

CAE

Writing Guide



languages

Part 1- Essay

- In part 1 of the writing exam you have to write an essay. This question is obligatory.
- You are given a general topic and three bullet points. Write about **TWO** of the bullet points.
- You are also given three opinions, but you don't have to use these. If you do, use your own words.
- An essay is formal or neutral in tone. Don't use contractions or colloquial language.
- The word limit is 220-260 words.
- Spend 45 minutes on the task:
 - 5-10 minutes to plan
 - 30-35 minutes to write
 - 5 minutes to check your work

Essay Structure

An essay should have **four** paragraphs.

Introduction

Normally two or three sentences. Introduce the general topic, then capture the interest of the reader with a question, a fact or an extreme opinion.

1st paragraph

One of the three bullet points from the notes.

2nd paragraph

A second bullet point from the three notes. Link it to the first, whether this is a supporting point or a contrasting view.

Conclusion

A summary of what you have said in the main paragraphs and make your main point. It must be interesting and the reader should learn something from it. **Decide on one of the points as being more important.**

Basic Paragraph Structure

1. A topic sentence to introduce the main point of the paragraph.
2. Give (an) example(s) to support your topic sentence.
3. Explanation of example.
4. Introduce second example or contrast.

There have undoubtedly been significant changes in the field of technology over the last century. An obvious example of this is the development of communications technology, namely the internet. In the past people had to rely on the postal service, which could take weeks or even months to deliver a message, whereas nowadays messages are sent in the blink of an eye. Furthermore, the emergence of low-cost airlines has transformed flying from a luxury reserved only for the rich to an accessible means of transport for all.

Below is an example of an exam task and a model answer.

You have attended a panel discussion on ways in which the needs of an ageing population can be met. You have made the notes below.

Ways in which the needs of an ageing population can be met

- more residential care homes
- more jobs available for elderly people
- more entertainment

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

"I'd rather get help in my own home than move into a care home."
 "Work gives people a way of organising their day."
 "Too many forms of entertainment are intended for young people."

Write an essay for your tutor discussing **two** of the ways in your notes. You should explain **which way you think is more important** giving reasons to support your opinion.

You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed in the discussion, but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Introduction, giving the background – why the population is ageing – and introducing areas where the elderly might have specific needs

Reason

Good linking expression (*In connection*) indicating new topic

Good words as an alternative way of expressing second opinion

Conclusion and writer's opinion, with reason

Linking word (*nevertheless*)

As medicine develops, life expectancy rises, increasing the proportion of the population over the age of 65. This presents numerous challenges for society as a whole, in areas ranging from healthcare to transport, and no country has fully come to grips with the issues involved.

Many more people survive strokes, heart attacks and other diseases than in the past, but they may suffer from impaired health and require assistance in some form. One solution is residential care homes, with trained support available round the clock. A major drawback, however, is the shortage of affordable places. Despite the high cost, governments should provide more homes, and, if necessary, subsidise the residents. **Without this intervention, moving to a home would be out of reach of many people, who risk ending up without the support they need.**

In connection with the question of work, for many elderly people retirement brings empty days to fill, without the **income** required to **pass the time enjoyably**. Having a job can provide a **structure** that might once have seemed very **demanding**, but is now missed. Some people would rather work, perhaps from home, and perhaps part-time. Such activity could be organised at a local or even national level, with employers offering tasks that are suitable for retired people.

Much could be done to meet the needs of an ageing population, and it is hard to prioritise just one area. **Nevertheless**, I believe that having an adequate number of places in residential care homes to meet demand is probably **the most important**, as health is a fundamental need.

Useful phrases for an essay

Making general points

- As a general rule...
- For the most part...
- In general...
- In most cases...
- On the whole...

Making additional points

- It is also the case that...
- In addition...
- Furthermore...
- More significantly...
- What is more...

Stating facts

- It is certainly the case that...
- Undoubtedly...
- Undeniably...
- Without a doubt...
- It goes without saying that...

