

How to Write a Formal Letter

The editors at [Scribendi.com](https://www.scribendi.com) explain how to write a formal letter

Use These Tips When Writing a Formal Letter

In today's Internet- and email-driven society, the need to write a formal letter arises less often than it did in the past.





However, it is still occasionally necessary to present a formal letter for the following reasons:

- to obtain information
- to apply for an academic program or a job
- to write a **complaint letter**, or
- to express your opinion in an effective and coherent manner

Tips for Writing a Formal Letter: Be Concise

- State the purpose of your formal letter in the first paragraph, and do not veer from the subject.
- Try to avoid flowery language and long words.
- Keep the letter short and to the point.



Use the Right Tone



A business letter or formal letter should be written in a tone that is slightly more formal than your everyday language.



Avoid the following:

- slang or jargon
- contractions such as *I'm*, *can't*, and *it's*
- vague words such as *good* and *nice*

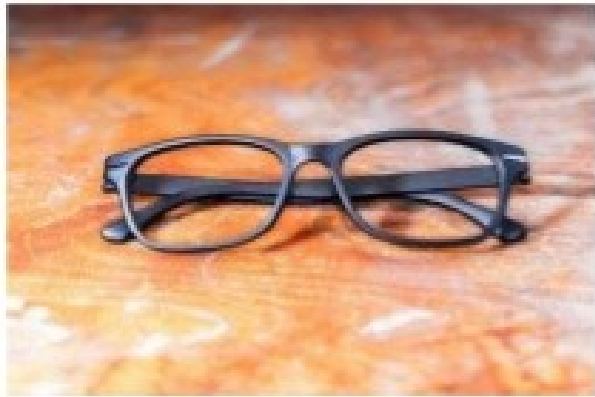
Be polite and respectful, even if you are complaining.

Proofread

Once you have written your formal letter, carefully check the grammar and spelling.

- Use the spell checker on your computer and then re-read the letter, because the spell checker will not likely catch every error.
- Use a dictionary or thesaurus, if necessary.
- Check the grammar and punctuation for correctness, and make sure the sentences are complete.





It is usually a good idea to have someone else proofread your formal letter, even after you have done so, because you may have overlooked errors in something that you have read many times.

If this formal letter is important enough for you to take the time to write, do not rush its completion. Errors may diminish the impact of the statement or impression you are trying to make.

Present Your Ideas Properly: Formatting a Formal Letter



Adhering to the standard conventions of good formal letter writing and presenting your letter attractively will ensure that the recipient seriously considers your thoughts and gives them the attention they deserve.

Heading

The heading consists of your address (but not your name) and the date. Telephone numbers and email addresses are not usually included here, but they are acceptable. Set in a block format, the heading goes in the top left corner of the page.

123 Elm Ave.
Treesville, ON M1N 2P3
November 23, 2015



Inside Address

The inside address consists of the name and address of the person to whom you are writing.

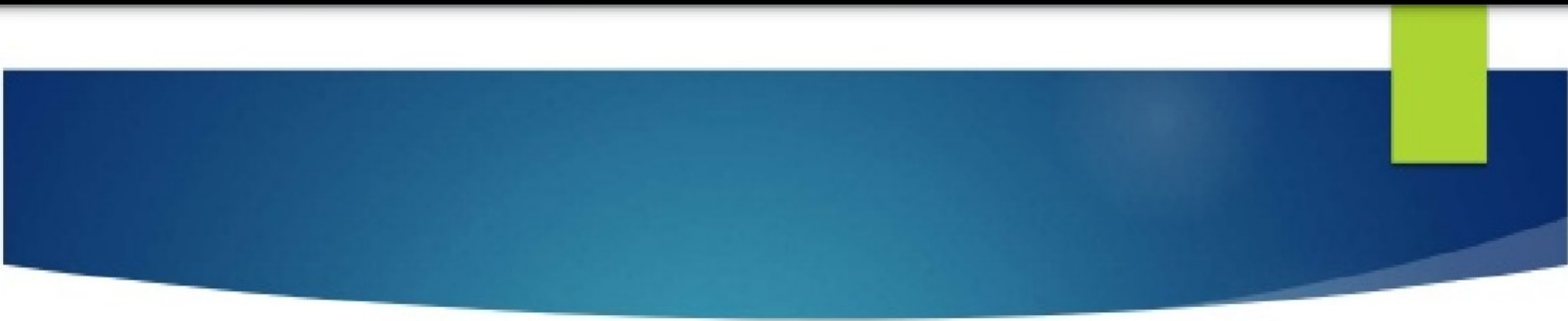
- You should try to address the formal letter to a specific person; however, if you do not know their name, at least try to include their title.
- This address is usually placed four lines below the heading if a word processor is used or one line below the heading if the letter is handwritten.

