

Formal Letters

B1 Layout

Write the recipient's name and address on the left hand side below the date.

Only use *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam* if you don't know the person's name.

		Your address
		The date
Other person's name and address		
Dear Sir ^(s) /Madam, /Dear Mr Brandon/Mrs White, =====		
=====		
Yours faithfully, / Yours sincerely		
Your signature		
Your name -printed		

Write your address in the top right hand corner.

Write the date directly below.

If you begin *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam*, end with *Yours faithfully*. If you begin with a name, end with *Yours sincerely*.

Write the name and/or title of the person you're writing to. Do not indent their address.

Write the first line next to the left hand margin.

Begin the next line under the name.

Write *Yours* with a capital 'Y' and *faithfully* or *sincerely* with a small 'f' or 's'. These endings are followed by a comma.

B2 Example

! number!
FIRST

22 York Street
Bridewell
BR8 4SD

24th Nov. 19-

The Principal
Clifton College
Clifton
CL5 2RE

Dear Sir,

I am interested in applying for a place on a computing course in your college and I would be grateful if you could send me full details of the courses you offer and the fees, together with an application form.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
S.M. Gilchrist
S.M. GILCHRIST (MISS)

!!! Never put your name before your address. Write the house number first, followed by the street, town (and post code, if you know it).

Give your reason for writing at the beginning. If you are replying to an advert, say where you saw it and when. If you are replying to a letter, give the date of the letter

Print your name clearly after your signature.

Types of Letters

B3.1 Enquiry

Explain clearly what information you would like and why you need it. If there are different points you need to explain or to ask about, use a different paragraph for each.

Useful language:

I am writing to enquire about ...

I was interested in your advertisement in 'The Daily Times' and I would like to have further information about ...

I should be grateful if you would send me (full) details of ...

B3.2 Application

Explain clearly which post/job you are applying for and, if you are responding to an advertisement, say where you saw it and when. Give all the necessary information about yourself, including age, qualifications, past employment, relevant experience and any special hobbies or interests, and explain why you are particularly interested in this post. Use a new paragraph for each main topic. It's also helpful to say when you would be available to attend an interview.

Useful language:

I am interested in applying for the post of... which was advertised in 'The Weekend Times' on 22nd September.

My reason for applying is that I would like to broaden my experience and also to make greater use of my knowledge of languages than I do in my present position.

I would be able to attend an interview at any time which is convenient to you.

B3.3 Apology

Explain why you are apologising, give reasons for your behaviour, express regret for the damage/inconvenience/offence which has been caused and promise not to let it happen again or to make up for what you've done, as appropriate.

Useful language:

*I am writing to apologise for.....
for the fact that (+ clause)
for (not) (+ ing)*

*The reason I couldn't telephone you was ...
I'm really sorry to have wasted your time.
I assure you that this will never happen again.
If you let me know where you bought it, I'll gladly replace it*

B3.4 Complaint

In the first paragraph, explain the reason for writing and in the next, explain exactly what the problem is. Give all the necessary details about where and when it happened and who was involved. Give other relevant information in further paragraphs if necessary. In the final paragraph, explain what action you want to be taken.

Useful language:

I am writing to complain about ...

I am writing to express my concern about the fact that ...

I must insist that you ...

I must urge you to ...

B3.5 Opinion

If you're replying or reacting to something such as a letter or an article, give the necessary details. Explain your opinion and the reasons for it clearly, using separate paragraphs for each main point. Sum up your argument in the final paragraph.

Useful language:

In reply to your letter of 12th September, I would like to say ...

I would like to respond to the article called '.....' which appeared in Monday's edition of your newspaper.

In my opinion, ...

It seems (clear) to me that ...

B3.6 Endings

It is usual to end letters which expect a reply with a sentence on a separate line. The most common ending is:

I look forward to bearing from you.