

Informal Email/Letter

Step 1: Salutation

Depending on the level of familiarity with the person you know, you can use “Dear [Name],” or “Hi [Name]”.

Hi [Name], (if writing to a friend or close family member)

Dear [Name] (if writing to teacher/distant relative)

Step 2: The opening paragraph

When beginning your informal email/letter, you should start with a greeting and outline the topic of the letter:

Thanks for your email (a greeting) – photography sounds cool as a hobby. I’d love to share what I do for fun and give you some tips. (the topic/main idea)

Step 3. The next paragraphs (main content)

In the next paragraphs, you give more details about why you are writing. Give relevant information, but don’t expand too much. Here we need to mention all the other important details that were provided in the assignment.

Step 4: The last paragraph

Here is where you want to create a lasting impression on your reader. You can ask any questions but also highlight some form of action you want them to take.

What got you into photography? Share some pics! (ask questions) Hope to hear from you soon. (call to action)

Step 5: Closing and signing off

When signing off, look at how you started your email. Your first name should then be written under this.

Best wishes, – friendly option

[Your Name] – remember to write your first name beneath

Tips for the Informal Email

- Begin your letter by responding to the input.
- Remember, the letter uses informal language.
- Try to avoid using exactly the same words that appear in the notes.
- Make sure you have included all the points from the notes.
- Use an appropriate closing formula.
- Decide what each paragraph will say before you start writing; each paragraph should have a specific purpose.
- Imagine you are really writing the letter and put yourself into the writer's position.
- Check your work for accuracy, punctuation and spelling.

A good informal letter should be:

- 1- Engaging – personal and chatty language
- 2- Concise – short, to the point with warmth
- 3- Correct – error-free (grammar, spelling, punctuation, content)

Keep your readers in mind when writing:

- Set a friendly tone
- Use casual language
- Give relevant details or information clear, fun and understandable

Useful Phrases

Greetings

Hi [Name] / Dear [Name] / Hey [Name] etc

Introductory paragraph

Sorry I haven't written for ages. / Sorry it's taken me so long to write.

How's it going? / How are you? / How are things with you? / How are things?

Referring to good news:

Glad to hear about. / I'm really glad to hear about / I'm very happy to hear about / I was very happy to read about

Referring to bad news:

I'm extremely sorry to hear about... / I'm very sorry to hear about... / Sorry to read about... / Its very sad to hear about you... / I can't tell you how sad I am that...

Introducing points:

By the way... / Did you hear about... / Did you see... Have you seen ... / Tell me about... / Oh, another thing...

Ending:

Well, time to go. / Well, it's time to go. / Well, got to go. / Well, time to close. / I've got to leave off now. / Write soon. / Make sure you write soon. / Love

Formal Email:

In a formal letter/email, you always need to state your purpose clearly, provide relevant details, and end with a polite call to action or closing remark, using appropriate formal phrases for openings and closings. There are three main areas of focus when writing a formal letter or email:

- Clear and polite communication: Obviously, your language should be formal and respectful, avoiding contractions and slang to maintain a professional tone.
- Logical structure and organization: That means you need to think about the appropriate greeting and sign-off, coherent paragraphs as well as suitable linking words and expressions that we can use to connect ideas smoothly.
- Persuasive or informative content: Every formal letter/email aims to achieve a specific goal, such as requesting action or providing feedback, so include relevant details and a courteous conclusion.

Salutation

The letter/email should start with a formal greeting such as:

- Dear Sir or Madam / To whom it may concern (if you don't know the name)
- Dear Mr/Ms [Last Name] (if you do know the name).

The first paragraph (opening)

The introduction must contain all the necessary information covered by the letter/email:

- An appropriate opening in which you should state your purpose for writing
- The topic of the letter/email
- A brief reference to the main key points that you will cover

The body paragraphs (main content)

In the main content, you should comment on/answer the main key points that you discovered in the task (see step 1) and each is placed in a separate section/paragraph.

Closing

The final paragraph should shortly summarise the intent of the formal letter and end with some call to action – take, return the money, send information, etc.

Sign-off

Yours faithfully – use it if you don't know the name of the recipient.

Yours sincerely – use it if you know the name of the recipient.

[Your Name]

Useful phrases for a formal letter:

Greetings

Dear Sir or Madam

Dear Mr Jenkins

To whom it may concern,

Beginning:

With regards to the letter/email on...

With reference to your letter/email...

After having received your letter/email...

I received your address from ... and would like ...

Thank you very much for your letter/email on...

I have been given your contact details by... and I would like to...

In reply to your letter/email of...