Introducing supporting facts

- Recent research has shown...
- There is evidence to suggest...
- The latest figures suggest that...

Suggesting something is not true

- It is not necessarily the case that...
- Not everyone agrees that...
- It seems unlikely that...

Suggesting causes

- This could be a result of...
- This may be attributable to...
- This could be because...
- This may/might be due to...

Stating results

- Thus...
- Consequently...
- This has the effect of...
- Therefore...
- As a result...
- For this reason...

Presenting alternative views

- Nevertheless...
- Nonetheless...
- However...
- On the other hand...
- Despite this...

Contradicting a statement

- In actual fact...
- In reality...

Part 2- Review

- In part 2 of the writing exam you may have the choice to write a review.
- A review is usually about a TV show or film, a book, a restaurant or hotel.
- If the question asks you to review two things, write a similar amount about each.
- It can be a positive, negative, or balanced review. You have to make a recommendation at the end, which could be positive or negative.
- A review is semi-informal or neutral in tone. Avoid contractions but do use colourful descriptive language.
- The word limit is 220-260 words.
- Spend 45 minutes on the task:
 - 5-10 minutes to plan
 - 30-35 minutes to write
 - 5 minutes to check your work

Review Structure

- **Always put an engaging title.**
- A review should have **four or five** paragraphs.

Depending on what you have to review, you may change the structure slightly. Look below at the two examples of the review structure:

- On the right, all the good and bad aspects have been separated into two paragraphs.
- On the left, the paragraphs deal with individual aspects of the hotel/ restaurant etc., so the paragraphs may contain a mixture of positive and negative comments.

Restaurant/hotel Review Structure

Title

Introduction

Introduce the name of the restaurant/hotel etc. You may want to say where it is, or other information such as the head chef and the cuisine served.

1st paragraph

Service- Very friendly but too slow to take order

2nd paragraph

Menu/Food- High quality but little variety

3rd paragraph

Atmosphere- great décor but music too loud

Conclusion

Conclude the review, indicating to the reader if your overall impression is positive or negative. Make a recommendation, either positive or negative.

Film/book/TV Review Structure

Title

Introduction

Introduce the name of the film or book. You may want to say who the author or director is, and when the film or book was released.

1st paragraph

A brief synopsis- but no spoilers!

2nd paragraph

All the things you liked (e.g acting, locations, plot...)

3rd paragraph

All the things you didn't like (e.g. Special effects, action scenes...)

Conclusion

Conclude the review, indicating to the reader if your overall impression is positive or negative. Make a recommendation, either positive or negative.

Here are two example answers. The review on the left is for a restaurant. The review on the right is comparing two films.

Read through both the reviews and refer to structures on the previous page.

Review of 'Lanterns'

'Lanterns' is the most expensive restaurant in this area and its advertising stresses its upmarket characteristics, with photos of well-dressed guests, candles and linen napkins on the tables, for instance. **You can hardly blame me** for expecting everything to be first class: the venue itself, the food and of course the service.

I took my parents to 'Lanterns' to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary, intending it to be not just a meal, but a special occasion that we would all look back on with pleasure for years to come.

Unfortunately, our evening was **nothing of the sort**. **Admittedly** the atmosphere of the restaurant seemed very welcoming when we arrived, as was the waiter who greeted us, but we stood waiting for several minutes before being shown to our table. And 'waiting' was the keynote of the evening: a long pause before we were given menus, and a long enough wait for each course to make us think somebody had been sent out to buy the ingredients.

The food itself was pleasant enough, but bland. I know not everyone wants salt in their food, but some pepper, herbs or spices wouldn't have gone amiss.

As I paid the extremely large bill, the waiter asked if we'd enjoyed the evening. I said the service had been slow, expecting an apology. Instead he tried to justify it, saying that most guests are not in a rush. **Well**, neither were we, but we still felt we'd been forced to stay considerably longer than we wanted to. 'Lanterns' certainly won't be seeing me again.

Introduces the restaurant, giving readers who don't know it a clear idea of what it is like.

