

UNIT 3 Formal Letters

- 1** a) Read the questions below, then listen to the beginnings and endings of three letters and tick the correct box for each letter.

1 Why has the letter been written?	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3
A to apply for a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B to ask for information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C to make a complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- b) Listen again and tick the correct boxes for each letter.

2 How does the letter begin?	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3
A Dear Advertiser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Dear Sir/Madam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Dear Mr Williams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Which of the following expressions have been used in the opening/closing remarks?	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3
A With reference to your advertisement ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B I am writing to apply for the position ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C I am writing to express my dissatisfaction ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D I look forward to hearing from you ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E I must insist on a full refund ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F Thank you in advance ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 How does the letter end?	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3
A Yours faithfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Lots of love	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Yours sincerely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Formal letters are normally sent to people in an official position or people you don't know well (e.g. *Director of Studies, Personnel Manager*, etc). They are written in a **formal style** with a polite, impersonal tone.

- You can write a formal letter to apply for a job/course, make a complaint, give/request official information, etc.
- A formal letter should consist of:
 - a) a formal **greeting** (e.g. *Dear Sir/Madam* - when you do not know the person's name; *Dear Ms Green* - when you know the person's name);
 - b) an **introduction** in which you write your opening remarks and mention your reason(s) for writing e.g. *I am writing to apply for the position of ...*);
 - c) a **main body** in which you write about the main subject(s) of the letter in detail, starting a new paragraph for each topic;
 - d) a **conclusion** in which you write your closing remarks e.g. *I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible ...* ;
 - e) a formal **ending** (*Yours faithfully* - when you do not know the person's name; *Yours sincerely* - when you know the person's name; + your full name).

Introduction

Paragraph 1

opening remarks/
reason(s) for writing

Main Body

Paragraphs 2 - 3 - 4 *

development of subject(s)

Conclusion

Final Paragraph

closing remarks

* The number of main body paragraphs may vary, depending on the rubric.

LETTERS OF APPLICATION

When you write a letter applying for a job or a course, you should include the following information:

A) in the **opening remarks/reason(s) for writing**

- the name of the job/course, where and when you saw it advertised.
e.g. ... *the position of manager advertised in yesterday's Herald.*

B) in the **main body paragraphs** (paras 2-3-4)

- age, present job and/or studies (e.g. *I am a nineteen-year-old university student.*)
- qualifications (e.g. *I have a BA in French.*)
- experience (e.g. *I have been working as a waiter for the last two years.*)
- skills and personal qualities that are suitable for the job/course
e.g. *I am a good and careful driver. I consider myself to be mature and responsible.*

C) in the **closing remarks**

- any other important information (i.e. when you are available for interview, where and when you can be contacted, references you can send, a remark that you hope your application will be considered, etc)
e.g. *I will be available for interview in September.*
I enclose references from my last two employers.
I look forward to hearing from you.

You usually use:

the present simple to describe skills/personal qualities

e.g. *I am a patient and reliable person.*

the past simple to talk about past experiences

e.g. *I left school in 1994. I worked for General Motors for four years.*

the present perfect to talk about recent work/studies

e.g. *I have been working for LTYU for two years.*

I have recently finished secondary school.

2 Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

You saw this advertisement in a local newspaper and have decided to apply for the job.

St George's Primary School is looking for a young, energetic and experienced schoolteacher to join us in September. Must be a good organiser and keen on sports.

Please apply in writing to Mrs Hunter, giving details of qualifications, skills and previous experience and saying why you think you are suitable for the job. Closing date 12th May.



Write your **letter of application**. Do not write any addresses.

- Who is going to read your letter?
- Do you know this person at all?
- What style should you use?
- Why are you writing this letter?
- How should you begin and end the letter? Choose A to C.

A Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,
Steven Davies

B Dear Headteacher,

Kind regards,
Steve

C Dear Mrs Hunter,

Yours sincerely,
Steven Davies

6 Which of the following points should you include in your letter? Tick (✓)

- A your favourite subjects at school
- B your qualifications
- C your present and previous jobs
- D a description of your appearance
- E your personal qualities
- F your plans for the summer

7 What do you think the successful candidate should be?

- A patient D artistic
B enthusiastic E hard-working
C athletic F fair

8 What experience would someone need for this kind of job?

- A experience with children
B experience in public relations

9 What qualifications would someone need to apply for this job?

- A a driving licence
B a BA in Education
C a degree in Media Studies
D a certificate in gymnastics
E a diploma in interior design

3 Read the letter and label the paragraphs with the headings below. Say what qualifications, experience and personal qualities Steven has. Do you think he will get the job?

- closing remarks • personal qualities • age/present job/qualifications
- opening remarks/reason(s) for writing • experience

Introduction

Dear Mrs Hunter,

With reference to your advertisement in Thursday's edition of the *Daily Star*, I am interested in applying for the position of primary school teacher.

