

UNIT III

LETTER WRITING II - TRANSACTIONAL LETTERS

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to identify different types of transactional letters as well as different writing styles depending on who you are writing to. You will also be able to use the appropriate format and vocabulary depending on the type of transactional letter you are going to write.

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1. Background information

1.1 Letter structure and layout

The purpose of transactional letters is to respond to written information. This information can be of different types: other letters, advertisements, notes, invitations, drawings, maps, guidebooks, etc.

Types of transactional letters: complaint, application, asking for or giving advice, information, invitation, etc.

The style of these types of letters can be either formal or informal depending on who you are writing to.

Contents: transactional letters sum up the information given in the rubric, explain the results of certain facts.

Structure: the letters include opening remarks, several paragraphs (each paragraph introduces a new topic), closing remarks.

Proverb

Chance favours the prepared mind.

stop and think 

Exercise 1

Look at the advertisement and the points under question.
What kind of letter would you write? Formal or informal? Provide reasons.

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Learning English Can be Fun

How often? What time?

- Classes twice a week!

Native English speakers?

- Professional teachers!

How much exactly?

- Cheap teaching materials!

What kind of audio or visual aids?

- Modern teaching approaches!

Come and join us!

Phone number: 009-001-34578

reading



Exercise 2

Read the following two letters of inquiry which have been written. After having seen the advertisement above, decide which one is better. Provide reasons.

A. Dear Sir / Madam,

I am really curious about a few things referring to your English course.

For instance, I am a very busy person. That is why I cannot attend the classes any time. Could you tell me the time and the days?

What about the teachers? Are they English speakers? I think they should know some Romanian phrases in order to explain the new vocabulary to beginners like me. Don't you think ? I am looking forward to hearing from you soon please.

Yours,

Maria Ștefănescu.

B. Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to ask you a few details about your advertisement in the April issue of The Weekend Magazine. I am interested in taking English classes, and that is why I would be happy if you could answer a few questions.

In the advertisement you state that classes are twice a week. I would like to know the exact days and times in order to rearrange my schedule accordingly.

Secondly, could you tell me a few things about the teachers? Are they English speakers? Are they university teachers?

I also require information on the cost of the teaching materials as well as on the type of teaching approach you use. Does it include any audio and visual aids, for instance radio cassettes, video-player, TV cassettes, language lab, etc?

I look forward to receiving answers to these questions. Thank you for your help.

Yours truthfully,

Mary Richardson

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..... ☺ **Let's have fun!**

Q: 'What two days of the week start with letter *T*?'

A: 'Tuesday and Thursday?'

Q: 'No, today and tomorrow.'

1.2 Reported questions

In English there are two main types of questions: *Yes / No* questions and *wh-* questions:

yes / no questions	Examples
<i>to be</i>	<i>Are you married?</i>
<i>to have got</i>	<i>Have you got any brothers or sisters?</i>
<i>modals</i>	<i>Can you swim? May I come in? Need I go there? Must you attend the meeting?</i>
<i>do / does / did</i>	<i>Do you like jazz?</i>
Wh- questions	Examples
<i>who</i>	<i>Who are you?</i>
<i>what</i>	<i>What are you doing ?</i>
<i>when</i>	<i>When are they leaving?</i>
<i>where</i>	<i>Where is she now?</i>
<i>which</i>	<i>Which is your favourite singer?</i>
<i>whose</i>	<i>Whose jacket is this?</i>
<i>why</i>	<i>Why are you upset?</i>
<i>how</i>	<i>How is he?</i>

When you report questions there are several steps to follow:

Yes/No Questions

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
'Are you tired?', he asked.	He asked me whether I was tired.
'Do you like jazz?', she wondered.	She wondered whether I liked jazz.

- The verb changes going one tense behind.
- Ask / wonder + if / whether.
- No inversion.

Wh-Questions

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
'Who is your boss?', he asked.	He asked who my boss was.
'Where are they going?', she asked.	She asked where they were going.
'Why is Tom crying?', she wondered.	She wondered why Tom was crying.
'How will you travel there?', he asked.	He asked me how I would travel there.

- The verb changes, going one tense behind
- Ask / wonder + *wh*-word.
- No inversion.

drills ?

Exercise 3

Rewrite the questions in Reported Speech.

1. 'When does the course start?', the client asked.

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2. 'How did he pay for the delivery?', she asked me.

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3. 'Will they replace the faulty vacuum cleaner?', Mum asked.

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4. 'May I come for the interview?', I asked.

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5. 'Was she checking the flight number for you?', he asked.

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2. Types of transactional letters

Transactional Letters Asking for Information

The style can be either formal or informal depending on the person you are writing to.

Example

Opening paragraph

Formal: I am writing to inquire about ..., etc.

