

## LETTER WRITING III

---

### 1. Background information

#### 1.1 Structure and style

Business letters should include the following structure:

- **Address and date:**

- a) your address in the top right-hand corner with the date underneath;
- b) the recipient's position, name and address of the firm / institute / organisation / university, etc. on the left-hand side.

- **Appropriate greeting;** e.g. *Dear Sir / Madam, Dear Mr Stevenson, Dear Ms Winston*, etc;

- **Introduction:** it includes opening remarks and the reasons for writing the letter;

- **Main body:** it includes several paragraphs. Each paragraph deals with a new subject in details;

- **Conclusion:** it includes the closing remarks;

- **Appropriate ending:** e.g. *Yours truthfully / faithfully; Yours sincerely* + your full name.

- 

N.B. If you do not know the recipient's name you should start your letter with *Dear Sir / Madam* and end it with *Yours truthfully / Yours faithfully* + your full name. If you know the recipient's name, you should start the letter with *Dear Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Green*, and end it with *Yours sincerely* + your full name.

Business letters are written in a formal style and include the following characteristics :

- advanced academic vocabulary;
- polite expressions and phrases;
- long sentences;
- impersonal tone;

- formal linking phrases / words;
- factual information;
- no use of short forms;
- no use of idioms;
- no description of personal opinions and feelings.

☺ **Let's have fun!**

Q: 'What's teacher's favourite nation?'  
A: 'Expla-nation.'

**stop and think** 

### Exercise 1

Study the examples below and underline the correct phrases to be used in business letters.

1. *I am writing to apply for the position of ...; I'd like to become a secretary.*
2. *Best wishes / Yours truthfully, Mary Williams;*
3. *Dear Sir / Madam; Dear Susan Collins;*
4. *I can't wait to hear from you / I look forward to hearing from you;*
5. *You can find the necessary references in the envelope / I have enclosed the necessary references;*
6. *I demand the money back / a full refund;*
7. *I for one think that you should... / I am confident that you should....*

## 1.2 Types of business letters

### A. Letters of Application

When you apply for a job or a training course you should write a letter of application.

Useful tips:

- In the introduction you should include the position you are applying for, where and when you saw it advertised.
- In the main body you should write several separate paragraphs including the following information:
  - a) age, present job and education;
  - b) qualifications;

- c) experience;
- d) skills that are relevant for the job;
- e) strengths, weaknesses.

- In the final paragraph you should give details about the references you can send, where and when you can be contacted for the interview, etc.

N.B. Use the present tense when you describe your personality. Use the past tense when you refer to your past studies and experiences. Use the present perfect tense when referring to recent studies / experiences.

## **B. Letters making offers**

Useful tips:

- Add any facts which may influence your customer;
- Point out the specific attractive features of your products (e.g. *they are cheaper than any other products in this domain; they have a special finish. We can offer promotional prices for the first ... items*, etc.)
- Point out the novelty, the reasonable price, the convenience and the ecological characteristics of your products / service;
- Include specific information regarding the quantity, price, terms of delivery, terms of payment, insurance information, etc.

N.B. It would be useful if could you send your letter together with the catalogue for that specific offer.

## **C. Letters making orders**

Useful tips:

- The first paragraph includes the reference to the offer made by the supplier;
- The main body should include the complete description of the goods;
- Pay attention to details: size, material, colour, price, etc;
- Specify the exact quantity and the exact quality of the goods;
- Send samples or drawings together with the order;
- State the time of delivery;
- The final paragraph should include your hope that the high quality of the goods / service will lead to further mutual deals.

## **D. Letters making complaints**

Useful tips:

- The first paragraph refers to your complaint and gives details of the incident (time, place);
- The main body describes the specific points of your complaint. Each paragraph deals with one specific reason. Be specific about the loss or the inconvenience you have suffered and the adjustment to be made;
- The final paragraph should explain what your expectations are (apology / full refund / replacement, etc). Be reasonable in your demands.

N.B.:

- If you complain about minor matters you can use a *mild tone*: e.g. *I am writing to draw your attention on; I do hope you will solve that matter promptly.*
- If you complain about serious matters, you can use a *strong tone*: e.g. *I am writing to express my deep dissatisfaction with your service ...; I demand a full refund or I shall be forced to take further action.*
- Regardless of the tone you may choose, make your requests firmly;
- Use a clear and concise style.

## **E. Adjustment letters**

Adjustment letters are in reply to complaints.

Useful tips:

- The first paragraph should include an apology or an expression of regret for the inconvenience;
- The main body explains the circumstances have which caused the trouble. A new paragraph should include your suggestions of the adjustment you propose (e.g. offer a discount, refund, replacement, etc).
- The final paragraph should express your hope that in spite of the inconvenience, your customer will continue doing business with your company.

N.B.