Addresses the reader directly, to make them feel involved.

The first person 'I' emphasises the personal nature of the review. Makes it less formal.

Informal phrase

Linking expression (*Admittedly*) to indicate that what follows contrasts with what is said in the previous sentence.

Informal word suitable for the personal tone of the review.

Two must-see Bond movies

Skyfall, directed by Sam Mendes, is a massively-popular action film featuring secret agent James Bond. Just as, almost fifty years earlier, Guy Hamilton's *Goldfinger* was, too.

In the older film, Bond has to prevent aptly-named gold smuggler Auric Goldfinger from stealing the US gold reserves in Fort Knox, following narrow escapes from death in England and Switzerland. In *Skyfall* it is the Secret Service itself, in particular Bond's boss M, that is under attack. The action takes place in superbly-shot locations as far apart as Istanbul and Macau, Shanghai and Scotland, as 007 battles Javier Bardem's utterly evil Silva.

These frequent changes of setting help maintain the pace of both films, holding the viewer's attention throughout – as do the highly-accomplished actors who play Bond. Other similarities include the magnificent title songs, sung by Shirley Bassey and Adele respectively, that famous suspense-building incidental music, and even the same Aston Martin car. In both movies, Bond faces genuinely scary opponents, particularly Goldfinger's deadly assistant Oddjob, although *Skyfall* keeps the excitement level a little higher by having longer action sequences.

One key difference is that *Skyfall*'s M is a woman, brilliantly played by Judi Dench. This, unfortunately, does not reflect any real change in the role of female characters in Bond films, even after half a century. Another criticism is the amount of violence, often shown in rather unnecessary close-up.

To sum up, both films are certainly worth watching, but for today's audience, accustomed to the non-stop action of movies like *Mission Impossible*, I would probably recommend *Skyfall*.

Useful phrases for a review

Introduction:

Personal anecdote to grab attention. Introduce name of book/film, restaurant + location, course, TV show etc.

- **Seldom do I** find the time to..., however when I do take time out of my hectic schedule, I like nothing more than...
- **Being a** bit of a **book worm**, the news that ... had released a new book had me **dying to read it**.
- **Being a** bit of a **film buff**, the news that ... had filmed a new movie had me **itching to see it**. So last week I **popped down** with a friend **to check it out**.
- **Being a** bit of a **foody**, the news that ... had opened a new restaurant had me **desperate to try it**. So last week I **put on my Sunday best and went to the restaurant with some friends**.
- **Having never seen/read/tried...** before I approached ... with a sense of trepidation, not knowing what to expect. Soon however, all my fears were allayed.

Book and Film reviews:

Vocabulary to describe the book in general:

- A page-turner
- I couldn't put it down.
- Glowing reviews
- Brought a tear to my eye
- Like watching paint dry (boring)
- I was on the edge of my seat (exciting)
- Gripping (exciting)

Vocabulary to describe a film/TV series in general:

- An all-star cast
- An accomplished actor
- An unmitigated disaster (bad film)
- A dazzling display of his/her talents
- Brought a tear to my eye
- Like watching paint dry (boring)
- I was on the edge of my seat (exciting)
- A blockbuster (big commercial film eg Superman)
- Gripping (exciting)
- Capture the audience's imagination.
- Spectacular set-pieces (main action scenes)
- Meryl Streep is cast in the role of...
- Brad Pitt gives a(n) (un)convincing performance as...
- The film is let down by a clichéd script.

Vocabulary to describe specific parts:

- A slow start
- A gentle introduction
- Gripping climax
- Nail-biting conclusion
- Cliff-hanger ending
- A shocking twist in the tail

Setting:

- The book/film is set in _____(place/time)
- The action takes place in _____ (place/time)
- The present day (now)
- An alternate reality where vampires / wizards walk the earth
- A sleepy village in the USA
- The bustling city of New York

Plot:

- The plot centres around / focuses on (the adventures / lives of _____)
- The plot follows the adventures of _____(character name)

Characters:

- Villain / hero / heroine / anti-hero / main character / protagonist
- The characters are believable / well-crafted / a bit 2 dimensional.

