next? But all-important details must be given in your writing. These things are easily learnt through some practice, through some work at your home, and you will find that learning these things is fun. Go next. So, thank you very much. If you have any confusions any doubts, you can please check with us. Thanks.