

1 Covering letter / email

In a covering letter or email you explain why you are writing to a company, organization or individual, and list the other contents of the correspondence or any attachments (for example, a CV or application form).

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>If you're writing a letter, put the name and address of the person you are writing to in the top left-hand corner. In an email, you don't need to include this.</p> | <p>6 Westlands Road Edinburgh EH4 7PH 3 May 2013</p> | <p>If you're writing a letter, put your address and the date in the top right-hand corner. In an email, you don't need to include this.</p> |
| <p>The Managing Director Youth Tennis Academy 14 MacArthur Road Edinburgh EH3 7LG</p> | <p>If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, use <i>Dear Sir</i> or <i>Madam</i> or <i>Dear Sir / Madam</i>. If you know the person's name, use <i>Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms</i> + surname.</p> | <p>Say why you are writing and where you saw the job advertisement in the first paragraph of the letter / email.</p> |
| <p>Dear Sir or Madam</p> | <p>Re: Children's tennis coaching assistant</p> | <p>Say what documents you're enclosing. If you're writing an email, say <i>Please find attached my CV and a reference.</i></p> |
| <p>I am writing to apply for the post of tennis coaching assistant at the Youth Tennis Academy, which is advertised on your website. Please find my CV enclosed.</p> | <p>I am fifteen years old, currently at school, and I feel that my passion for tennis both as a player and a coaching assistant makes me a strong candidate for this position.</p> | <p>Give reasons for your interest in the job in the second paragraph.</p> |
| <p>As you will see from my CV, I have been the captain of my school tennis team for the last three years, during which time we have consistently been in the top three school teams in Edinburgh. I also play regularly for the regional under-sixteens team, and I travelled to London last year to take part in an international junior event with teams from all over Europe.</p> | <p>I also have some tennis teaching experience with children and teenagers, as last year I worked as a part-time assistant at a summer sports academy in Glasgow. I have enclosed a reference from my manager for this job.</p> | <p>Give information about your achievements and experience in the third and fourth paragraphs.</p> |
| <p>I would be available for interview immediately, and can provide further references if required. I look forward to hearing from you.</p> | <p>Yours faithfully</p> | <p>Say when you are available for an interview.</p> |
| <p><i>Alexa Williams</i> Alexa Williams</p> | <p>If you started with <i>Dear Sir</i> or <i>Madam</i>, end with <i>Yours faithfully</i>. If you used <i>Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms</i> + surname, end with <i>Yours sincerely</i>.</p> | <p>Use this phrase to bring your letter / email to an end.</p> |
| <p>If you're writing a letter, print your name clearly under your signature.</p> | | |

Tips for covering letters / emails

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. A letter or email like this should be formal.
- Use formal language, with full forms (*I am*), not short forms (*I'm*).
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- Use the appropriate opening and closing expressions.
- If you're attaching documents to an email, make sure you give them clear names.

2 Description of a process

In a description of a process you write about how something is made, how something is done or how something happens.

Introduce the topic in the first paragraph, and give background information.

Coffee was first widely enjoyed in Arabia in the fifteenth century, and coffee-drinking quickly spread to Europe and the rest of the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Coffee is now exported by over fifty countries, and the global market is worth more than \$100 billion a year. About 2.5 billion cups of coffee are consumed in the world every day, and it is all processed in basically the same way.

Describe the process in paragraphs two and three.

Coffee berries used to be picked by hand, but now machines are often used instead. After picking, the flesh is removed from the berries to leave the seeds, and these are washed. If coffee is to be decaffeinated, this is the point in the process when it takes place, and the beans are washed in a special solvent to remove caffeine. The coffee seeds are dried and then roasted, which is when they turn brown and begin to look like the coffee beans which we buy in the shops.

Use sequencing linkers like *after* and *then* to structure your writing clearly.

Use the passive when describing a process.

The roasted beans are classified by their colour, from light (a shorter roasting time) to dark (a longer roasting time). Darker beans often taste richer and sweeter, and lighter beans are more acidic. The level of caffeine is not affected by roasting. Once it has been roasted, coffee must be stored properly to keep it fresh. The best place to store beans is in an airtight container in a dark, cool place – the quality of the beans is reduced by exposure to air, heat and light. The finished product is then exported, and finally it becomes the drink that we all love so much.

End the description with a sentence which refers to the finished product and what happens to it.