Restaurant review:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ▸ Hearty meal | ▸ Freshly-baked |
| ▸ Wholesome food | ▸ To feast/gorge on (eat a lot of) |
| ▸ Succulent/juicy (meat) | ▸ To eat/drink to your heart's content |
| ▸ Creamy | ▸ Devour/gobble up |
| ▸ With a kick (spicy) | ▸ Savour |
| ▸ Crunchy/crispy | ▸ Nibble |
| ▸ Well-seasoned | ▸ Lively atmosphere |
| ▸ Packed with flavour | ▸ Service with a smile |
| ▸ Mouth-watering | ▸ Cheap – economical/ reasonably-priced |
| ▸ Heavenly | ▸ Expensive – pricey/costs an arm and a leg |
| ▸ Roast | ▸ €20 a head (per person) |
| ▸ Pan-fried | |
| ▸ Grilled | |
| ▸ Steamed | |

Killer Lines when concluding

- Were I to sum up ... in one word, it would be...
- ... left a lot to be desired (wasn't good enough)
- ...more than lives up to the hype (is as good as everyone says it is)
- ... is by far and away the best ... you're likely to ... this year
- ... really raises the bar (sets a higher standard)
- ... sets the benchmark for other (others will be judges against how good it is)
- ... ticks all the right boxes
- ... holds up well in comparison with ...
- ...comes off badly in comparison with ...

Part 2- Report

- In part 2 of the writing exam you may have the choice to write a report.
- This task requires you to provide information about a situation in the present or past. You also have to suggest a future course of action.
- It has to be concise and well-organised. Use **headings** so that the reader can quickly find the information they are looking for in your text.
- Always end your report with a recommendation that will improve the situation.
- It is a formal paper, so avoid contractions and colloquial language.
- The word limit is 220-260 words.
- Spend 45 minutes on the task:
 - 5-10 minutes to plan
 - 30-35 minutes to write
 - 5 minutes to check your work

Below is an exam task and a model answer.

Six months ago, your company started to sponsor a local sports club and your manager has asked you to write a progress report.

Your report should explain why your company chose to sponsor that sports club, describe the form that the sponsorship takes, and suggest with reasons why it should or should not continue.

Write your **report**.

Report Structure

Title

Introduction

Focus on the aim of the report.

Subheading

Give the relevant facts about the current situation.

Subheading

Give the relevant facts about the current situation.

Recommendations and conclusion statement

Make your recommendations

The subheadings will depend on the content points you are given. However, normally there will be two distinct points and give recommendations, **or** it will say evaluate and give recommendations, which in essence is asking for strengths and weaknesses and then suggestions.

Report on sponsorship of youth football team

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assess the company's sponsorship of the local youth football team.

Reasons for sponsorship

The company received negative publicity when a chemical leakage from the factory polluted the river. It was therefore decided that efforts should be made to improve the company's image locally. The town's youth football team was chosen as it was struggling financially. It was felt that helping the club would provide very positive publicity for the company.

Details of sponsorship

The company offered to meet the football club's expenses in full, initially for two years. Sponsorship covers the cost of hiring the council-owned football pitch that the club uses. **Previously the club could only afford to hire the pitch for three hours once a week; the company has doubled this to two three-hour sessions each week.**

The company has also agreed to pay for a new football kit for club members, which should be available before the start of the next football season.

Recommendation

Some letters in local newspapers suggest that the company's motives for sponsoring the team were suspect. However, this is outweighed by a considerable amount of positive publicity, as the youth football club is very popular in the town and its financial struggles were a cause of concern. For this reason, and because the sponsorship has raised the company's profile and greatly improved its image locally, I strongly recommend that we continue.

Title

Gives the purpose of the report, in different words from the instructions.

Section headings

Explains why the company decided to start sponsorship, and why it chose the football team.

Gives details of the form the sponsorship takes.

Shows how the club benefits from being sponsored.

Considers both negative and positive effects.

