

Transactional Writing Types

Language Paper One

Section B - Possible writing forms*

Letters

Letters are always addressed to a particular person or group of people.

1. If you're asked to write a letter, look at the audience to see if you need to use a formal or informal register.

2. If the letter is to a friend or relative, or someone your own age, you should use a more informal register and person tone.

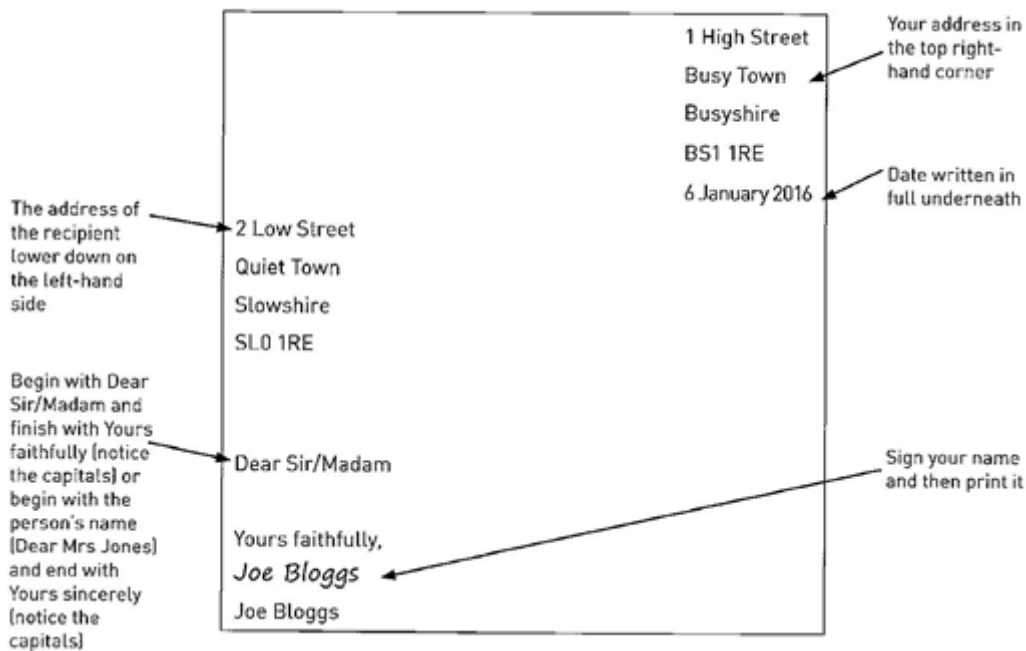
- Start by using your reader's name e.g. 'Dear Jenny' and sign-off with 'best wishes' or 'see you soon'.
- Please make sure that you still use Standard English and formal vocabulary – do not make your letter too chatty!

3. If the letter is to someone you don't know well, or someone in a position of authority, keep it formal with a serious tone. This means that you should

- Use formal greetings (e.g. 'Dear Sir/Madam') and sign-offs (e.g. 'Yours sincerely' if you have used their name, 'Yours faithfully' if you haven't).
- Use Standard English and formal vocabulary e.g. 'In my opinion...' or 'I find this state of affairs...'

· Remember you can lose marks for writing in the wrong form and layout.

Here's how a formal letter should look:



Speeches

1. Speeches are written to argue or persuade, so they need to have a dramatic and emotional impact on their audience.
2. One way to make a speech persuasive is to use an effective structure – arrange your points so that they build tension and end with an emotive or exciting climax.
3. You should also use lots of rhetorical devices to make your writing engaging and persuasive e.g. AFOREST – please make sure this is controlled and measured. Do not overuse!
4. Try to acknowledge other views of your own and provide a counter-argument. This shows you have fully considered the question e.g. 'Some people may argue...however, I believe...'
5. A good speech should make people think. Do not be afraid to pose a rhetorical question or use pronouns to create a sense of unity e.g. 'Do we really have no other option?', 'Together we must create change...'

Remember: speeches are spoken, not read. Try to use techniques that are effective when they're spoken aloud.

Reports – (analyse and advise)

Reports are formal texts that identify a problem, give advice and try to suggest possible solutions to the issue(s). They are often directed to someone in authority who can act upon suggestions, such as a head teachers, local councils or governing bodies, and so are usually written in a formal register and in an impersonal style. This means writing using very few personal pronouns (I, we, he, she).

For example:

I should like to note a number of issues ✕

It should be noted there a number of issues ✓

· It is important to give your report a clear title and to make sure it is clear who your report is to. For example:

o Report to: The Parents' Association

Re: Extra School Equipment

· Write an introduction that sets up the main theme, then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments for *and* against.

· Consider your use of facts and statistics as well as quotes from experts (or students/residents) to provide evidence for your argument

· It can also be useful to use subheadings and bullet points in a report to help structure your points and allow the reader to focus on the main issues.

What tells us that this short extract is from a report?

Reviews

A review is a piece of writing that given an opinion about how good something is – it might be a book, film, piece of music or even an exhibition.

When people write reviews often feel passionate about the topic. They have usually had a very good/bad experience and feel compelled to write about it.