Tips for descriptions of a process

- Be consistent with register. A description of a process is usually formal.
- Use formal language, with full forms (*it is*), not short forms (*it's*).
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- A description of a process is very often best written using the passive.
- Try to include some interesting facts in the first paragraph – this will make your reader want to continue reading.
- The easiest way to describe a process is in chronological order – start at the beginning and describe each stage of the process in turn.
- There are lots of sequencing linkers (*in the beginning, after, next, then, once, finally*) to help you to make the stages of the process clear.

3 Description of a person

In a description of a person you write about yourself or a person you know.

Introduce the person in the first paragraph. Say who they are and where they're from.

In the second and third paragraphs give more details about the person.

Give examples and add details.

Sam Graham is my cousin, and my friend, too. We're both sixteen, and we've got a lot in common. Unfortunately for me, he lives in the USA, so I don't see him as often as I'd like!

Sam always dresses fashionably, but he usually looks quite scruffy! However, the first thing you notice about Sam is his big, friendly smile. He's a very laid-back, positive person, and that's one of the reasons I like him so much. He's really easy to spend time with, and he's always happy to try new things.

Like me, Sam's really into football, although he calls it 'soccer'. He's also a good basketball player – he's fairly tall, which helps! We both love computer games, and we regularly play together on the internet. At the moment, we're playing *World of Warcraft*. Last week Sam saved my life – online, anyway! We chat online the whole time, and talk about what we're doing, the music we're listening to, and things like that. He often has good advice about things that are worrying me, like exams and school work.

I'd love to be able to spend more time with him, but we can only get together once a year or so, either when we visit my mum's sister in the States or when they come over to the UK. But even though we live thousands of kilometres apart, Sam is probably my best friend. We're so similar that he's almost like my twin brother!

Use linkers to avoid too many short sentences.

Try to use a good range of interesting adjectives.

Give reasons for your personal opinions.

Use adverbs of frequency, manner and intensity.

End with a sentence which summarizes why the person is important to you.

Tips for descriptions of a person

- Be consistent with register. This description should be informal, though a biography would probably be formal.
- Depending on the task, you can include details about the person's appearance, personality, and interests, how you spend time together, and why you like or admire the person.
- Use a range of vocabulary, including different adjectives, adverbs, and verbs (not just *be*, *have* and *like*).
- Give information that you think the reader will find interesting. Don't try to describe every detail about the person.

4 Description of a place

In a description of a place you write about somewhere that you know, saying what it is like, what you can do there and whether you like it.

Give the name of the place you're describing in the first paragraph. Try to include an interesting fact or opinion early on, so your reader wants to continue reading.

In the second paragraph say where the place is, and give some introductory information about it, for example the most famous place or popular places to visit.

In the third paragraph go into more detail, and mention more places to see and things to do.

Use adjectives to bring your description to life.

In the last paragraph describe your favourite thing about the place (or the thing you like the least).

If you go to Granada in winter, make sure you take gloves, a hat and a scarf. You may think that Spain is always warm, but Granada sits below snow-covered mountains at 750 m above sea level, and in January and February it can be freezing.

But even if the weather is unkind, Granada, in the south of the country, is worth a visit. The most famous reason to go is the astonishing Alhambra, the greatest example of Moorish architecture in Spain, and surely one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. The most impressive parts were built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and you can easily lose yourself for a day exploring the palace and gardens.

But that's not all – Granada is also home to fascinating museums, great cafés and restaurants, and romantic parks. Of particular interest is the Archaeological Museum, which gives a picture of the history of the local area and which has a fantastic view of the Alhambra on the hill above. If you get tired of culture, there's even a ski station only 30 km from the city.

The best thing of all, though, is the atmosphere. Granada is always lively, and if you wander the neighbourhoods of the Albaicín and Sacromonte you'll hear music and conversation wherever you go. And, this being Spain, life goes on late into the night – so find a warm local restaurant and forget about the cold outside.

Tips for descriptions of a place

- Your language could be formal or informal – imagine who your reader is, and where they're reading the description. If the description is for a friend, or is on a travel website, use an informal style (like the description above).
- Use the present simple for descriptions of places.
- Use a range of vocabulary, especially different adjectives.
- Give information that you think the reader will find interesting. Don't try to describe every detail.
- You don't have to describe a place you like or a beautiful place – you could describe somewhere you've been to which you didn't like at all, or somewhere very ugly where tourists never go.