Main Body

I am 28 years old and currently teaching in Margate. I have a BSc degree awarded by Glasgow University in 1997. I completed my certificate in Education at Preston Teacher Training College in 1998.

I have been working for Margate Education Department since 1999. During this time, I have enjoyed teaching a variety of subjects, including English, General Science and Games.

I consider myself to be punctual, hard-working and fair. I enjoy working with children and have good organisational skills.

Conclusion

I enclose a reference from my present employer. I would be grateful if you would consider my application. I am available for interview any weekday morning. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Steven Davies
Steven Davies

Para 1

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Para 2

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Para 3

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Para 4

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Para 5

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5 Fill in the correct form of the verbs in the list.

study, be a member, graduate, join, attend, award

- 1 I *graduated* from Lancers University in 1998 with a first class degree in Physical Education.
- 2 At the moment, I courses at Southfield College.
- 3 After leaving high school, I Art at the School of Fine Art in Paris.
- 4 I am keen on sports. I Barton football club three months ago.
- 5 I of the local orchestra, where I play the violin.
- 6 I was a grade A in Maths.

FORMAL STYLE

Formal style is characterised by the use of:

- **advanced vocabulary**
e.g. *I am writing to enquire whether ... (not: I want to ask if)*
- **formal linking words/phrases**
(consequently, however, therefore, for this reason)
e.g. *I have worked as a primary school teacher for ten years and therefore have experience working with children.*
- **passive voice**
e.g. *I can be contacted ... (not: You can contact me ...)*
- **polite forms without contractions**
e.g. *I would be grateful if ..., I would appreciate it if you could ... I would like to apply ... (not: I'd like ...)*

Colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs, idioms and short forms are **not** used in formal style.

4 Read the letter again and find formal expressions to match the informal ones in the table, as in the example.

Informal Style	Formal Style
About your advert ...	<i>With reference to your advertisement ...</i>
I want to apply for
I got my teaching certificate
I've had a job in
I think I'm always on time
I like working with kids
There's a note from my boss
I'd like it if you hired me
I'm free to talk to you
Drop me a line sometime

6 a) Read the letters below and label the paragraphs with the headings.

- opening remarks/reason(s) for writing • experience, personal qualities
- closing remarks • age/qualifications • other information

Dear Sir/Madam, (A)

I am writing to apply for the position of part-time shop assistant which was advertised in this week's edition of the *Frankfurt English News*.

I am a 16-year-old student. In December I passed the examination for the First Certificate in English with grade A. It is my ambition to become a teacher of English. Therefore, employment in an English-language bookshop particularly appeals to me.

Despite my lack of formal work experience, I feel that I would be well-suited for the position. For the past two years I have been a volunteer helper in our school library. In my school report I was described by the librarian as enthusiastic, dedicated and reliable.

Since the school holidays include the months of July and August, I will have no other commitments and would be available to work at any time, excluding Saturdays, for as many hours as needed.

I may be contacted at the above address, or by telephone on 435 1708. I look forward to receiving a reply in due course.

Yours faithfully,
Steffi Braun
Steffi Braun

Para 1
opening remarks/reason(s) for writing

Para 2
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Para 3
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Para 4
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Para 5
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Dear Manager, (B)

Hi! I've decided to drop you a line about the job you advertised in the *Frankfurt English News*.

I'm a 16-year-old student, and my English isn't bad. **I got an A in the First Certificate exam!** I want to be an English teacher, so it would be lots of fun to sell English books.

I haven't worked before, but I'm sure I'd be good at the job. I've helped out in our school library for ages, and **the librarian says you have to work hard.**

I won't be doing anything in August. We've got to go on holiday then, so I can work any hours you like (but not Saturdays).

You can get in touch with me at the above address, or give me a ring on 435 1708. **Let me know soon!**

All the best,
Steffi
Steffi Braun

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- b) Compare the two letters. Which one has an appropriate greeting and ending? Then, underline the phrases in Letter A which mean the same as the phrases in bold in Letter B. Which style is more suitable in a formal letter applying for a job? Why?

- c) Read the advertisements below. Which job did Steffi apply for?

A Hard-working young assistant wanted for part-time work in a bookshop during July/August. No sales experience needed, but a good understanding of English is essential.

Apply in writing to Bookworms.

B Large department store seeking ambitious and experienced floor manager to work on a full time basis. Computer skills an asset. For more information call J.T. Reeves at 217-3233.

- 7 In which letter in Ex. 6 can you find each of these features? Label each point as A or B.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1 short forms | ..... |
| 2 passive voice | ..... |
| 3 a friendly, personal tone | ..... |
| 4 everyday vocabulary | ..... |
| 5 formal linking words/phrases | ..... |
| 6 phrasal verbs or idioms | ..... |
| 7 longer, more complex sentences | ..... |
| 8 advanced vocabulary | ..... |
| 9 colloquial expressions | ..... |
| 10 a polite, impersonal tone | ..... |

Young helpers (18 - 25) needed in our summer camp for 10 - 14 year olds. Duties include helping with games and other activities.