A review should be lively and should stimulate the reader's interest in whatever you are reviewing. It is also important to remember that the purpose is to persuade people of your viewpoint so make sure you use lots of different persuasive techniques.

You review could have several different purposes:

- If it is to an appropriate audience, you may want to add humour to entertain the reader
- You also need to inform the reader about the thing you are reviewing, based on your opinion.
- You might also need to advise the reader whether or not to purchase the item.

Do not focus too much in describing everything in detail – it is more important to give your opinion and keep your review engaging. Do not be afraid to show your personality

Common mistakes:

- Assuming that you have to write positively about the item you are reviewing – in fact, lots of good reviews are very negative about their subject matter.
- Assuming you have to write a balanced piece, giving strengths and weaknesses in equal measure. This can result in a boring piece that leaves the reader disinterested.
- Do not be afraid to be forceful in your opinion and show your personality.

Your review needs to give an evaluation



B2. Imagine you have been to a music concert.

You have decided to write a review for a broadsheet newspaper to share your views about the concert. You could write about it in a positive or negative way.

Write a review for the newspaper giving your views.

'Music through the Millennium': A Feast for the Ears

Make your opinion clear from the start of the review.

Make sure your review is informative as well as entertaining.

From the moment the audience took their seats, the auditorium was buzzing with excitement, and they were not to be disappointed. This stunning collection of classical and contemporary pieces took the audience on an unforgettable journey through a thousand years of music, from the intense gloom and misery of funeral marches to the pounding excitement of percussion movements, and the intense joy of some truly superb symphonies. This was a sonic experience not to be missed: a congregation of musical heavyweights that each packed a punch strong enough to knock the emotional stuffing out of even the stoniest of hearts. From start to end, 'Music through the Millennium' was a true schooling in the stirring power of music.

This review is for a broadsheet newspaper, so make sure you adapt your writing appropriately — use a formal register with fairly complex language.

Use figurative language to make your review interesting.

Articles

The main purpose of most articles is to inform people about current issues or other topics of interest. They do this in two main ways:

By directly reporting information	By writing commentaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Some articles are written to convey facts about a story or theme. · They may report the viewpoints of other people, but the writer will not directly express their own viewpoint on the subject. · The writer's viewpoint might come across through the viewpoints they choose to quote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commentaries (also called columns or opinion pieces) offer the viewpoint of the writer on a news story or an important theme. · Commentaries entertain their audience, as readers engage with the personality of the writer by agreeing or disagreeing with their opinions and insights.

1. The main purpose of articles are to engage the reader. An effective article blends these two aspects above
2. When writing articles DO NOT waste time worrying about columns and pictures. However, you should make sure you use a heading (with a strapline) or a title, and you may choose to use subheadings too if they are appropriate.
3. When writing an article – pay close attention to the genre and audience. For example, you may be asked to write for a newspaper or a magazine:

Magazines

Magazines tend to focus on entertaining the reader, so they will mostly contain commentaries and opinion. Although some can be written purely to inform, most magazine articles are characterised by a lively and energetic tone.

Blogs

Blogs are often written in an informal (conversational) yet personal tone. Most people who view blogs genuinely want to hear your opinion. Blogs are more likely to be written in an argumentative way so feel free to be forceful and show your personality.

Although the audience for an online blog may be younger than that on traditional media but keep to Standard English and avoid abbreviations and emojis!

Newspaper

Newspapers are aimed a general audience and can come in two different categories:

- Tabloid – (e.g. The Sun, The Mirror) tend to focus on more sensational topics and people, making their news stories more accessible. Your tone could be more conversational and humorous, but should still use Standard English and avoid colloquialisms.
- Broadsheet – (e.g. The Telegraph) are thought of as more formal, focusing on more sophisticated topics. As a result, you will need to use adapt your writing style appropriately. Use a formal register with fairly complex language but you can still entertain!

There is no specified format for an article, but a successful one often includes:

- A catchy title that gives some indication of what the article is about
- A lively, entertaining opening to interest the intended audience
- Plenty of details about the topic, often using a variety of literary techniques
- A clear opinion given offering multiple insights (possibly with quotations from experts)
- A mixture of facts, quotes and statistical evidence with persuasive/emotive language

- A final paragraph that summarises the article and ends in a memorable way, leaving the reader with a clear final impression of your opinion.

Leaflets

Leaflets can have varied audiences and purposes, but they're often used to advise or persuade an audience.

Leaflets need to grab the reader's attention, so that they remember the information given. You can use layout features (e.g. heading, subheadings, bullet points) but do not forget the use persuasive language techniques to achieve this too (e.g. lists of three, direct address).

Although it is a bonus to have these layout features, the content of your writing and its accuracy is the most important aspect.

Some tips for leaflet writing:

- Slogans are a good idea: make them short and snappy and only use one or two exclamation marks, if necessary.
- Use personal pronouns (I, we, he, she, etc.) to personalise the information to the reader.
- Keep your work neat to maximise the visual impact on the reader
- Leaflets need a clear structure to organise the information. Use subheadings and bullet points to structure your work – do not wander off-topic.
- Pictures can inform the reader and are common features of a leaflet. If you use them, write down what the picture will show – do not waste time drawing it.