5 Description of an event

In a description of an event you write about something that happened on a specific occasion in the past.

The first game

I first went to a football match when I was eleven years old, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. My dad used to go with his friends as often as he could, and one Saturday he asked if I wanted to join them. I'd never been all that interested in football, but I was curious, so I said yes. It was Oxford United against Tottenham Hotspur.

The atmosphere grew more and more intense as we walked towards the ground amongst crowds of people, and the noise inside was amazing. And when the game started it got even louder. I couldn't believe that adults could behave like this, screaming and pointing and groaning. At first I spent more time watching the crowd than the football. How could they care so much?

It started to pour with rain at half-time, and the stands were uncovered - this was before Oxford moved to a new stadium. But it didn't matter. By then I was hooked, and I spent the second half shouting and jumping up and down with everyone else. I even enjoyed the cold hotdogs that we bought after the game.

The final score? Well, it wasn't really about the score for me, it was the experience that mattered. That game changed my life, it made me a dedicated follower of Oxford United, and it led to many years of hope and disappointment (mainly disappointment). It was 0-0.

Give your description an interesting opening paragraph. Include information about where and when your story happened.

Tell the main story in the second and third paragraphs.

Use time expressions and sequencers to connect events.

Use different narrative tenses – past simple, past continuous, past perfect, *used to*.

Try to use a good range of vocabulary.

Use questions to keep the reader interested and involved.

Use a mix of longer and shorter sentences – this will make your description more interesting to read.

Bring your narrative to a clear end in the final paragraph.

Describe feelings as well as events – this will make your description more entertaining and involving.

Tips for descriptions of an event

- Be consistent with register. A description of an event is often informal.
- Use short forms (*didn't*), not full forms (*did not*).
- Choose a simple event – don't make it too complicated!
- Give a clear description of the context so the reader knows when and where the event happened.
- Use the past continuous to set the scene and to show longer actions, the past simple for main events, and the past perfect for events that happened earlier.
- Describe atmosphere and feelings as well as what happened.

6 'For and against' essay

In a 'for and against' essay you write about a topic or statement from opposite points of view, and then give your own opinion.

Give a general introduction to the topic in the first paragraph.

Give the separate arguments for and against the statement in paragraphs two and three. These can be either way round – the argument for the statement can be first, or the argument against.

Show that you have thought about the consequences of any changes you suggest.

Use linkers of contrast (*however, ... ; nevertheless, ... , etc.*) to structure your essay clearly.

Use modal verbs to make suggestions and recommendations.

Give your own opinion in the final paragraph, and say why you believe this.

'Junk food should be banned.' Discuss.

Junk food, in the form of burgers and other types of fast food, is everywhere in our cities nowadays. Some people believe that we should ban the sale of junk food because it is unhealthy. However, many kinds of junk food are very popular, and for a lot of people it makes up a significant part of their diet.

One reason for making it illegal for shops and restaurants to sell junk food would be to improve everyone's health. There is no doubt that a diet of junk food is unhealthy. Producers and retailers would have to think of new ways to make healthy food more exciting and appealing instead. An additional benefit would be a reduction in the amount of litter on our streets.

On the other hand, making all junk food illegal seems an extreme solution. Shouldn't people have the freedom to decide what kinds of food they want? Most of us enjoy eating snacks and treats sometimes, and a ban would deny us this. It should not be the job of governments to control what we eat and drink.

In my view, eating junk food every now and then is not harmful, as long as it is part of a balanced diet. It might be unhealthy, but we ought to be able to choose our own diets for ourselves. The important thing is that there need to be other cheap and healthy options available. That is how eating habits can be changed – not through legal interference.

Tips for 'for and against' essays

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. This essay should be formal. Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- Don't give your opinion in the first paragraph, just give a general introduction to the topic.
- Don't mix up arguments for and against the statement in the same paragraph.
- Try to write a similar amount for both your for and against paragraphs to show you are giving a balanced view.
- Support your arguments by giving evidence or thinking about the possible consequences of any changes.
- Only give your own opinion in the final paragraph. Make sure you give a reason.

7 Letter / Email of complaint

In a letter or email of complaint you write to a company, organization or individual to complain about goods, services or a situation.

