

Plan

An informal letter is a personal letter written to a relative, friend or acquaintance. There are many reasons for writing an informal letter: to give news, talk about plans, congratulate, thank or apologise to someone, etc. Below is a general plan for an informal letter, with questions to guide you.

Greeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use first names 	
Opening paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use set phrases (refer to Guide to writing) to begin your letter • say why you are writing 	<i>Why are you writing this letter? Do you want to give news, congratulate the reader, etc?</i>
Main part (2-3 paragraphs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop your ideas 	<i>What exactly do you want to tell the reader?</i>
Closing paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state anything you want to emphasise • use set phrases to end your letter 	<i>Is there anything you want to repeat?</i>
Signing off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a signature ending and your first name below that 	

Guide to writing

- Make sure you follow the appropriate layout for informal letters:

Greeting: on the left-hand side of the page (e.g. *Dear Bill, Dear Mum,*). Put a comma after the name.

Your address: on the right-hand side of the page (not always necessary)

Date: below the address

Indent paragraphs: start the first line of each paragraph under the comma.

Signing off: towards the middle of the page. Don't forget the comma after the signature ending. Write your first name underneath. Do not put a full stop after your name.

92 Park Lane
Epsom
Surrey KT18 2LR
18 June 200....

Dear Betty,

Love,
Jill

- Refer to the reader in a friendly way and use informal language.
- Start a new paragraph for every major point. This will make it easier for the reader to follow your letter.
- Use linking words/phrases to make your writing flow better (e.g. *well, by the way, anyway, what's more*).
- Use short forms (e.g. *I'd, can't*).
- Include exclamation marks to express your emotions more clearly (e.g. *We had a wonderful time!*).
- Use direct questions (e.g. *How were your holidays?*).
- Remember to use a greeting, set phrases to begin and end your letter and a signature ending. Look at the table below for ideas.

Greetings	Set phrases for opening paragraph	Set phrases for closing paragraph	Signature endings
Dear Henry Hello Mary! Dear Mum NOT: Dear brother Dear friend	I hope you are fine. It was nice to hear from you. Thanks for your letter. What have you been up to? Sorry I haven't written for so long.	Well, that's all for now. I must go now. Write soon. I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Waiting for your letter.	Yours Love All my love Lots of kisses Bye for now Best wishes Take care

Writing practice

1. Read the letter of apology below and add punctuation. Then find the mistakes in the layout and correct them.

Done



Dear Janet

we hope you are fine we reached Woodland yesterday and everything was great until we went to put up the tent you lent us I don't know how to say this and I feel really bad about it but I'm afraid we have ruined your tent let me start from the beginning

we arrived here in the afternoon and decided to set up camp immediately before it got dark anyway while we were pitching the tent there was a sudden gust of wind Mack and I held on tightly to the tent but the wind was so strong that it ripped the front of the tent

we're really sorry that we ruined your tent you can't imagine how bad we feel we managed to mend it a bit but we plan to replace it as soon as we get back if we don't find exactly the same one we'll buy one that you like

once again we're really sorry about the tent we hope you can forgive us

love Irene and Mack

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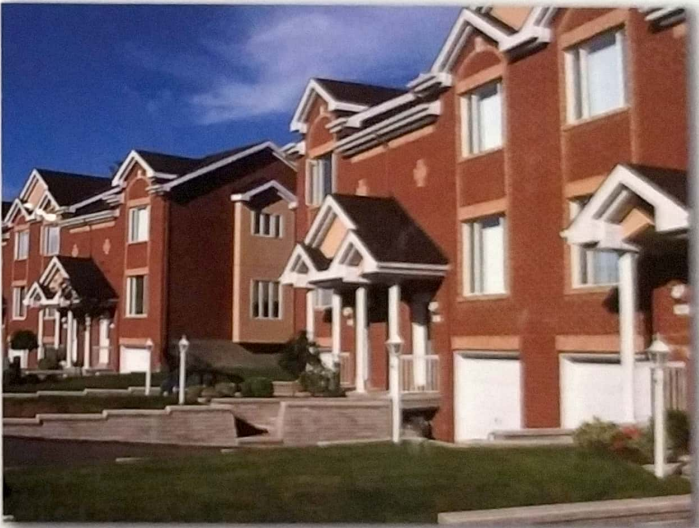
3. Write a greeting and the opening paragraph for each of the following letters.

a. While you were in London, you stayed with your aunt's family for a month. You are back home now and have decided to write her a letter. You want to thank her for putting you up and let her know how you are getting on.



b. You have moved to a new neighbourhood and have changed schools. Write a letter to a friend, telling him/her what everything has been like so far.

OX1



c. You are on a trip around Europe with your family. A friend of yours had asked you to buy him/her a watch from Switzerland. However, you didn't have the opportunity to buy it. Write a letter to your friend, apologising and explaining what happened.



4. Tasks for homework.
Choose one of the topics given in exercise 3 and write a letter in an appropriate style. (120-180 words)