Salutation

Skip one line after the inside address and write the salutation. Your choice of salutation depends on whether you know the intended recipient of the formal letter. The most usual greeting is

Dear

followed by the person's name .



If you do not know whether the person you are addressing is a man or a woman, you may begin with:

Dear Sir or Madam

Ms. may be used if you do not know the marital status of a woman. Furthermore, if the person has a specific title, such as Dr., make sure you use it.

Dear Mr. Trunk:
Dear Mrs. Branch:

Dear Ms. Root:
Dear Dr. Acorn:

Body

- Skip one line after the salutation, and begin writing the body of the formal letter.
- This is the main part of the letter.
- It is best to use short, clear, logical paragraphs to state your business.



Closing and Signature



This is the end of the letter.

- Skip one line after the last paragraph of the body of the letter, and write the closing.
- Only the first word of the closing should be capitalized. It is punctuated with a comma.
- Leave several lines after the closing and type or print your signature. Using ink, write your actual handwritten signature between these two printed lines.

Yours sincerely,

Ezra Twig

Ezra Twig



**FORMAT OF
AN INFORMAL
LETTER**

The format of writing an informal letter

Format :

Explanation

Address

- The writer's address is written at the **top left hand corner**

- For example:

25, Jalan Tebing 8/8,
Seksyen 8,
40000 Shah Alam,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Date

- Written **below** the **address**.

For example: 6 June 2011 For example: 6 June 2011

Greeting

- Written on the **left-hand side of the letter.**

Begin with:

Ø Dear.....,

For example: Dear Amin, Dear Latifah,

Ø Dearest....., or My dear....., (for close friends & family)

For example: Dearest father, My dear Uncle Syed, Dearest Siti,

Opening(1st paragraph)

You may begin your letter by:

- Asking about the person's health. For example:
 - Ø How are you? I hope that you're in the pink.
 - Ø How's your family getting on?
 - Ø I'm fine and I hope you're fine too.
 - Ø I hope that you're as fit as a fiddle.

- Asking what the reader had been up to?
 - Ø How's the weather at your place? Not too hot I hope.
 - Ø Did you get to visit your grandparents?
 - Ø Did you go on your trip to Paris as you had hoped? They say Paris is a beautiful city.

Expressing happiness and sorrow

- Expressing happiness: For example:
 - Ø I received your letter on...
 - Ø I'm happy to receive your letter...
 - Ø Thank you for your letter which I received.....
 - Ø I'm so glad to hear.....
 - Ø I'm glad to learn that....
- Expressing sorrow:
 - Ø I'm sorry to hear that.....
- Expressing apology:
 - Ø I'd like to say sorry for...
 - Ø I'm sorry for not writing....

Content(several paragraph)

- In the 2nd paragraph, mention your main reason for writing the letter. You may use the following phrase:
 - Ø In your last letter, you wanted me to describe / advice.....
 - Ø I'm writing this letter to....

Closing(last paragraph)

Inform the reader that you are ending the letter. You may use the following phrases:

- Ø I'll write again soon.
- Ø Do write to me soon.
- Ø Well, that's about all for now.
- Ø Please give/send my regards to...
- Ø Please convey my warm regards to....
- Ø Let me pen off here.
- Ø Take care of yourself.
- Ø Hope to hear from you soon.
- Ø I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.
- Ø Hope to receive a reply from you.
- Ø Bye / Goodbye.