If you're writing a letter, put your address and the date in the top right-hand corner. Put the name and address of the person you are writing to in the top left-hand corner. In an email, you don't need to include this.

If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, use *Dear Sir or Madam* or *Dear Sir / Madam*.

In the first paragraph say what you're complaining about.

I am writing to complain about my family's experience on PilotAir flight PTA456 from Gatwick to Madrid on 23 June this year.

In the second and third paragraphs give more information about your complaint. Make sure you explain it accurately and in detail.

When we arrived at the airport we found that the flight was delayed. I understand that sometimes delays are unavoidable, but in this case the delay was over six hours, and at no time did a PilotAir representative explain to us what was happening or how long we would have to wait. Furthermore, we also received no vouchers for refreshments despite being repeatedly promised them.

When the flight finally took off, we found that there was no food or drink on the plane, and that one of the lavatories was not working. This meant that the journey, especially with two small children, was extremely uncomfortable. To add to this, at no time did any of the cabin crew apologize – in fact, they were very unhelpful and disappeared for most of the flight. We finally landed in Madrid at nearly midnight, and found that our car hire office was closed. Consequently, we had to return to the airport the next day to collect our car.

In the last paragraph describe how the problem has affected you, and say clearly what you would like to happen (a refund, compensation, a replacement, etc.).

You will appreciate that this experience meant our holiday got off to a very bad start. I completed your online complaint form two weeks ago, but I have heard nothing. In the light of the poor service we experienced, I would like to receive a full refund for the Gatwick–Madrid flight.

Use this phrase to bring your letter / email to an end.

I look forward to hearing from you.

If you started with *Dear Sir or Madam*, end with *Yours faithfully*. If you used *Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms + surname*, end with *Yours sincerely*.

Yours faithfully

Christina Mansfield

If you're writing a letter instead of an email, print your name clearly under your signature.

Tips for letters / emails of complaint

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. This letter or email should be formal.
- Be polite but firm – you don't want to cause offence, but you do want a fast and appropriate response.
- Use the appropriate opening and closing expressions.
- Use indirect structures to sound more polite (*Would it be possible to ... ?* rather than *Can you ... ?*).
- Use full forms (*I am*), not short forms (*I'm*).
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.

8 Letter / Email to a newspaper

In a letter or email to a newspaper you give your opinion about a story that is in the news, or about an article that has appeared in the newspaper recently.

If you're writing a letter, put your address and the date in the top right-hand corner. In an email, you don't need to include this.

270 Beach Road
Brighton
BN6 2FF

19 June 2013

The Letters Editor
The Daily News
66 Clifford Street
London
E14 8QT

If you're writing a letter, put the name and address of the person you are writing to in the top left-hand corner. In an email, you don't need to include this.

Dear Sir / Madam

If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, use *Dear Sir* or *Madam* or *Dear Sir / Madam*.

In the first paragraph say why you're writing and give your opinion briefly.

I was interested to read your article about the need for more car parking in city centres (*More parking, please!* 17 June), and I am writing to express my views on this controversial topic. I believe that the best solution to the parking problem may be the opposite of what you suggest.

If you're writing about a newspaper article, refer to the article and the date it was published.

In the second and third paragraphs give more details of your argument.

I agree that there are more cars than parking spaces, but the best way forward may be to reduce the number of cars, not to increase the number of spaces. London's congestion charge has been very successful, and other cities should consider the same approach. This would reduce pollution and traffic jams, both of which would be made worse by simply increasing parking provision.

In the last paragraph make a final comment about your ideas.

For this proposal to work, we would need to provide good public transport to city centres. Many people drive because bus services are so poor, but better buses would be good for everybody and also good for the environment. With fewer cars on the roads, bus journeys would be faster, too.

Use this phrase to bring your letter / email to an end.

Finally, a reduction in traffic would make city centres much more pleasant places for shoppers and tourists to spend time in. For many years we have wanted to achieve this, and now we have our chance. If city centres are enjoyable places to be, then more people will visit and more money will be spent, with the added benefit that the local economy will be better off, too.

I look forward to hearing the opinions of your other readers.

Yours faithfully

If you started with *Dear Sir* or *Madam*, end with *Yours faithfully*. If you used *Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms* + surname, end with *Yours sincerely*.

Simon Charles

If you're writing a letter, print your name clearly under your signature.