- Do not insist too much on the justification part. Let the injured party decide whether the inconvenience is just a human error.

- Do not take complaints as criticism;
- Do not be too apologetic; don't be too arrogant;
- In the closing remark, try to regain the customer's goodwill.

## stop and think

### Exercise 2

Study the following extracts and identify the type of letters they are taken from.

1. Although the contract stipulated 20,000 kg fresh bananas, we found that the goods were below the standard quality. Consequently, we cannot accept the shipment.
2. We have enclosed a catalogue with different samples as well as the price for smaller and larger quantities.
3. I have helped my grandparents pick fruit in their orchard every summer holiday. For the past three years I have been a tourist guide for the tourists visiting my town (Saturdays).
4. It is possible that the mistake occurred because of our sales clerk's negligence. Compensation will be immediately made.

- 1 = .....  
 2 = .....  
 3 = .....  
 4 = .....

## 2. Language development

### drills ?

### Exercise 3

Read the advertisement and answer the questions below.

*We are looking for a young, resourceful university student to join our summer camp. Must be a good organiser, a sociable person, patient with 13 / 15 year-old kids and good at doing sports. Experience is not required.*

1. What style would you use: formal or informal?
2. What is the reason for writing this letter?

3. What are the greeting and closing phrases that you should use?

4. Which of the following points should be included in the letter?

- a. your skills;
- b. your age;
- c. your physical appearance;
- d. your past experience;
- e. the sports that you practise;
- f. your personality;
- 3. Which qualities will be in your favour?
- a. easy-going;
- b. funny;
- c. reserved;
- d. fair;
- e. a good leader;
- f. athletic;
- g. out-going.
- 4. What type of letter should you write?

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

writing 

#### Exercise 4

Write the following letter of complaint in full, filling each gap with words from the list: *forced, writing, in addition, inconvenience, firstly, complain, afford, below, behaviour, appalled*.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am (1 ..... ) to (2 ..... ) about the faulty deliveries of the wrong goods.

(3 ..... ), against our order marked no. 36 / January 12, we received only 3 tones of corn instead of 7 tones.

(4 ..... ), the quality of the corn was much (5 ..... ) the standard.

## drills ?

To make matters worse, I am (6 ..... ) by your personal assistant's (7 ..... ) who simply refused to contact you in order to solve this (8 ..... ).

This is the fifth mishandled order, and we cannot (9 ..... ) any more inconveniences of this kind. I demand immediate action, otherwise we will be (10 ..... ) to do business elsewhere.

### Exercise 5

Match the opening remarks with the closing remarks and identify the type of letters they are taken from:

#### Opening remarks

1. *I am writing to complain about the hair-dryer I purchased from your company.*
2. *I am interested in applying for the position of tourist guide.*
3. *We thank you for the letter of June 22, about the good and bad points you observed in your first hours of testing our new motorcycles.*
4. *We would like to order two styles of sports shoes having the following characteristics: ....*

#### Closing remarks

- A. *We do hope that this adjustment will prove to be valuable to you.*
- B. *We would like to have the goods delivered on May 9.*
- C. *I demand an immediate replacement or full refund.*
- D. *I am available for an interview any Friday and Saturday (mornings) and you can contact me on 2356781 after 5 p.m. every day.*

1 = .....; 2 = .....; 3 = .....; 4 = .....

#### Types of letters

- 1 = .....
- 2 = .....
- 3 = .....
- 4 = .....

## Exercise 6

In English you can use the prefixes (*il-*, *im-*, *in-*, *un-*, *dis-*, *ir-*) in order to give the antonym of certain adjectives. Provide antonyms to the following adjectives using the above-mentioned prefixes.

e.g. moral – immoral

1. patient .....
2. legal .....
3. comfortable .....
4. friendly .....
5. responsible .....
6. modest .....
7. relevant .....
8. loyal .....
9. satisfied .....
10. happy .....
11. acceptable .....
12. available .....

## Exercise 7

Use the correct preposition in order to fill in the gaps below. Identify the type of letter the fragment is taken from.

*I wish to express my dissatisfaction (1 ..... ) the service I received last weekend when I stayed in your hotel.*

*To start with, despite the fact that I had booked a double room, I was given a single room. Such a thing is appalling (2 ..... ) me.*

*Secondly, the bathroom was dirty and the room service was slow.*

*In addition, the receptionist had a completely inappropriate attitude (3 ..... ) my remarks.*

*I will not be staying (4 ..... ) your hotel in the future and I will tell all my friends to do the same.*

Type of letter: .....



### Exercise 8

Write a letter of application using the prompts below:

- shop assistant, 'Daily News', weekly magazine
- 17 years old, ambitious, sales domain, opportunity
- no experience, hard-working, sociable, new people
- afternoons, weekends available
- 345217891
- Carole MacArthur

[illegible]