Reports usually (but not always) include a recommendation about future action.

Part 2- Proposal

- In part 2 of the writing exam you may have the choice to write a proposal.
- This task requires you to outline a problem, or a problematic situation, and provide recommendations for future solutions.
- The main difference between a report and a proposal is that the report focuses on describing a past or present situation, while a proposal focuses on future actions that will improve a situation.
- It has to be concise and well-organised. Use **headings** so that the reader can quickly find the information they are looking for in your text.
- Always end your report with a recommendation that will improve the situation.
- It is a formal paper, so avoid contractions and colloquial language.
- The word limit is 220-260 words.
- Spend 45 minutes on the task:
 - 5-10 minutes to plan
 - 30-35 minutes to write
 - 5 minutes to check your work

You see this notice in a local newspaper of the town where you are studying English.

The Government has promised our town a grant to invest in new sports facilities. The Planning Director invites you, as a resident or visitor, to send a proposal saying which sport should receive the money, how it should be spent and why it would benefit people in the town.

Write your **proposal** in **220–260** words in an appropriate style.

Here is an exam task and a model answer.
The first and last headings stay the same across any question. However, you need to create your own headings for the main paragraphs.

Proposal Structure

Title

Introduction

Focus on the aim of the report.

Subheading 1

Give relevant facts about the current situation to provide some context to the proposal. We need to know basic information about the situation we are providing solutions for.

Subheading 2

Outline possible actions to improve the situation. In other words, **what** you propose to do.

Subheading 3

Explain how the actions you suggested will improve the situation or benefit people.

Conclusion

A final, brief statement that provides a final recommendation thus concluding the proposal.

Proposal for new sports facilities

Introduction

The aim of this proposal is to suggest the most suitable way of spending the government grant for new sports facilities.

1 The Missing Sport

This town already has extensive facilities for football, rugby and athletics, as well as an Olympic-size swimming pool and a top-class sports centre catering for a wide range of sporting activities. However, one increasingly-popular sport is conspicuous by its absence: squash.

2 A Sensible Investment

The grant would be spent on constructing a number of squash courts. To do this would not be overly expensive as the surface area needed would be small compared with tennis courts, for instance. Apart from the installation of a glass wall at the front of each so that matches can be watched from outside, no further expenditure would be necessary as squash players provide their own equipment.

3 Improving People's Lives

Squash is one of the most physically demanding of all sports, providing intensive exercise for up to four people over a short period of time. As courts would be in constant use from early morning to late evening, they would be a highly efficient way of raising many people's fitness levels. Moreover, it is likely that players would set up a lively social club, thereby strengthening the sense of community in the town.

Conclusion

I would strongly recommend that squash be chosen. It would be the most cost-effective way of spending the money and also the ideal way to improve people's quality of life.

Useful phrases for reports and proposals

Stating the purpose of the proposal

- The principal objectives of this report/proposal are to
- The objective of this report/proposal is to...
- The purpose of this proposal is to evaluate / explain / describe / analyse etc

Background information

- At the present moment,
- Comments made at the end of the questionnaires suggest...
- Following a survey among...
- Concerned members of the local community were invited to attend...
- A number of concerns with regard to ... were expressed by...

Recommendations and suggestions

- I would strongly recommend that...
- In the light of the results of the survey I would advise against...
- The best solution would be to...
- In order to improve it is necessary to..
- This will have a positive impact on ...

Final recommendations

- Implementation of the above ideas would result in...
- Provided that these recommendations are taken into consideration,...
- Should these suggestions be implemented, there will be a drastic increase/improvement in...

Development

- First of all,...
- In addition to this
- Furthermore,...
- Moreover,...
- In fact,...
- Last but by no means least,...

Part 2- Formal Letter / Email - General Info.