Simon Charles

Tips for letters / emails to a newspaper

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. This letter or email should be formal. Use formal language, with full forms (*I am*), not short forms (*I'm*).
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- Use the appropriate opening and closing expressions.
- Make sure your points are very simple and clearly made.

9 Narrative

In a narrative you tell a short story about a past situation or event.

Make sure your narrative has an interesting beginning. Include information about where and when your story happened.

Use different narrative tenses – past simple, past continuous, past perfect, *used to*.

Use synonyms to avoid repeating words, for example, *look for* and *search*.

Describe feelings as well as events – this will make your story more entertaining and involving.

The first time I met Ellie, I nearly knocked her over! I was running through the park one cold November morning, and I'm sorry to say I wasn't looking where I was going.

I was running because I was trying to find my dog, Harry. I used to take him for a walk every morning, and he'd never run off before. One minute we were walking quietly along together, and then he suddenly ran away at top speed. He'd seen a rabbit and decided to chase after it, but he hadn't come back!

Amazingly, instead of being annoyed with me, Ellie was extremely sympathetic. After I'd explained the situation, she even helped me to look for Harry!

We spent half an hour searching everywhere, in the trees and down by the river. In the end, we found him sitting outside the café in the middle of the park. I was thrilled to see him, but Harry didn't seem bothered. He was more interested in the food – in fact he looked as if he might try to steal someone's breakfast!

I bought Ellie a coffee and a cake to say 'thank you', and we ended up exchanging phone numbers. Since that day we've become really good friends. We often go to the park at weekends. But now I usually leave Harry at home!

Try to use interesting vocabulary, for example, the adverbs *amazingly* and *extremely*.

Use time expressions (*eventually, ...; just then, ...*, etc.) and sequencers (*two hours earlier, yesterday*, etc.) to connect events.

Bring your narrative to a clear end.



Tips for narratives

- Be consistent with register. A narrative is often informal.
- Use short forms (*didn't*), not full forms (*did not*).
- Use a colloquial, chatty style and avoid formal expressions and linkers.
- Choose a simple story and don't make it too complicated. It's better to describe fewer things in more detail.
- Give your story a clear beginning (paragraph one), middle (paragraphs two, three and possibly four) and end (last paragraph).
- Use the past continuous to set the scene and to show longer actions, the past simple for main events, and the past perfect for events that happened earlier.
- Describe atmosphere and feelings as well as what happened.

10 Notes / Invitations / Announcements

Note

In a note you write a short message to someone to give them some information.

Write in note form to make the sentences shorter (*water plants*, not *water the plants*).

End with your name.

Start with the name of the person the note is for.

Hi Meg

Thanks very much for agreeing to look after my flat while I'm away.
Here's a list of things that need doing.

- collect post from postbox downstairs and leave in kitchen
- water plants once a week, esp. the ones in the bathroom
- keep an eye on washing machine - sometimes it fills up with water
- turn heating on if the weather turns cold

Thanks again - see you soon.

Jack

Use *PS* to add extra information at the end.

Put separate points in a list, not in a sentence - it makes the note clearer and easier to understand.

PS Help yourself to the veg in the fridge - they won't last till I get back!

Invitation

In an invitation you invite a person or a group of people to an event, and give details of where and when it is happening.

Ben

Say why the event is happening.

Andrea and I are having a joint birthday party.

Party at 8.00 p.m., on Sat. at Andrea's house (288 Witley St.)

We'd really like you to be there!

We'll provide drinks and snacks - you bring the music!

RSVP to andrea2277@intermail.com

See you there!

Say when and where the event is happening.

Tell people if they need to bring anything like food or drinks. If the event is formal, tell them what to wear.

Put *RSVP* if you want people to let you know if they're coming or not, and give contact details.

Announcement

In an announcement you write a short message to a group of people about an event or a situation. Announcements are often formal or official.

Fashion show

Use a heading to explain what the announcement is about.

I am very pleased to announce that there will be a student fashion show in three weeks' time, on Monday 13 April. The show will be held in the school gymnasium from 1.15-2.15. All the clothes are being designed and made by students at schools and colleges in the city.

There will be an admission charge of £1 per head, with all proceeds going to the charity Clothes for Crisis. Places are strictly limited to 250, and tickets are now available from the administration office.

NB lunch that day will be an hour earlier than usual, from 12.00-1.00.

Frances Lowden
Head Teacher

Explain the purpose of the announcement in the first sentence.