Helpers must speak English or French and be able to work at any time, including some evenings, from 5th - 25th July. Apply in writing to Ben Carroll.



- 1 What skills/qualifications and personal qualities do you think would help you get the job? Circle.
A energetic and sociable
B can drive a car
C worked in a summer camp last year
D have worked as a waitress
E like working with children
F good at outdoor activities and sport
G good cook
H good organiser
I speak English and French
- 2 Which of the points above refer to skills, qualifications, experience or personal qualities?
- 3 Do you know the person you are writing to?
- 4 What is your reason for writing?
- 5 How should you begin and end the letter?

In a formal letter making a complaint, you may use a **mild** tone, for complaints about minor problems, or a **strong** tone, for complaints about more serious matters, especially when you are extremely upset or annoyed. However, the language you use should never be rude or insulting.

- In the **opening remarks**, you should state your complaint, including details of what has happened and where/when the incident took place.
e.g. (Mild) • *I am writing in connection with .../to complain about ... the terrible behaviour/attitude/rudeness of ...*
I am writing to draw your attention to ... which ...
(Strong) • *I wish to bring to your attention a problem which arose due to your staff/inefficiency ...*
• *I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction at ...*
• *I wish to express my dissatisfaction/unhappiness with the product/treatment I received from ... on ...*
- In the **main body paragraphs**, you present each of the specific points you are complaining about. You start a new paragraph for each point and justify these points by giving examples/reasons.
e.g. • *Although you advertise "top quality", I felt that the product I purchased was well below the standard I expected.*
- In the **closing remarks**, you should explain what you expect to happen (e.g. to be given a refund/replacement/apology/etc).
e.g. (Mild) *I hope you will replace ...*
I feel/believe that I am entitled to a replacement/refund ...
I hope that this matter can be resolved/dealt with promptly.
(Strong) *I insist on/ demand a full refund/an immediate replacement/etc or I shall be forced to take legal action/the matter further.*
I hope that I will not be forced to take further action.

10 Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

You recently bought a calculator, but you were given the wrong model by mistake. When you complained, the shop assistant was rude to you. Write a letter to the company's complaints department, explaining the reasons for your dissatisfaction and saying what action you expect the company to take.

- 1 Who is going to read your letter?
- 2 Do you know the person you are writing to?
- 3 Why are you writing this letter?
- 4 Would you use a mild tone or a strong tone? Why?
- 5 What opening and closing remarks would you write?

- 11 a) Read the letter opposite, and fill in the gaps with words/phrases from the list.**

but also, furthermore, not only, however, in addition to, firstly, to make matters worse

- b) Read the letter again and label the paragraphs with these headings.**

- closing remarks
- opening remarks/reason(s) for writing
- 1st complaint & examples/reasons
- 2nd complaint & examples/reasons
- 3rd complaint & examples/reasons

- c) Now answer the questions.**

- 1 Why is Mrs Adams complaining?
 - 2 What are her specific complaints?
 - 3 Does she justify her complaints? If so, how does she justify them?
 - 4 What is Mrs Adams expecting?
Tick (✓)
- A replacement
 - A full refund
 - The calculator to be repaired
 - An apology
- 5 What will Mrs Adams do if she is not satisfied?
 - 6 Has Mrs Adams used a mild or a strong tone? Underline the words/phrases that justify your answer.



Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction

I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction at the disgraceful treatment I received at the Walford branch of Stimpson's Electronics yesterday afternoon.

Para 1

Main Body

(1), the product I was given was not the model I had asked for. The new X-401 calculator was demonstrated to me by the sales assistant, and I agreed to buy it. (2), on unpacking my purchase, I saw that I had been given the smaller X-201 model instead.

Para 2

(3), this calculator was much cheaper than the model I requested and paid for. It didn't have many of the features I needed and was much more basic than the one I was shown to begin with.

Para 3

(4), I was deeply offended by the behaviour of the sales assistant when I went back to the shop to complain. He was (5) impolite, (6) unhelpful. He refused to contact the manager when I asked to speak to him about the incident.

Para 4

Conclusion

As you can imagine, I am extremely upset. I must insist on a full refund, (7) a written apology from the local manager, or else I shall be forced to take further action. I expect to hear from you as soon as possible.