- In part 2 of the writing exam you may have the choice to write a formal letter or email. This may be to the editor of a newspaper, applying for a job, or even a letter of complaint.
- It is a formal paper, so avoid contractions and colloquial language.
- You should always be polite and respectful, even if you complain. A useful way to achieve it especially in formal letters is to use 'modal verbs', i.e., would, could or should.
- Do not include any addresses.
- The word limit is 220-260 words.
- Spend 45 minutes on the task:
 - 5-10 minutes to plan
 - 30-35 minutes to write
 - 5 minutes to check your work

Your company has a number of vacancies for students who wish to do two weeks' work experience during the next summer term. You have been asked by your manager to write a letter to a local college. Your letter should explain:

- what your company does
- what kind of work the students would do
- how they would benefit from working for the company.

Write your letter.

Read the exam question and the model answer. Notice that the structure is based on the three main points in the question.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to inform you that this hotel will be able to offer work experience to twelve students aged 16 to 18 during the summer term. Placements will last a fortnight and no wages will be paid.

The hotel employs over 100 full-time staff, the majority of whom live in the local community. In addition to providing luxury accommodation, we serve high quality meals in our restaurant and café, and offer extensive leisure facilities including a gymnasium, swimming pool and sauna.

Placements will involve working with reception staff, housekeepers, maintenance workers and porters, kitchen staff and waiters, fitness instructors and lifeguards. Young people will be expected to carry out the same tasks as permanent employees, but suitable training will be given. They will receive health and safety instruction when their placement commences, and will be supervised at all times. They will also be assessed throughout and receive constructive advice from their supervisors.

On successful completion of their placement, students will be awarded a Work Experience Certificate and a detailed description of the work they have done, both of which will be useful additions to their CV. Moreover, their placement will introduce them to the world of work, possibly giving them ideas for careers and enabling them to make contacts for future networking. What will benefit them most, however, is the opportunity to develop their employability skills, regarded by many employers as essential for those seeking their first job.

I would be most grateful if you could pass this information on to your students.

Yours faithfully,
Montserrat Oriol

Salutation

Reason for writing

Main point 1

Main point 2

Main point 3

Concluding

Signing off

Part 2- How to Structure Formal Letters

Salutation

Use **Dear Sir or Madam** if you **don't know the name** of the recipient.

If you know the name, use the appropriate title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) along with the surname (e.g. **Dear Mr Jenkins**).

If you are writing to a newspaper editor, then use **Dear Editor**.

Paragraph one

The first paragraph outlines the purpose of the letter and the reason for its sending.

Paragraph 2

In paragraph two deal with the first point included in the question.

Paragraph 3

Develop your next main point

Paragraph 4

Develop your final key point

Concluding

At the end, conclude the letter and finish any thoughts mentioned before, or specify any action the recipient should take, return money, send information, etc.

In the case of a job application tell the reader when you are available for interview and thank them for their time.

Signing off

Yours faithfully if you **don't know the name** of the recipient.

Yours sincerely if you **know the name** of the recipient.

[Your name]

Part 2- Formal Letter of Complaint

Read the exam question and the model answer. Notice that in the question we have some reference to main content points (the food and service). However, you have to be creative and invent the specific problems.

Read this extract from a letter you have recently sent to a friend:

.... Oh, and by the way, don't go to Barry's Restaurant for your birthday. We went there last night - the service was awful and the food was a disaster! I complained to the head waiter but he asked me to put it in writing ...

Write your letter of complaint to the restaurant manager (around 220-260 words)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my disappointment with regards to my experience of your restaurant yesterday. I chose 'Joe's Diner' to impress three of my most important business clients, after having read a glowing review in "Best Restaurants in Britain 2000". Sadly, the reality failed to live up to my expectations.

First of all, as stated in the guide book, you had a variety of set meals on the menu. However, only 2 meat dishes and 1 fish dish were on offer yesterday, which deeply disappointed my guests. Therefore, we chose a starter, a main dish and a dessert à la carte. This was not an easy task though, since many were unavailable. In the end we did not have any other choices than the onion soup and seafood salad for a starter.

