



Read and write a formal letter for IELTS General Training Writing Task 1

This worksheet will help you:

- identify formal language features in a letter
- write a formal letter

Exercise 1

Read the IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 below and complete the following sentence by crossing out the incorrect words:

- The letter has to be formal because it's to someone you know / don't know about something important / unimportant.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have recently moved into a rented house with some friends. However, there are several problems with the house that need fixing.

Write a letter to the company who manage the property. In the letter

- explain the situation
- describe the problems with the house
- say what you want the manager to do

Write at least 150 words. You DO NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Exercise 2

Read the sample answer below and tick (✓) or cross (✗) each of the following statements:

- The writer explains the situation
- The writer describes the problems with the house
- The writer says what he/she wants the manager to do



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Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a tenant at a property you manage and am writing to complain about some maintenance issues that have not yet been resolved. I moved into the house last month with two friends and highlighted these issues at that time to the person who provided the keys.

The main issue is that the lock on the front door is very stiff and can take several attempts to lock or unlock it. This is inconvenient and at times frustrating, especially when we need to be somewhere at a certain time or when the weather is bad. The other issues are the cracked kitchen window pane and the alarm system not working, both of which present security concerns.

We would appreciate it if you could arrange for the necessary repairs to be carried out as soon as possible. I can arrange to be home any day this week so that the repairs can be completed.

I look forward to hearing when the work has been scheduled.

Yours faithfully,

Pete Jones

Word count: 165

Exercise 3

Without looking back at the letter, underline the more formal option in each of the following examples.

- I'm writing to complain about / I am writing to complain about...
- ...resolved / dealt with (e.g. ...issues that have not yet been resolved/ dealt with.)
- ...attempts / goes (e.g. ...take several attempts/goes to...)
- We would appreciate it if you could... / Can you...?
- ...done / carried out (e.g. ...to be done/carried out as soon as possible)
- Look forward to hearing... / I look forward to hearing...
- Yours faithfully / Regards

Now look back at the letter to check your answers.



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Exercise 4

Read the IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 below from the Official IELTS Practice Materials and complete the following sentence by crossing out the incorrect words:

- The letter has to be formal because it's to someone you know / don't know about something important / unimportant.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently bought a large expensive item but when it was delivered to your home you found some problems with it. Write a letter to the manager of the shop. In the letter

- give details of what you bought
- describe the problems with your item
- say what you want the shop to do

Write at least 150 words. You DO NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Exercise 5

Underline the best option in each of the following examples to use in your letter.

- I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with... / I'm writing to express my dissatisfaction with...
- ...received / got (e.g. ...the product I received/got on...)
- ...purchased / bought (e.g. I purchased/bought the product on...)
- ...being moved / in transit (e.g. ...but was disappointed to find that it had obviously been damaged while being moved / in transit)
- Please can you... / I would appreciate it if you could...
- Thank you for your assistance / Thanks for your help



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Exercise 6

Plan and write a formal letter for the Writing Task in Exercise 4. You can use the best options from Exercise 5 in your answer if you need help.

Blank lined area for writing the formal letter.

When you've finished your letter, check that you've included all of the required information (i.e. the three bullet points in the Writing Task), used paragraphs to separate the information, and used formal language (e.g. a formal opening/closing, a polite request, and formal vocabulary).

Then compare your answer with the sample answer below.



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ANSWERS

Exercise 1:

The letter has to be formal because it's to someone you don't know about something important.

Exercise 2:

- The writer explains the situation ✓
- The writer describes the problems with the house ✓
- The writer says what he/she wants the manager to do ✓

Exercise 3:

a. I'm writing to complain about / I am writing to complain about... . 'I am' is more formal than the contracted form I'm.

b. ...resolved / dealt with (e.g. ...issues that have not yet been resolved/dealt with.). The verb 'resolve' is more formal than the phrasal verb 'deal with'.

c. ...attempts / goes (e.g. ...take several attempts/goes to...). The noun 'attempt' is more formal than the noun 'go'.

d. We would appreciate it if you could... / Can you...? The polite request 'We would appreciate it if you could...' is more formal than the direct request 'Can you...?'.

e. ...done / carried out (e.g. ...to be done/carried out as soon as possible). The phrasal verb 'carry out' is more formal than the verb 'do'.

f. Look forward to hearing... / I look forward to hearing... . 'I look forward to...' is more formal than leaving out 'I' and writing 'Look forward to...'.

g. Yours faithfully / Regards. 'Yours faithfully' is a more formal closing than 'Regards'.

Exercise 4:

The letter has to be formal because it's to someone you don't know about something important.

Exercise 5:

a. I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with... / I'm writing to express my dissatisfaction with... . 'I am' is more formal than the contracted form I'm.

b. ...received / got (e.g. ...the product I received/got on...). The verb 'receive' is more formal than the verb 'get'.

c. ...purchased / bought (e.g. I purchased/bought the product on...). The verb 'purchase' is more formal than the verb 'buy'.



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ANSWERS

Exercise 5: continued

d. ...being moved / in transit (e.g. ...but was disappointed to find that it had obviously been damaged while being moved / in transit). The phrase 'in transit' is more formal than the verb 'move'.

e. Please can you... / I would appreciate it if you could... . The polite request 'I would appreciate it if you could...' is more formal than the direct request 'Please can you...?'

f. Thank you for your assistance / Thanks for your help. 'Thank you' is more formal than 'Thanks', and the word 'assistance' is more formal than the word 'help'.

Exercise 6:

Compare your answer to the sample answer below.

- Did you include the same kind of information?
- Did you organise the information in the same way?
- Are there any formal language features in the letter that you could have used in your letter?

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the sofa I received on Monday of this week. I purchased the product online but on delivery was disappointed to find that it had obviously been damaged while in transit.

The most noticeable damage is a dent in one of the arms where the sofa must have been knocked or damaged by something heavy falling on it. There is also a large rip in the material on the underside of the sofa and a deep scratch on one of the wooden legs. While neither of these are visible when the sofa is the right way up, they are further signs that the sofa was not adequately protected during transit.

I would appreciate it if you could arrange for the sofa to be collected and repaired as soon as possible or for a replacement sofa to be delivered.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Pete Jones

Word count: 155