



INFORMAL LETTERS AND EMAILS

WHAT IS A LETTER/EMAIL?

Informal letters and emails are texts that involve an exchange of written or printed messages with someone you know (a friend, a relative, etc.).



CONTEXTUALISATION

Emails and letters are part of our everyday life and they are a great way to communicate.

LAYOUT

Section	Explanation/Definition
Greeting	Greet the reader appropriately.
Introduction (paragraph 1)	When you are replying to an email, you usually say something about what was in the original letter or give your reason for writing.
The main content (paragraph 2/3)	Development of the subject.
The conclusion (paragraph 3/4)	Summarise what you have said.
Ending	Closing sentence and signature.

CHECKLIST – WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE



Register	Informal	
Lexis	Use chatty language, colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs, idioms...	
Recommended grammar structures	Contractions, relative clauses without a relative pronoun and ellipsis are more common in informal language.	
Expressions	Greeting	<i>Hi (Jo)! / Hi there!</i>
	Beginning an informal letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thanks so much for your email</i> • <i>Sorry not to have contacted you earlier</i> • <i>Thought it was time I dropped you a line...</i> • <i>Lovely to hear from you.</i> • <i>How are you?</i> • <i>How are things?</i> • <i>Hope you're well.</i>

	Referring to a previous letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You said in your letter that you want to...</i> • <i>Last time you wrote, you mentioned...</i> • <i>I remember that you spoke about...</i> • <i>I'm sorry to hear/learn ...</i> • <i>I'm so pleased to hear ...</i> • <i>It's great to hear ...</i> • <i>What wonderful news about ...</i>
	Moving the topic on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anyway, the reason I'm writing ...</i> • <i>I thought I'd write to tell/ask you</i> • <i>Anyway, I was wondering ...</i>
	Giving a preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'd rather (watch a film).</i> • <i>I'd prefer to (play basketball).</i>
	Making suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why don't we (try sailing)?</i> • <i>How about (going to the beach)?</i> • <i>We could (go swimming).</i>
	Inviting someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would you like to (come to the cinema)?</i>
	Giving advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think you should (invite her).</i> • <i>You could (ask your parents for help).</i>
	Ending an informal letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think that's all for now.</i> • <i>Do write soon! / Write back soon!</i> • <i>Once again, thanks for contacting me.</i> • <i>Give my love to...</i> • <i>Speak to you soon.</i> • <i>All the best,</i> • <i>Take care,</i>
Linking words	Group ideas into paragraphs and link them with informal connectors, for example: <i>also, plus, anyways, but, also, okay, in the meantime, to sum up, basically, in a nutshell, all right, well, on top of it all</i> , etc.	

EXAMPLE

INSTRUCTIONS

You have received a letter from an English friend:

Hi!

I remember that you worked in a ski resort last winter, and I'm thinking of doing the same this year. Were there any drawbacks? Did you meet interesting people? What opportunities were there for skiing? Would I gain much from doing it for just four months? Should I apply for it?

Thanks for your help

Jack

Write your letter in 120-140 words.

ANSWER

Hi Jack,

Great to hear from you. So, you're thinking of applying for my old job – there are positive things about it, but there are loads of downsides.

I know how much you love skiing, but to be honest you'll be lucky to get more than a couple of days in all. And you have to buy your own ski pass, which is pricey - no freebies!

It can be stressful because you're dealing with clients the whole time, getting equipment sorted, stuff like that. When snow conditions are poor, you have to find entertainment for them, and they may not be thrilled about the situation! When I was there, they complained a lot. I did improve my people skills, but I hated the paperwork, which was really time-consuming. Filing isn't my thing, and there was piles of it.

I don't really know what to advise. You won't get much skiing, it's stressful, but it's paid employment and learning to deal with people in difficult situations is a bonus. It's your call! Let me know if I can do anything, or if you want any contact names.

All the best,

Carlo