Reason for writing

I am writing with regard/reference to ...

I am writing to express (my concern about/ disappointment with/disapproval of/apologies for)

I would like to draw your attention to/point out ...

Complaining

I am willing to complain about ...

You said ...but in fact what happened ...

Request for action

I would appreciate it/be grateful if you would ...

I look forward to receiving/seeing ...

I trust/very much hope you will ...

I would be grateful if you could...

Could you please provide details on...

I would appreciate information regarding...

In the light of this, I would advise...

Given the situation, I would suggest...

The best solution would be to...

In order to improve it is necessary to..

This will have an impact on

Ending:

I hope to hear from you soon...

If you require any further information, feel free to contact me

Should you require anything else, do not hesitate in contacting me

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

I trust that this information will be helpful.

Model 1 – Complaint Letter

You recently had an unpleasant experience when you were shopping in a department store. One of the assistants wrongly accused you of shoplifting. Although you were able to prove that you had paid for the item in question, you received no apology.

Write a letter to the manager of the shop, saying why you are angry and disappointed and asking for some kind of compensation for the way you were treated. Say that you will take further action if you do not receive an official apology.

Write between 150-180 words

Model 1 – Complaint Letter - Solved Example

Dear Mr Menton,

I am writing about a recent incident in your shop in which I had the misfortune to be involved in. The incident I refer to is when one of your staff stopped me and accused me of shoplifting in front of about 20 other people. Needless to say, this was an extremely embarrassing situation for me. Thank goodness I had kept the receipt to prove that I had paid for everything on my person at the time, but to be accused of stealing like that in front of all those people – some of whom I knew personally – was very humiliating and degrading. The shop assistant used a very accusatory tone...

But the thing that angered and dismayed me most was not the accusation itself – after all, misunderstandings happen sometimes – but the accuser’s failure to acknowledge his mistake or apologise to me. When I showed him the receipt, he simply walked off mumbling about how ‘shady’ a character I looked. Considering how much embarrassment I was caused, I do not think it was too much to have expected a simple apology either, do you?

Which brings me back to why I am writing; if I cannot get an apology from this assistant, then I would like a formal one from you instead. If an official apology is not forthcoming and I am not compensated in some way – with a shopping voucher for example – then be warned that I will take further steps to ensure that I get justice.

I look forward to hearing from you at the very earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Mathers

Model 2 – Cover Letter

You have found an advertisement for an opening in an animal sanctuary in their website.

Write a letter/email to apply for the job

Write between 150-180 words

Model 2 – Solved Example – Cover Letter

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you to express interest in the voluntary work placement at your animal sanctuary which I saw advertised on your website.

I am eighteen years old and in my final year at secondary school, due to sit my A levels next summer. I am planning on taking a degree in veterinary science at university and have received two conditional offers. As you will see from my CV, I have always shown an interest in working with animals and have relevant experience from voluntary work which I carried out at a local dogs' home. In this position I had sole responsibility for taking care of some dogs' daily needs, such as feeding, cleaning and exercise. In addition to this, I regularly spend time on my uncle's farm throughout the year and usually help him take care of the animals. This hands-on experience has reinforced my decision to seek a career working with animals. Both the dogs' home and my uncle would be willing to provide references.

I am hard-working, punctual and willing to help out with any kind of job at the sanctuary. My decision to undertake a degree in veterinary science confirms my interest in and commitment to the field. I am certain that experience working at your animal sanctuary will provide an invaluable insight into working with animals and a unique opportunity to acquire a range of skills and expertise.

I hope I have shown that I am an ideal candidate for this position and please find attached my CV.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Emily Jones

HOW TO WRITE A BLOG POST



STARTING A BLOG POST

1

TITLE

Short + interesting
Eye-catching
Make me want to keep reading

USER NAME

Posted by+nickname+on date+time
Example,
Blood is thicker than water
Posted by: Susan Meyers on 23th Oct,
2018, 18:00pm

OPENING

The opening is just one paragraph which main purpose is to get the readers interested in with an anecdote, a question, an interesting fact, a quote, etc.

2

BODY

The body consists of 2 - 3 paragraphs, each one dealing with one aspect.

Remember a paragraph is not a sentence, there needs to be more:

- Topic sentence
- Supporting sentences that expand the idea (reasons, examples, references, etc.)
- Concluding sentence

3

CLOSING

The closing is one paragraph concluding the writer's opinion.
Remember:
Do not introduce any new ideas.
Do not write a very long one.
Address the readers directly.