Divide the announcement into separate paragraphs to make the information clearer.

If appropriate, end with your name.

10 Notes / Invitations / Announcements

Tips for notes / invitations / announcements

- Use short forms (*I'm*) in informal invitations and announcements and full forms (*I am*) in formal invitations and announcements. Notes are usually informal.
- Think carefully about the purpose of the note, invitation or announcement. Why are you writing it, and what information do people really need to know?
- Make the layout and organization as clear as possible – it needs to be easy for the reader to see the important information.
- Tell the reader very clearly if they need to do anything, and what it is they need to do.

11 Opinion essay

In an opinion essay you say what you think about a topic or statement, giving reasons for your views.

'Computer games are a waste of time.'
Write an essay giving your opinion.

Use linkers of reason, addition and contrast to connect ideas.

Introduce the main idea of the essay in the first paragraph.

Some people disapprove of computer games because they do not think they are educational or useful. However, playing computer games is an extraordinarily popular hobby around the world. Can something so popular really be pointless?

Use a variety of expressions for introducing your opinions.

State your view and then give more details of your argument in paragraphs two, three and four.

In my opinion, playing any game teaches us many useful skills. Computer games are no different. For example, we learn how to think quickly, and how to solve problems.

Give examples or reasons to support your ideas.

What is more, we co-operate with other people when we play in teams. Computer games are often seen as solitary, but in fact many people play online and make friends with other gamers all over the world. In family life, computer games have replaced board games, and children often play with their parents.

To my mind, playing computer games can be very relaxing – not all games are violent, and some are beautifully designed and highly sophisticated. When you play a game, you do not think about anything else, so it is a very effective way to reduce stress. Everyone needs a way to unwind and relax, and computer games are just as valid as listening to music or reading. It has been shown that computer games can in rare cases be addictive, but on the whole the benefits clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

Mention counter-arguments if you like, but don't spend long on them – you need to put your own arguments forward.

Sum up your own opinion in the final paragraph, and end with a final thought on the topic.

In conclusion, I believe that playing computer games can be a rewarding and satisfying hobby, especially as part of a balanced range of free time activities. I strongly disagree that gaming is 'a waste of time'. Quite the opposite – it gives life a whole new dimension.

Tips for opinion essays

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. An essay like this should be formal.
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- Introduce the topic at the start. You can give background information or say what other people think.
- Keep on topic. Discuss the ideas in the question – do not introduce new ideas!
- Use a variety of opinion expressions, not just *I think*, e.g. *it seems to me that ...*; *it is clear to me that ...*
- End with a clear conclusion summarizing your views. You can qualify your opinion if you don't 100% agree or disagree.

12 Personal / Informal letter / email

In a personal / informal letter or email you write to a friend or relative about personal news.

If you're writing a letter from home, put your address and the date in the top right-hand corner. If you're away on holiday, just put the date. In an email, you don't need to include the address or the date.

22 July 2013

Use an informal greeting like *Hiya* or *Hi*. In letters you can also use *Dear*.

Hiya Lauren,

In the first paragraph give general information about how you are and what you're doing.

How are things with you? Are you having a good summer? Right now, I'm writing to you from a sunny beach in Portugal. I'm having an amazing time! It's so nice to get away from the rain and get a bit of a suntan.

In the second and third paragraphs give more details about what you're doing.

I'm staying at a summer surf camp on the Algarve. I've never surfed before so I'm on the beginners' course. I've fallen off loads! Luckily, there are lots of other beginners, so I don't feel too embarrassed! The instructors are really patient, and we get plenty of time to just sit and relax and admire the view.

Use phrasal verbs and colloquial language and expressions.

Use idioms to add interest.

I'm sharing a room with three other girls, and we're getting on like a house on fire. We cook together most nights, but yesterday we went to the local pizzeria, which was pretty good (better than our cooking!). It's been great to make some new friends - I'm not getting much sleep because we can't stop chatting at night! And a big coincidence - one of the girls lives really near you, so I'll introduce you when we get back home.

Ask questions and make suggestions.

Take a look at my pics on Facebook. It'll give you an idea of how nice it is. Really wish you were here too. You'd love it! Maybe next year we could come here together - what do you think?

Let's meet up when I get back next month. Lots of love to you and your family!