Informal: I would like you to tell me ...; Can / Could you let me know ..., etc.

Main Body

First paragraph

Formal: I would be grateful if you could send me / tell me...; I would appreciate some further information on ..., etc.

Informal: Can you tell me; I want / need to know, etc.

Second paragraph

Formal: Another matter I need information on is ...; I would also like to know about ..., etc.

Informal: Can you also tell me a few things on ...; I also want to know ...; etc.

Closing paragraph

Formal: I look forward to receiving ...; I would be grateful if you could inform me as soon as possible ...; etc.

Informal: Tell me soon ...; Please, let me know ...; Send details as soon as you can ..., etc.

writing 

Exercise 4

Rewrite the letter below using the formal style.

Dear Karen,

How are things over there? My folks are planning a visit to the caves next summer similar to the ones you went to last June. I need to know some things before leaving.

Since we are also travelling by coach, can you tell me how many people went on your trip? Do you remember how much the ticket was?

I also need to know what kind of clothes to take. Although the trip takes place in June, inside the caves might be cooler; am I right?

You can save my life if you send me all these details. Let me know as soon as possible, please.

Best wishes,
Doris

Opening paragraph

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Main body

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Closing paragraph

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Transactional Letters Giving Information

The style can be formal or informal depending on the person you are writing to.

Example

Opening paragraph

Formal: *I am writing in reply to your letter asking information about ..., etc.*

Informal: *This what I have found out for you ..., etc.*

Main Body

Formal: *Regarding ...; As regards ...; As far as ... is concerned ..., etc.*

Informal: *Remember the information you wanted on ...?; Well, ...; If I were you ..., etc.*

Closing paragraph

Formal: *Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require more information about ...; I do hope I have been of some assistance to you, etc.*

Informal: *Hope this will do for now; Let me know if you need any more details, etc.*

writing 

Exercise 5

Rewrite the letter below using informal style.

Dear Mr Clark,

I am writing in reply to your letter asking information about our new hotel.

As far as the location is concerned, we assure you that the panorama is absolutely marvelous. The hotel is situated on the top of the hill and it is surrounded by deep valleys and thick forests.

The facilities are the most modern ones, and the costs are moderate; it's good value for your money. The rooms are large and cosy. There are also a gym, a sauna, a swimming pool, a cinema, a bar and a trendy club.

The prices are as follows: one single room is 67 euros per night, one suite is 102 euros per night.

I hope that I have been of some assistance to you. Please, do contact us should you need further information. We do hope you will take this opportunity and visit our hotel.

*Yours sincerely,
Michael Moore*

Opening paragraph

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Main body

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Closing paragraph

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Transactional Letter of Complaint

Most letters of complaint are written in the formal style. Nevertheless, if you write such a letter to a friend in order to complain about poor service, you may need an informal style.

Exercise 6

Read the letter below and identify the style and underline the formal phrases.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to express my entire dissatisfaction with your hotel arrangements .

I regret to have to call your attention to the poor service in your hotel: rude staff, small stuffy rooms and dirty toilets.

In addition, the meals provided by the hotel restaurant were tasteless and lacked variety. We had the same vanilla pudding three days in a row.

Furthermore, we could not go to the swimming pool – as stated in the advertisement – something was wrong with the water pipes.

We feel that you should refund our money or offer at least a 30% discount on our next holiday. We look forward to receiving a reply as soon as possible.

Yours truthfully,

Corinne Marlow

Style :

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Exercise 7

Look at the advertisement and notes below. Write a similar letter of complaint. Use the informal style.

Fantastic Summer Camp

Come with us and you will have the summer holiday of your life!

The initial cost does not include the other activities.

- Excellent prices!

Rough and uncomfortable.

- Perfect camping site!

No guide, no coach, no timetables.

- Exciting trips!

Inappropriate boats.

- Cruise on the river!

Nothing to see, except deserted areas.

- Sightseeing tours!

Tel. 021-235-07601 for information

Opening paragraph

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Main body

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Closing paragraph

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3. SAA ☒

You will have to spend about 45 minutes for this assignment, provided you have completed all the tasks required by the unit. Use the information above as well as the bibliography included in this unit.

The assessment criteria will focus the following requirements:

- Correct matching solutions= 55 %
- Correct identification of letter type= 45%

Match the following beginnings with the endings. Identify the type of letter they are taken from.

Beginnings

1. *I am writing to apply for the job of secretary, advertised in the 3rd issue of Women's Magazine.*
2. *I am writing to inform you about our new training course for trade managers.*
3. *I am writing to inquire about your advertisement in yesterday's local paper.*

Endings

- a. *I do hope that you will consider my application and contact me soon.*
- b. *We apologise for any inconvenience caused. We do hope that you will continue doing business with us.*
- c. *Thank you in advance for your help.*