

UNIT II

LETTER WRITING I

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to understand the differences between different types of letters: formal letters, informal letters and semi-formal letters. You will also become familiar with the specific structure and layout of letters, specific greeting and closing phrases in order to use them in contexts of your own.

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1. Background information

1. Types of letters

Look at the following table in order to see the differences between types of letters in terms of purpose and format:

Type	Purpose
Letters of giving or asking for information	To let people know details about a specific matter.
Letters of invitation	To invite people to attend a certain event.
Letters of accepting or refusing an invitation	To accept or refuse an invitation.

Letters of application	To outline your skills and expertise.
Letters of inquiry	To request assistance, information and goods.
Letters of complaint	To ask that certain matters should be corrected.
Letters of adjustment	Response to a complaint letter.
Letters of apology	To mend a situation.
Letters expressing congratulations	To congratulate people on special events.
Letters giving news	To let people know about the latest news.
Letters of thanking, expressing regrets, or refusal, etc	To let people know your feelings regarding a certain situation.
Letters of acknowledgement	To let people know that you have received something sent to you.
Letters of reference	To recommend someone for employment or academic research, studies.
Letters of resignation	To let an employer know about your decision to leave the present position and the reasons for doing so.

☺ **Let's have fun!**

Q: 'Which letter is always trying to find reasons?'
A: 'Y'(why?)

stop and think



Exercise 1

Look at the following extracts and identify the type of letter they belong to.

1. I am afraid I can't come to your party. I have to work long hours. It's a pity I can't make it.

.....
2. I have met the man of my dreams and next week we are getting married. I would be so happy if you could accept to be one of

the bride's maids. I have already bought a pink dress for you. Please, say yes.

.....
3. I am sorry I couldn't write lately. I have been so busy looking for a new house. Now, at last, here I am in my new flat. It is gorgeous.

.....
4. I wouldn't miss it for the world. Of course I will be there. Thank you so much for the invitation. I am looking forward to seeing you and your new girl-friend.

.....
5. I am quite plump, and I feel miserable. I am writing to you to ask what you think I should do about it? It's urgent!

.....

☺ **Let's have fun!**

Q: 'Why shouldn't you put the letter M into the refrigerator?'

A: 'Because it turns ice into mice.'

1.2 Letter structure and layout

Letters generally have the following structure:

- Your address. It is included on the top right-hand corner.
- The date. It is written under the address.
- Greeting.
- Paragraph 1: the introduction. It specifies the reason for writing.
- Paragraphs 2, 3, 4: the main body. They develop the topic.
- Final paragraph: the conclusion. It includes the closing phrases.
- Your name.

Study the following example:

Address	The Intercontinental Hotel 22, Hope St. Frankfurt
----------------	--

Date	12 March, 2005
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Greeting	Dear Mum,
-----------------	-----------

Paragraph 1	Here I am in Frankfurt. The flight was pleasant and the weather is great. Everything seems perfect.
--------------------	---

Paragraph 2	The hotel room is so big and the view is fantastic. I am staying with two other colleagues of mine. We have already visited the town and the main museums. Prices are quite convenient.
--------------------	---

Paragraph 3	Yesterday we went to a jazz club. It was great fun. Tomorrow we are going to do some shopping. I can't wait. I would like to find some handicrafts to bring back home.
--------------------	--

**Final
paragraph**

So, don't worry . Everything is under control. Take care of yourself.

**Closing
phrase**

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Love, JulieLove, Jul

stop and think



Exercise 2

Look at the following parts of a letter and arrange them according to the above-stated example. Identify the type of letter:

1. Yours truthfully,
2. 15 September 2004
3. London
4. Dear Sirs / Madams,
5. I have worked in the sales' department for three years, and I have acquired robust expertise in this field.
6. I would like to apply for the post of sales manager advertised in yesterday's paper.
7. 3, Freedom Rd.
8. I have also worked as a free-lancer in the advertising unit of a travel agency.
9. You can contact me at the above-mentioned address or at the phone number: 324 55 22.
10. I look forward to hearing from you,
11. Robert Stevenson

LETTER:

.....

.....

.....

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.....

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.....

.....

1.3 Writing styles in letters

Although all three types of letters have the same format (see subchapter 2 above), each style has its own features, as follows:

1. Formal style

- Address: besides your own address, which is placed on top, on the right-hand corner, followed by the date, you should also add the recipient's position, name and address on the left-hand side of the page.
- Specific greeting phrases: e.g. *Dear Sirs / Madams, Dear Mr. Brown, Dear Ms Chambers*, etc.
- Language: formal phrases (e.g. *It is also an honour to hear from people like you*), formal linking words (e.g. *Nevertheless*) advanced vocabulary (e.g. *the funds allocated to us*), no short forms.
- Specific closing phrases: *Yours truthfully, Yours faithfully* (in letters beginning with *Dear Sir / Madam*) or *Yours sincerely* (in letters beginning with *Dear Ms Chambers*), followed by your full name.

2. Informal style

- Your address on the top right-hand corner of the page, followed by the date;
- Informal greeting phrases, such as: *Dear Dad, Dear Susan, My dearest ones*, etc.
- Informal vocabulary: e.g. *Must admit, I can't wait, By the way, I'll make it up for you*, etc.
- Informal ending phrases: *Love, best wishes, Yours, Take care* – followed by your first name.

3. Semi-formal style

These types of letters seem similar to both informal letters and formal letters using a combination of the two styles as follows:

- Address and date follow the informal style.
- Greeting phrases follow the formal style (*Dear Mr. Brown*).
- Semi-formal vocabulary using some formal phrases and some informal phrases (N.B. never use colloquial phrases).
- Ending phrases combining the two styles: e.g. *Best wishes, Regards, Yours sincerely* – followed either by your first name or by your full name.

stop and think



Exercise 3

Study the following phrases and label them as *formal* or *informal*.