Furthermore, the meals were not served at the same time. About five minutes after a rump steak was put on the table for one of my clients, none of the others had been served. I asked your staff to bring all the other meals soon and in another five minutes only two, including my grilled salmon, were brought to us. When the other one, the steamed trout, was put on the table, the client who had ordered the rump steak had almost finished.

Finally, the beef steak another client had was overcooked, although he had ordered it medium rare.

On paying the bill, I complained about this inconvenience to your head waiter, but he asked me to contact you directly in writing. I feel that a refund to the tune of at least £200 would be appropriate. I look forward to receiving a satisfactory reply within 14 days.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Smith

Useful Phrases for Letters of Complaint

Listing Problems

- First of all,
- **Not only was** there a hair in my wife's soup, **but** the main course **also** arrived cold.
- On top of that...
- As if that was not enough...
- To top it all off...
- The straw that broke the camel's back was...

Complaining Expressions

- The standard of the... was not up to scratch.
- The... was not up to the expected standard.
- The... left a lot to be desired.
- The... failed to live up to our expectations.
- We were left bitterly disappointed by...
- The quality of the customer service we received was woefully inadequate.
- The... was an absolute disgrace. (v.strong)
- Overall, our visit to your (restaurant) was an unmitigated disaster from start to finish.

Requesting Action

- It seems only fair that you should... (offer a full refund)
- I would appreciate it if you...
- I would be grateful if you...
- Should these demands not be met, you will be hearing from my lawyers.
- I expect to receive compensation to the tune of (€2000) for the...

Making Recommendations

- I strongly recommend that your organisation...
- It would be advisable to...
- I suggest re-evaluating your procedures regarding...

Sign off

- I look forward to receiving your reply.
- I expect to receive a prompt reply to this letter.
- Yours faithfully,

Different ways to say...

Bad

- Awful
- Appalling
- Dreadful
- Wretched
- Terrible
- Sub-par
- Rubbish

Shocked

- Taken aback
- Astonished
- Astounded
- Speechless
- Stunned
- Staggered
- Lost for words

Angry

- Irrate
- Cross
- Infuriated
- Seething
- Indignant
- Enraged
- Mad

Part 2- Letter of Application (Formal)

Dear Sir or Madam,
Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss Johnson

I am writing in response to your advertisement in "English Today" magazine. I am interested in applying for the role of language school receptionist.

As you will see from my attached CV, I have spent the last three years at the International College in Birmingham. During this period, I was promoted from phone operator to the position of receptionist. I was responsible for answering and directing calls, as well as greeting students and resolving technical problems. Moreover, I had the privilege to come into contact with foreign students who helped me improve my spoken and written English.

Given the experience I have acquired at International College Birmingham, I consider myself well-equipped to respond to the challenge of working in your language centre. I feel I have the necessary personal qualities to deal with the demands of the post. For instance, I see myself as a hardworking person who works well under pressure. My experience working with the students at the school has helped me to be more patient and understanding.

Thank you for taking the time to read my application, I hope you will consider me for the post. I am available for interview between the 7th and the 14th of April.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Faithfully,
Yours Sincerely,

Claire Prescott

Explain why you are writing- say where you saw the advert and what role you are applying for.

Work experience is important when applying for a job so invent a fantastic career for yourself!

Try to convince your potential employer why you deserve the job. What qualities do you possess that make you the best?

In the last paragraph you need to politely ask that they consider your application and say when you are available for interview.

Part 2- Informal Letter

- An informal letter is a form of communication between two people who usually know each other well. Although there are many reasons for writing an informal letter, it usually consists of topics on a personal level.
- You may have to give advice, or give a narrative account of a situation like a holiday.
- We can be informal in this type of writing since we are talking to a good friend, so contractions are fine. However, we should still avoid slang expressions.

Read the question below, and then the model answer. Notice the changes in tone and formality between this type of letter and a formal letter.

You have received a letter from an English friend.

I'm doing a project at college about how people's lives have changed over the last few decades in different countries. Can you tell me about the situation in your country? I'd like to hear about improvements and also about anything that's worse now.

Write your **letter** in reply. You do not need to include postal addresses.