Signing off

Signing off

If you are writing to your parents, you can sign off using:

- Ø Your loving daughter,
- Ø Yours lovingly,
- Ø Yours affectionately

If you are writing to friends or relatives, you can sign off using:

- Ø Your friend,
- Ø Yours sincerely,
- Ø Yours faithfully,
- Ø Your niece / nephew,

Informal letter

The format:

Your address _____

Date _____

Greeting,

Opening _____

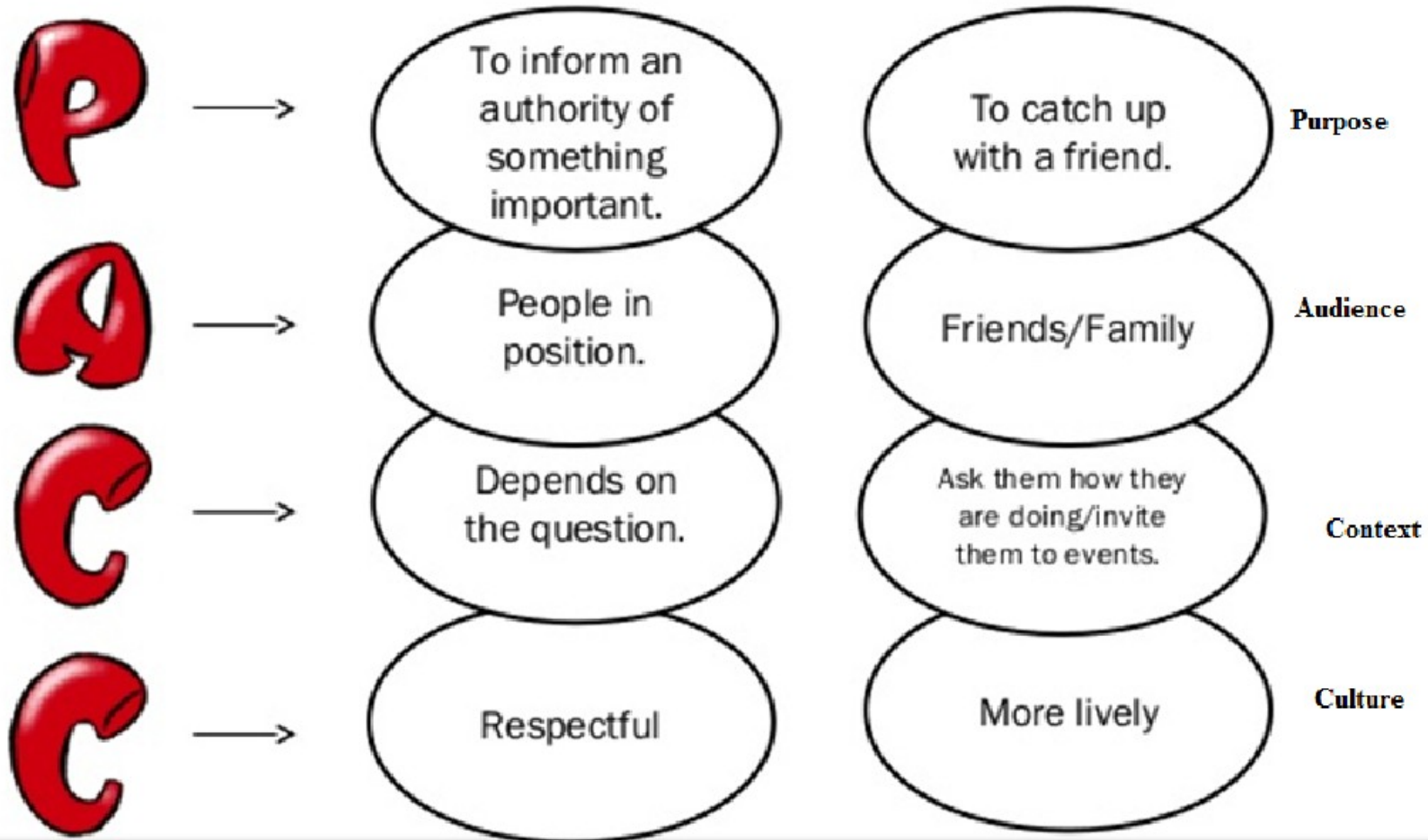
Contents _____

Closing _____

Signing off, _____

Signature _____

Formal vs Informal Letter





Thank You