Para 5

Yours faithfully,
Caroline Adams
Caroline Adams

- 12 Read the following extracts and say which of them are beginnings (B) and which are endings (E). What tone has the writer used in each?**

1 B I am writing to complain about the quality of an appliance I recently purchased from your company. mild tone

2 I demand an immediate replacement or a full refund, or I shall be forced to take the matter further.

3 I would appreciate it if the faulty appliance could either be replaced or repaired as soon as possible.

4 I am writing to inform you that I was absolutely horrified by the rudeness of your shop assistants.

13 Read the situations, and answer the questions that follow, as in the examples.

- I** A month ago you ordered some skiing equipment from a sports shop and paid by credit card. Although you asked for it to be sent by courier, you have received nothing. You urgently need this equipment.
- II** You recently bought an air conditioner which had been advertised on television. On receiving it, you discovered that it was nothing like the product shown in the advertisement.
- III** You have just come back from a package holiday where you were very disappointed by the lack of facilities and poor services.
- I** Which of the following complaints would you include in each letter? Write full sentences.

A have already paid – equipment still not delivered – urgently need it *Letter I*

.....

B contrary to advertisement – no swimming pool – rooms extremely small – no maid service

.....

C model not one advertised – huge – ugly – old-fashioned model

.....

- 2** Match the opening and closing remarks, then say which letter of complaint you would use them for.

Opening remarks ...

- A** I wish to express my dissatisfaction with your mail-order service.
- B** I am writing to express my disgust at the facilities and service offered by your travel agency.
- C** I feel I must complain about the misleading advertisement on TV promoting your product.

Closing remarks ...

- 1** I feel completely cheated and therefore demand a full refund of the money paid to you.
- 2** I insist that the product be replaced or else I will be forced to take further action.
- 3** Unless I receive the equipment by the end of this week, I will have no choice but to cancel my order.

14 Read the situation below and say:

- a) who you would address the letter of complaint to;
 b) what complaints you would include in the letter; and
 c) what opening and closing remarks you would write.

You live near a secondary school. Lately you have been disturbed by noisy children who gather outside your house, playing loud music and throwing litter into your garden.

15 Join the following complaints to their examples/reasons, using linking words/phrases from the list below, as in the example.

even though, however, in spite of the fact, nevertheless, although, but

- 1** The new game took fifteen minutes to load onto my computer. The salesman said it would load instantly.
The new game took fifteen minutes to load onto my computer, even though the salesman said it would load instantly.
- 2** I paid for a set of five compact discs. There were only three compact discs in the box.

- 3** The advertisement said the tent was waterproof. Rain continually dripped into the tent.

- 4** The bicycle was brand new. The chain came off my bicycle the first time I rode it.

- 5** The battery went flat after only two hours. The instructions said it lasted for sixteen hours.

16 Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

You recently went for a meal at Benny's fast food restaurant, which is part of an international chain. Unfortunately, the service was very slow and the food was badly cooked, so you complained to the supervisor. However, he was very rude to you and insisted on your paying for the meal. You have decided to write a letter of complaint to the company's head office. Write your **letter**, explaining the reasons for your complaint and saying what you expect the company to do.

- 1 What is your reason for writing?
- 2 Do you know the person you are writing to?
- 3 Would you use mild or strong language? Why?
- 4 How would you begin and end the letter?
- 5 How many main body paragraphs should you write? What should the topic of each one be?
- 6 Read the advertisement and the complaints in the speech bubbles. Then, use the complaints and suitable linking words/phrases to explain the reasons why you are complaining.

Benny's - **FAST Service** - **Delicious FOOD**

Our Customers always come first

1 I had to wait 15 minutes to give my order. It took a further 20 minutes for the food to be served.

2 The chips were raw, the meat was frozen in the middle and the tomatoes were rotten.

3 I complained to the supervisor, who insisted on my paying for the meal. When I refused, he rudely told me to leave.

e.g. 1 *Despite the restaurant's claim of fast service, I had to wait ...*

- 7 What would you expect the company to do? (e.g. refund, dismiss the supervisor, improve service, check on quality of food, etc) In which paragraph would you write your demands?

17 These paragraphs are written in the wrong style. Correct them by using the words in the list. Then, say which is an opening remark and which is a closing remark.

A - *as you can imagine* - *a full refund* - *a written apology* - *I am extremely upset* - *I feel I am entitled to* - *I look forward to receiving your prompt reply*

1) I'm sure you can guess 2) I'm really cross. 3) I think I should get 4) all my money back, in addition to 5) a great big "sorry" from the local manager. 6) Write soon.

B - *complained* - *I am writing to express* - *I was served* - *my anger* - *my complete dissatisfaction* - *the behaviour of the supervisor*

1) Hi — I want to tell you 2) how shocked and disgusted I was with the meal 3) I had last night at the local branch of Benny's, and 4) how really furious I was at 5) what the supervisor did when I 6) said the food was horrible.

18 Read the rubric in Ex. 16 again. Write your letter (120-180 words), using your answers from Exs. 16 and 17 to help you. You can use the letter in Ex. 11 as a model.