4

INVITING COMMENTS

Optional: Include a final sentence encouraging people to contribute with their comments. Some expressions:
Share your thoughts. / Let me know about what you think. / I'm looking forward to reading your thoughts.

5

USEFUL LINKERS

I'd like to share my experiences/thoughts with you...

Firstly, / To start with / In the beginning / Right from the start

Secondly / Besides / Apart from that / In addition

Believe it or not / Needless to say

Personally / In my opinion / I think / I am convinced
Therefore / So that's why / Thus / For instance / As you can see

All in all, I think / After all

Finally / To sum up

Blog Post Model - Shopping

TASK 2: WRITTEN PRODUCTION /12.5 points

You have approximately 45 minutes to complete this task.

TOPIC: SHOPPING

You read this article in a blog about fashion:

What Does the Future of Shopping Hold in the Fashion Industry?

Over the course of 2020, the way we shop changed forever. Today, over 25 per cent of the world's population shops online. With this dynamic shift to online shopping and exciting technological innovations becoming available to brands all the time, the world of fashion is evolving and adapting at an impressive rate. The days of mass shopping in the traditional way have disappeared. Instead, brands are utilising technology to create personal, immersive, and remote shopping experiences.

Finally, we can expect the future of fashion and shopping to continue to strive for greater sustainability. Fashion is becoming ever-more sustainable. Thanks to the development of more sophisticated synthetic materials such as vegan leather, fashion brands will have an increasing variety of materials to work with. This will enable them to keep working towards the sustainable practices that their customers are asking for.

Adapted from: <https://technofaq.org/posts/2020/12/what-does-the-future-of-shopping-hold-in-the-fashion-industry/>

You decide to write a **comment on the blog** giving your opinion about online shopping.

You must write about **the following points**:

- Explain the pros and cons of online shopping
- Give your opinion on the topic
- Make predictions about what the situation may be like in the future

Blog Post Model Solved – Shopping

Is Online Shopping Really the Future of Fashion?

After reading this article about the future of shopping in the fashion industry, I would like to share my thoughts on this topic.

On the one hand, online shopping offers many advantages. It is incredibly convenient, as you can browse and buy clothes from the comfort of your home at any time. Moreover, it allows customers to compare prices easily and access a wider variety of products from brands all over the world.

On the other hand, there are some significant drawbacks. You cannot try clothes on before buying them, which often leads to disappointment and returns. Additionally, I believe that shopping in physical stores is a more enjoyable and social experience that many people miss.

Personally, I think a balance between both options is ideal. I enjoy shopping online for basic items, but I prefer visiting stores for special purchases.

Looking ahead, I predict that technology such as virtual fitting rooms will solve many current problems, making online shopping an even more popular and satisfying experience for everyone.

How to write an opinion essay?

Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is simply to tell the reader what the essay is about. You can start your essay by referring to the question that was asked and writing it in your own words. It is also worth mentioning the points you are going to describe:

There are many factors to consider when deciding if the university should be free or not. Among these are taxes, equality of opportunity, and the economy.

Main body:

Main body paragraphs are the most important part of your essay so they should be the longest and one paragraph should comment on one point. In addition, every paragraph should start with a topic sentence, which is like an introduction to the paragraph and it tells the reader what exactly the paragraph is going to discuss. A topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph (which is also the most important). It essentially tells readers about the rest of the paragraph.

Paragraph 1: Firstly, a majority of people believe that a significant part of taxes should go to education. Opponents might say if someone can afford university, then he/she should pay for it. However, people with higher education have better wages and therefore pay higher income tax after graduation.

Paragraph 2: Secondly, making university free for all, creates more opportunities for those from low-income backgrounds. Although they may still have difficulty meeting other costs such as accommodation, it makes the playing field more level.

Paragraph 3: In addition, having an educated workforce is proven to help the economy grow. Namely, the more highly educated people there are, the higher the standard of living for everyone. Consequently, more people will be able to pay taxes to fund the education of future generations.

Remember: you don't have to tell the truth! The examiners won't know, so if you don't have experience or an opinion you can make something up!

Conclusion:

The conclusion comes at the end of your essay, it summarizes the main idea of the essay. You need to write a clear, justified conclusion. You can't just say, 'I agree', or 'I disagree.' Think of it like this: you need to convince the examiner that your conclusion is correct.

In conclusion, a university should be free for everyone. It makes economic sense and ultimately benefits all members of society.

Tips

Always answer the question directly. Your essay must be 100% relevant to the task. If the prompt requires you to discuss two specific points and express your own opinion, you must address every element.