	F	I
1. <i>I look forward to meeting you.</i>		

2. <i>I'm looking forward to meeting you.</i>		
3. <i>Thanks for sending me the postcard the other day.</i>		
4. <i>Well, must admit it's so nice of you....</i>		
5. <i>Sorry, but I don't think I'll make it.</i>		
6. <i>Please do not hesitate to ask for any further details...</i>		
7. <i>How come you didn't find the time to answer my letter?</i>		
8. <i>Many thanks for your prompt reply.</i>		
9. <i>We wish to confirm your order No. 343 and inform you that....</i>		
10. <i>We note with surprise that</i>		
11. <i>It is always a pleasure to hear from you....</i>		
12. <i>I've been busy lately and that's why I couldn't write back sooner.</i>		

Proverb*Familiarity breeds contempt.***2. Language development****drills ?****Exercise 4**

Match the following informal phrases to the purposes they are used to express.

Phrases	Purpose
1. <i>Could you do me a favour?</i>	a. finishing a letter
2. <i>Let's....</i>	b. making suggestions
3. <i>Best wishes,</i>	c. giving news
4. <i>I'm so happy to hear that...</i>	d. accepting an invitation
5. <i>Did you know that Peter....</i>	e. asking for a favour
6. <i>Let me know when</i>	f. asking for a response
7. <i>I wouldn't miss it for the world!</i>	g. thanking the person for writing

8. <i>Thanks for your postcard...</i>	h. beginning a letter
9. <i>Congratulations on passing the driving test!</i>	i. congratulating a friend on passing his/her driving test

1 =; 2 =; 3 =; 4 =; 5 =; 6 =; 7 =; 8 =; 9 =

Exercise 5

Fill in the missing words in order to complete the following formal letter. Then check your answers.

Dear Sirs (1),

After having traveled throughout Africa (2), business I would like to (3), my opinion (4), the endangered animals as (5), as on the environmental preservation. Although these animals are (6), real danger, if action is (7), soon we could still save them.

Secondly, I could see that tourists visiting this (8), could help develop the country. We should persuade the hotel (9), pay more attention to the surrounding wildlife and thus save the natural habitat.

All in all, we should try (10), change (11), their mentality (12), their behaviour so that they have minimal (13), on the natural surroundings.

I would be most (14), if you would reply as soon as possible expressing your (15), on this matter.

Yours (16),
Prof. Jeremy Stevenson

writing 

Exercise 6

Choose the most appropriate phrases in order to complete each of the gaps with the two letters(A and B) which follow.

Phrases:

1. *thanks / Once again I'd like to thank you*
2. *your support / your kind assistance*
3. *my house-warming party / social event*
4. *thanks / owing to*
5. *first of all / firstly*
6. *ingenuous / smart*
7. *I wonder if you could / tell me if you can*
8. *I will raise this opportunity / That would be so good*
9. *Hope / I do hope*
10. *come round / pay us a visit*

11. Yours sincerely / Yours

Letter A

Dear Sally,

(1) for (2) the other day with (3)
(4) to you, it was a smashing success.

(5). Your (6) ideas helped so much. I owe you
one. Now, (7) come to my place next weekend and have a
game of tennis together. (8) (9) you will make it
(10) as soon as you get here.

(11),

Sam

Letter B

Dear Mr Sullivan,

(1) for (2) with the preparations for the
(3) celebrating Mr Brown's retirement.

(4) your kind contribution the event was a real success.
(5) your (6) ideas served as a good example to follow
in the future.

(7) come more often in our town. (8) to tell you
that (9) you will be able to (10) and meet my family
too.

(11),

Lewis Martin

Proverb

No news is good news.

drills ?

Exercise 7

Read the following phrases and identify the letter type and
style they are from.

- a. I am writing to say how sorry I am for mixing up the dates.
- b. I would be honoured if you could attend our wedding.
- c. We do hope this request will receive your immediate
attention.
- d. Thank you very much for your kind assistance.
- e. Have you heard about the latest row in our
neighbourhood?
- f. I am writing to inform you about the next board meeting.
- g. I would be grateful if you could send me further
information.

h. I am writing to apply for the post of sales manager in your company.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.

writing

Exercise 8

Match the beginnings with the endings and identify the type of letter each pair is from. Then check your answers.

Beginnings

1. I am sorry to say I can't make it.
2. It would be my pleasure to give you some advice on that matter.
3. I am writing to complain about a faulty hair-dryer that I bought from you last week.
4. I am writing to request your advice on an urgent matter.
5. Do come round next time you are in town.
6. We regret to inform you that you have not been accepted for the summer course.

Endings

- a. I am looking forward to meeting you again soon.
- b. Please, do not hesitate to contact us should you apply again in the future.
- c. I do hope my advice is useful.
- d. I hope I will find some more time in the future and it will make up for my absence.
- e. I really need your competent counselling.
- f. I hope you will either replace it or give me a refund.

1 =; 2 =; 3 =; 4 =; 5 =; 6 =

Type of letter

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

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 on the following requirements:

- appropriate letter layout= 30%
- correct usage of the prompts below= 30%
- appropriate structures and phrases characteristic of the informal style= 30%
- correct usage of the limited number of words. 10%

Write an informal letter of giving news. Use the prompts below:

- You are spending your holidays in the mountains.
- You are staying in a chalet in the mountains.
- The weather is fine. It is summer.
- Give details about food, places, people, etc.

Use the following structure and layout:

- Your address;
- The date;
- Greetings;
- Paragraph 1: introduction;
- Paragraphs 2, 3, 4: main body;
- Final paragraph: conclusion;
- Closing phrase
- Name

Use 120 - 130 words.