Bye for now

Use an informal closing expression like *Bye*, *Bye for now*, *See you soon*, *All the best* or *Lots of love*.

Vicki

Write only your first name at the end.

Tips for personal / informal letters / emails

- Use the correct register and be consistent. This letter or email should be informal.
- Use short forms (*I'm*), not full forms (*I am*).
- Use a colloquial, chatty style and avoid formal expressions and linkers.
- Use phrasal verbs and idioms.
- Use appropriate greetings and closing expressions.
- Use a variety of tenses.
- Ask your reader questions and express an interest in what they're doing.
- Only give details that might interest your reader - don't write an academic essay!

13 Report

In a report you give information about a subject that you have researched.

Give the report a title.

Facing the music at our festival

Introduction

Last summer the town held a weekend music festival for the first time. The aim of this report is to analyse any problems with the organization of last year's festival, and to make recommendations for possible improvements this year.

In the first paragraph explain the aim of your report.

Use headings to make the organization of your report clear.

Getting there

The site of the festival is the perfect size for the 5,000 or so festival goers that attended last year. However, access was difficult, due to the lack of public transport. This meant that visitors with no cars had to come by taxi, which added an unwelcome extra cost to their weekend.

Use linkers of reason, addition and contrast to connect ideas.

Accommodation

The camping area was a great success, with particularly positive comments about the shower and toilet facilities – 68% of people said it was 'the best festival campsite I've ever seen'.

Include statistics to support your findings if possible.

Catering

Although there were between ten and fifteen food stalls on the site, they all served similar cold sandwiches and rolls. As a result, we received a number of complaints about the limited choice of food – hot food would have been very popular, especially in the evening.

Summarize your findings and make clear recommendations.

Recommendations

In conclusion, I would like to suggest two main improvements for this year. Firstly, I recommend that we provide buses to transport visitors to the festival site, with the price of the bus included in the entrance ticket. Secondly, I suggest that we extend the choice of food available. For instance, we could offer curries, pizzas and burgers, as well as the sandwiches and rolls that are currently available.

Use sequencers to list your recommendations.

Tips for reports

- Use the correct register, and be consistent. A report should be formal.
- Use full forms (*I would like*), not short forms (*I'd like*).
- Use formal structures, expressions and linkers, and avoid chatty, colloquial language.
- Use headings to make it easier to read the report.
- Support your ideas with facts and statistics.
- End with a conclusion which gives clear recommendations to the reader.

14 Review (book or film)

In a review you give your opinion of a book, film, concert, exhibition, etc., explain your opinion, and say whether you would recommend it to other people.

Give a general description of the film or book in the first paragraph, including the title and the name of the director or author.

Give a brief summary of what the film or book is about in the second paragraph, without saying exactly what happens.

Use a range of extreme adjectives and / or modifying adverbs to emphasize your opinion.

Give your opinion of the film or book in detail in the third paragraph.

Give reasons for your opinions.

In the last paragraph sum up your opinion and give a clear recommendation.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey is a fantasy adventure film directed by Peter Jackson and based on the classic novel by J.R.R. Tolkien. It's the first film in a three-part series, a follow-up to the hugely successful *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

The main character is a young hobbit called Bilbo Baggins, who goes on a long journey to try to reclaim the Kingdom of Erebor from the evil dragon, Smaug. Naturally, his travels are exciting and dangerous, and he and his companions have many terrifying adventures on the way.

The film is never boring, mainly because the original book is so well-written. Bilbo is the hero, but he also makes mistakes, and that's what makes him so interesting.

The other main characters are also surprisingly believable.

One criticism of the film is that it has, if anything, too many spectacular special effects. It can sometimes be difficult to take in all the on-screen action, whereas the book leaves more room for your imagination. The only other criticism I have is that the film is too short, but at least there are two more parts to look forward to.

To sum up, Jackson has done it again. *The Hobbit* is unforgettable, and is probably one of the best films I've seen all year. Don't miss it – and see it in 3D if you can, as it makes a great film even better!

Tips for reviews

- Be consistent with register. A review for a website could be informal (like the review above); a review in a newspaper or magazine should be more formal.
- Don't include too much factual information about the plot – give the context and essential details only.
- If you're describing a book or film, don't tell readers what happens at the end!
- Remember, readers want to know your opinion, not just read a summary of the story.
- Use a lively style to keep your readers interested.
- Remember to end with a recommendation.