Carefully plan your entire essay before you start writing. A good essay is never improvised. Spend 5–7 minutes on planning: an introduction, two main body paragraphs (one for each point from the prompt), a separate paragraph for your personal opinion, and a conclusion.

After writing, always proofread and correct your essay. Dedicate the final 5 minutes to thorough editing. Check for grammatical, lexical, spelling, and punctuation mistakes. Even a single advanced-level error (e.g. affect/effect confusion or incorrect collocations) can lower your score.

Clearly and explicitly express your opinion in the final paragraph (conclusion). In an essay, stating your personal opinion is compulsory – it must be clearly visible. Avoid weak or formulaic phrases such as “In the end, I would like to say that...”. Instead, use more sophisticated language, for example: “Taking all the above arguments into consideration, I firmly believe that...”.

Support every claim with concrete examples, facts, statistics, or quotations. Unsupported opinions score poorly. Use advanced linking phrases such as: According to a recent study..., For instance..., A striking example of this is..., or As Professor Smith rightly points out.... This significantly boosts your marks in both Content and Communicative Achievement.

Maintain a formal or semi-formal style, depending on the topic. Most essay tasks require a neutral-formal register. Informal expressions (e.g. you know, kinda, or contractions like don't) are only acceptable when they appear inside direct quotations used to support your argument.

Master the use of punctuation – it is a powerful tool for emphasising arguments. Short sentences are clear and emphatic, but overusing them can make your writing feel choppy and irritating. Longer, complex sentences add elegance and rhythm, provided you use commas, semicolons, and dashes accurately and effectively

Useful Phrases

First Paragraph

.... clearly/undoubtedly has an impact on... / It is common knowledge that... plays a crucial role in... / It is undoubtedly the case that... / There is little doubt that... / ... is widely believed to contribute to... / It is generally considered that... / Recent research suggests that... / Studies have shown that... has an impact/influence on... / Few people would contest/dispute the fact that...

Second Paragraph

Another factor to consider is... / On the other hand/In contrast... / It is often claimed that... / All the evidence suggests that...

Stating your opinion

As I see it, / It seems to me that I would also say that / I am convinced that ... / I am inclined to believe that ... / There is no doubt in my mind that ... / One of the drawbacks of is / However, one of the benefits is that ...

Changing topic

As regards the causes for this, ... / Concerning the causes for this, ... / As for the causes, ...

Presenting arguments

One justification often given for ... is that... / Advocates/Proponents would claim that ... / Those who object to ... often argue that ... / Another objection is that ... / However, it should not be forgotten that ... / ... are opposed to ... on the grounds that ... / From the point of view of ... / According to ...

Describing causes

One factor which has led to ... is ... /One of the factors which has brought this about is ... / The problem often stems from ... / The situation has been exacerbated by ... / ...has only made the situation worse. / One consequence of ... is ...

Proposing steps and measures

As regards the most appropriate response to this situation, one suggestion would be to ... / The first step to be taken would be to ... / To alleviate the situation people should ... / In addition they ought to ... / This can only be dealt with if ... / To overcome this problem, ... / Were the government to ... the situation would doubtless improve. / Individuals can do a great deal to ... / The burden of responsibility lies in the hands of ... / It is vitally important that ... / Legislation should be introduced to control ... / It would be a grave error if we ...

To conclude an essay: Concluding

In light of the above, ... / Taking all this into consideration/account, ... / As far as I am concerned, ... / in my opinion, / as I see it, etc. / ... is the most effective way to... due to the fact that... / Despite the fact that... undoubtedly plays a role in... / I firmly believe that... is more effective due to the fact that... its advantages outnumber/outweigh those / All in all it seems to me that ... / The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that ... / All things considered, ... / On balance, I/we tend to believe that ... / The world would surely be a better place to live in if ...

Opinion Essay Model - House

You read this information in an article from an online blog:

Renting A Home vs. Buying

When it comes to buying vs. renting a house, there is always a passionate debate about which makes the most financial sense. At first glance, a mortgage payment might be less than your current monthly rent, but that mortgage is just the tip of the iceberg. For many people, the associated costs of homeownership might run as high as 50% of their mortgage payment. Renting might cost less, even over the long term. Once you've evaluated the finances and the non-financial factors (e.g. social, professional), you'll be on your way to making an informed decision that fits your needs.

You decide to contribute your opinion to the blog by writing an essay about the topic.

You must include the following points:

- Argue for or against renting.
- Comment on the situation in your country.

Write between 150 – 180 words.

Opinion Essay Model Solved - House Renting: The Smarter Choice for Young People Today

After reading this article about renting versus buying a home, I feel strongly that renting is the better option for most people, particularly young adults.