Dear Marian

Great to hear from you. I hope you're well and enjoying your college course.

Your project sounds very interesting. I've just had a **chat** with my grandparents, to find out how their way of life has changed during their lifetime, and a few things came up that you might like to hear about.

They said their standard of living is much higher now than it used to be, mainly because they have far more money to spend – **even though** they're pensioners. When they were much younger, and my grandfather went out to work, it was a struggle to cope on the money he earned, especially as they had several children to bring up.

Now they can spend much more on leisure activities and holidays, so **whereas** they couldn't afford to go abroad on holiday until they were in their 50s, nowadays they go skiing in Switzerland or Italy every winter, and in the summer they like to go on a river cruise in another country, too.

The biggest change, they say, is in the amount of freedom that they have. As **kids**, they were under pressure from their families and everyone they knew had to do certain things and behave in certain ways, but now there's much greater tolerance of different ways of living.

On the other hand, they feel that people don't **stick together** the way they used to – instead of everyone helping each other, people tend to be more self-centred.

Well, I hope you can use this in your project, Marian.

All the best
Mischa

- Letters begin with social remarks before introducing any major topic.
- Introduces the main topic in a positive way.
- The writer is surprised that, as pensioners, his grandparents have more money to spend.
- Linking word (*whereas*) to introduce a contrast
- Informal vocabulary
- Good linking expression in new paragraph, to show change from improvement to something that is worse now
- Short paragraphs common in informal letters

Informal Letter Structure

Friendly greeting

e.g. *Hi Tom! Thank you for your letter- it was nice to hear from you!*

Introduce the main topic

Your project about foreign customs sounds fascinating. Here in Spain we have so many, so I'll just speak about the ones from my area.

Paragraph 1

Deal with the first point included in the question with reasons and examples.

Paragraph 2

Develop your next main point with reasons and examples.

Paragraph 3

Develop your final key point with reasons and examples.

Say goodbye and request a reply

One thing you can do before saying goodbye is make up an excuse to 'leave'. For example:

Anyway, I've got to go now- the kids want their dinner and it won't cook itself! But don't be a stranger, give me a call soon.

Friendly close

All my love,

[Your name]

Greetings

- Dear Tom
- Hi/Hello, Karen!

Set phrases for opening paragraphs

- Just thought I'd drop you a line
- I haven't heard from you for ages
- Thank you for your letter- it was nice to hear from you!
- Sorry I haven't written for so long

Set phrases for closing paragraphs

- Well, that's all for now
- Well, I'd better finish off here
- I must go now
- Write soon
- Waiting for your letter
- I look forward to hearing from you

Endings

- All my love
- Best wishes
- All the best
- Lots of kisses
- Take care

Different ways to say...

Important/ Necessary	Important/ Necessary	Advantage	Disadvantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Key▸ Vital▸ Paramount▸ Imperative▸ Essential▸ Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Crucial▸ Fundamental▸ Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Benefit▸ Boon▸ Asset▸ Plus point (inf)▸ Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Drawback▸ Downside▸ Flaw▸ Pitfall▸ Weakness▸ Shortcoming

Bad	Shocked	Angry	Problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Awful▸ Appalling▸ Dreadful▸ Wretched▸ Terrible▸ Sub-par▸ Rubbish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Taken aback▸ Astonished▸ Astounded▸ Speechless▸ Stunned▸ Staggered▸ Lost for words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Irate▸ Cross▸ Infuriated▸ Seething▸ Indignant▸ Enraged▸ Mad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Complication▸ Issue▸ Obstacle▸ Controversy▸ Pickle (inf)▸ Mess (inf)

Good	Nice	Happy	Thing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Splendid▸ Outstanding▸ Tremendous▸ Stupendous▸ Wonderful▸ Superb▸ Marvellous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Courteous▸ Likeable▸ Cordial▸ Considerate▸ Cordial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Cheerful▸ Merry▸ Jovial▸ Joyful▸ Delightful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Aspect▸ Element▸ Feature▸ Detail▸ Matter▸ Point