

Letter

What to expect in a Part 2 letter

- You may need to write to, for example, the editor of a newspaper or magazine, the director of a company, the principal of a college or an English-speaking friend.
- Make sure you write in an appropriate style. To a friend you should write informally; to the other people mentioned above, write in a more formal style.
- A letter question may ask you to comment on something that has happened, give advice, express your feelings about something, describe your own or your company's needs, persuade, request, answer questions, etc.

How to do a Part 2 letter

- Plan your letter in paragraphs, and include an appropriate beginning and ending.
- Do not include any addresses.
- Make sure you deal with all the points that are specified.
- Begin your letter with the reader's name if you know it, e.g. *Dear Susie* to a friend or *Dear Ms Gerrard* to somebody you don't know personally. In the latter case, end your letter *Yours sincerely*. *Ms* is used when writing to a woman if you don't know whether or not she is married.
- If you don't know the reader's name, begin your letter *Dear Sir* or *Madam* when writing to an organisation and you don't know who the specific reader is going to be. In these cases, end with *Yours faithfully*.
- You shouldn't start a letter *Dear friend* or use job titles, such as *Dear Manager*.
- Make sure you use a range of expressions.
- Make sure the purpose of your letter is clear.

Practice task and model answer

1 Read the Part 2 task below and answer the questions.

- 1 Who must you write to?
- 2 What will be the main topic of your reply?
- 3 What requirements are there in the task?

You have received a letter from an English friend.

I'm doing a project at college about how people's lives have changed over the last few decades in different countries. Can you tell me about the situation in your country? I'd like to hear about improvements and also about anything that's worse now.

Write your letter in reply. You do not need to include postal addresses.

2 Read the sample letter written by Mischa and answer the questions.

- 1 How appropriate is the style that Mischa has written in? Give three examples as evidence of this.
- 2 Is the organisation of his letter correct?
- 3 Which paragraphs deal with the various requirements of the task?

Dear Marian

Great to hear from you. I hope you're well and enjoying your college course.

Your project sounds very interesting. I've just had a chat with my grandparents, to find out how their way of life has changed during their lifetime, and a few things came up that you might like to hear about.

They said their standard of living is much higher now than it used to be, mainly because they have far more money to spend – even though they're pensioners. When they were much younger, and my grandfather went out to work, it was a struggle to cope on the money he earned, especially as they had several children to bring up.

Now they can spend much more on leisure activities and holidays, so whereas they couldn't afford to go abroad on holiday until they were in their 50s, nowadays they go skiing in Switzerland or Italy every winter, and in the summer they like to go on a river cruise in another country, too.

The biggest change, they say, is in the amount of freedom that they have. As kids, they were under pressure from their families and everyone they knew had to do certain things and behave in certain ways, but now there's much greater tolerance of different ways of living.

On the other hand, they feel that people don't stick together the way they used to – instead of everyone helping each other, people tend to be more self-centred.

Well, I hope you can use this in your project, Marian.

All the best
Mischa

Letters begin with social remarks before introducing any major topic.

Introduces the main topic in a positive way.

The writer is surprised that, as pensioners, his grandparents have more money to spend.

Linking word (*whereas*) to introduce a contrast

Informal vocabulary

Good linking expression in new paragraph, to show change from improvement to something that is worse now

Short paragraphs common in informal letters