

Rules for Writing Formal Letters in English

In English there are a number of conventions that should be used when writing a formal or business letter. Furthermore, you try to write as simply and as clearly as possible, and not to make the letter longer than necessary. Remember not to use informal language like contractions.

Addresses:

1) Your Address

The return address should be written in the top right-hand corner of the letter.

2) The Address of the person you are writing to

The inside address should be written on the left, starting below your address.

Date:

Different people put the date on different sides of the page. You can write this on the right or the left on the line after the address you are writing to. Write the month as a word.

Salutation or greeting:

1) Dear Sir or Madam,

If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use this. It is always advisable to try to find out a name.

2) Dear Mr Jenkins,

If you know the name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) and the surname only. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, you can use Ms, which is for married and single women.

Ending a letter:

1) Yours faithfully

If you do not know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

2) Yours sincerely

If you know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

3) Your signature

Sign your name, then print it underneath the signature. If you think the person you are writing to might not know whether you are male or female, put your title in brackets after your name.

Content of a Formal Letter

First paragraph

The first paragraph should be short and state the purpose of the

letter- to make an enquiry, complain, request something, etc.

I am writing to enquire about/complain about... Por la presente quisiera saber/quisiera mostrar mi queja sobre...

The purpose of this letter is to express my disappointment with..../el propósito de esta carta es expresar mi malestar con/sobre...

✎Body of the letter

The paragraph or paragraphs in the middle of the letter should contain the relevant information behind the writing of the letter. Most letters in English are not very long, so keep the information to the essentials and concentrate on organising it in a clear and logical manner rather than expanding too much.

I find it necessary to inform you... Me es necesario informarle(s)

Firstly...Primeramente

This meant that....Esto implicó que/supuso que

Then....Luego/Más tarde

✎Last Paragraph

The last paragraph of a formal letter should state what action you expect the recipient to take- to refund, send you information, etc.

I would be grateful if ...Estaría agradecido/a si

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.Si quiere más información por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience/without delay. Espero su respuesta tan pronto como le sea posible/sin demora.

I await your prompt reply. Espero su rápida respuesta.

EXPRESSIONS TO BE USED

***Adjectives to describe feelings**

Appalled, distressed,disgusted,shocked,disappointed, dismayed,dissatisfied

***Linkers**

Reason: because, because of, since, due to

Consequence: As a result, consequently, as a consequence, therefore,

for this reason