

Formal letter structure

1 Opening

Address your letter to *Dear + the name or job title of the person you have been asked to write to*, followed by a comma, then start a new line for the opening paragraph under the comma. (*Note: in examinations you are not required to put an address, date or valediction*).

2 Paragraph 1: Introduction

Why are you writing? Give the general purpose and context only (e.g. to complain, apply, request, disagree) and an indication of what you are responding to (e.g. a recent holiday or a letter in last week's newspaper).

3 Paragraph 2: Details of situation

Give previous history of the relevant event, or your background or experience for an application. Say what happened exactly if you are making a complaint, or focus directly on the text you are arguing with. This section should include specific factual data, such as numbers and other details.

4 Paragraph 3: Further development

Give further support to your claim or request, including evaluative comments. Summarise the current situation and give reasons why your letter should be given consideration (e.g. other problems which occurred with your holiday accommodation, or how well you fulfil the job-requirements).

5 Final paragraph: Future action

Say what you wish to happen next (e.g. that you look forward to being called for interview, or expect to receive some compensation as soon as possible). Suggest, firmly but politely, what may happen if you do not receive a response to a complaint, or if your views are not agreed with.