To begin with, renting offers much greater flexibility. If you need to move for work or personal reasons, you can do so without the stress of selling a property. Furthermore, as the article points out, homeownership carries many hidden costs beyond the mortgage itself, such as maintenance, insurance, and taxes, which can become a serious financial burden.

Regarding the situation in my country, Spain, buying a home has become increasingly difficult for younger generations. House prices have risen dramatically in recent years, especially in big cities like Madrid and Barcelona, making it almost impossible for people in their twenties or thirties to get a mortgage.

In conclusion, while owning a home may be a dream for many, I believe renting is currently the most practical and financially sensible choice for the majority of people today.

How to write an Article

An article is typically written for a magazine, newspaper, or website, and it needs to be engaging, informative, and opinion-based to hook the reader. By expressing your views clearly and making it fun to read, you'll not only impress the examiners but also enjoy the process.

Step 1: Analyse your task quickly

Task analysis is very simple. All you have to do is two things:

Firstly, find the key points you have to answer in your task.

Secondly, find the topic of the article

So, now you need to brainstorm all the vocabulary that you can think of related to the topic. If you prepare some words in advance, it will be much easier for you to write an article!

Step 2: Add a Title

The title should be engaging as well as the introduction and contain the main idea of the article. But, it is okay if your title is simple and just gives a general idea.

Step 3: Introduction

The role of the introduction is mainly to catch the reader's attention, it can be done by asking a question, sharing a fact, or addressing the reader directly. This also shows you can use varied language like questions or exclamations.

Step 4: Body (answering the questions)

Here you answer the main questions that we identified in Step 1. Also, we use the vocabulary that we prepared earlier in Step 1. The role of the article is primarily to entertain the reader. It is worth including some of the author's personal experiences and anecdotes.

Step 5: Conclusion

Finish your article with a nice final sentence. It doesn't have to be anything special – you can summarise your points, give a recommendation, or end on a positive note.

Useful Phrases

Rhetorical questions:

Have you ever ...? / What do you think about ...? / Are you one of those people who thinks that ...? / Are you one of those people who ...? / What would life be like if ...? / Will the future bring us ...?

Introducing your first point:

Firstly, / In the first place, / First of all , / The first thing to consider is, / One thing to consider is, /To begin with

Introducing more points:

Secondly, / Another consideration, / Yet another consideration is ... / Another thing to consider is... / Added to that... / Apart from that... / In addition to this...

Introducing your final points:

In conclusion... / To conclude... / To sum up... / So...

Introducing your opinion:

I think... / In my opinion, ... / Personally, I believe that ... /In my view, / If you ask me... / To my mind, ... / My personal opinion is...

Differences between articles and essays

In the table below, you can see what an examiner can expect from you and how he marks your writing on your exam.

| Language | |
|--|---|
| Essays use a semi-formal, neutral tone and stay balanced until the end. | Articles are more informal and engaging, often speaking directly to the reader with questions or stories. |
| Organisation | |
| Essays have a fixed structure: introduction, body paragraphs discussing different views, and conclusion. | Articles are more flexible, with a catchy title, engaging introduction, main body, and a summary or final thought at the end. |
| Writing style | |
| Essays need formal words and linking phrases for arguments, like “however” or “furthermore”. | Articles include contractions (e.g., I’m, don’t), everyday expressions, phrasal verbs, and questions to make them lively. |
| Content | |
| Essays discuss pros and cons or different opinions on a topic, with reasons and examples. | Articles share personal views on something like hobbies or events, aiming to inform or entertain the reader. |

Article Model - Hobby

You have seen this advertisement in the school magazine.

Your Hobby

We would like to know something about your hobby. Write an article for the school magazine explaining why this hobby is so special to you.

The best articles will be published in the magazine.

Write your article using between **150 and 180 words**.

Article Model Solved – Hobby

Hobby like no others!

Can you imagine your life without hobbies? I think is impossible. Everyone is interested in something different and that makes our life unique.

My hobby is organizing journeys. To be honest at the beginning I thought it was very challenging, because I had to organize everything by myself. But now I even want to set up my own business. All my friends and family members always ask me about some tips how to organize a perfect trip. And thanks to that I feel useful and fulfilled, because I love helping others.

My first trip was a complete disaster. My sister and I set off very early to be on time at the airport. But when we arrived it turned out that our flight was yesterday. It was of course my fault; I was 100% sure that it was that day. So, we didn't fight anywhere.

I think my hobby is addictive. So be careful, if you try it once, it is impossible to stop, and that makes it special.