

Writing an Informal Letter



INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Operační program Vzdělávání pro konkurenceschopnost

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Warm-up

Work in pairs.

- What is the main difference between informal and formal letters?
- Which situations call for a formal letter and which situations call for an informal letter?
- What is the purpose of writing an informal letter?
- How often do you write to your friends?
- What are usually the purposes of your letters or emails?

Introduction (1)

Generally speaking, the **main difference between informal and formal letters** is that informal letters are written as people speak. There is currently a tendency in business communications to move away from formal writing style to a more, personal informal style.

The differences are in layout and language between informal and informal letters, e.g. indentation, the use of contracted verb forms, the use of phrasal verbs and idiomatic language, etc.

Hints:

Imagine that you write to a real friend of yours.

Friends usually have names - so address him/her with a name: begin the letter with **Dear Joey/ Tim /Rebecca**, etc.

Begin your letter with some general statements. Refer to the letter you have received from your friend and thank him/her for it or apologise for the fact that you have not answered the last letter soon enough.

Use the proper register. The letter is supposed to be informal so you can use contractions, informal linking words like **well, by the way, anyway, so, colloquial expressions**, etc.

You can use more-conversation-like statements or questions in your letter: **You know that I had this exam, right? You think he will be able to come to the party?**

Use questions to ask about your friend - arrange the next meeting, send greetings to his/her friends and family, etc.

End your letter in informal way: **Best wishes; Love; Regards**. Instead of these phrases you may put two XXs. They indicate sending kisses ;-)

Introduction (2)

Useful expressions:

Thank you for your letter. It was nice to hear from you.

Your last letter was a real surprise. It was so nice of you to remember about...

Thanks a lot for the information you've sent me in your last letter.

I've just received your letter. I'm so happy to hear that...

I'm sorry I haven't answered earlier but I was really busy with my school.

I'm sorry I haven't written for so long but...

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Well, that's all for now. Will talk to you soon.

Give my regards to your Mummy.

I hope we will be able to arrange a get-together.

Do write back as I'm waiting for the news from you.

Model letter:

Q: You are abroad spending your holidays in a very exciting places you have always wanted to visit. The people you travel with are really nice so you enjoy their companionship. Write a letter to your friend describing what you have been doing so far and what you still plan to do.

Dear Amy,

Thank you a lot for your last letter. It was a nice surprise to hear from you. I'm sorry I haven't written to you earlier but I had to organize some things concerning my trip.

As you probably remember I've always wanted to visit some unusual places. And now, at last, off I went! But you'd never guess where I've chosen to spend my holiday. It's Antarctica! You would never think of it, would you? I'm so excited about the whole event!

The people I travel with are incredible. It's their fourteenth expedition there. They know every path in the snow by heart and they are very helpful. They share their knowledge and experience with me. Would you believe that here everything is different? You even need to set your tent in a special way. It's all very challenging. Tomorrow we plan to move further North so I may not be able to stay in touch for a while.

Anyway, I'd like to meet you when I get back. Hope you are enjoying your holiday. Do write back soon.

Love,
Becky

Exercises

1 Choose one of the three subjects and write a letter to a friend or family member

- 1 Write a letter to a friend you haven't seen or spoken to in a long time. Tell him / her about what you have been doing and ask them how they are and what they have been up to recently.
- 2 Write a letter to a cousin and invite them to your wedding. Give them some details about your future husband / wife.
- 3 Write a letter to a friend you know has been having some problems. Ask him / her how she / he is doing and if you can help.

2 Read extracts 1 – 11 from some letters and emails. Which are beginnings and which are endings? Write B or E.

- 1 Just a note to say thank you so much for having me to stay last weekend. **B**
- 2 Thank you for your letter of 16 April. Please find enclosed a cheque for £50.00.
- 3 Write or better still, email me soon.
- 4 How are you doing? You ll never guess who I saw last week at Dan s.
- 5 I am writing in response to your advertisement in yesterday s *Daily Star*.
- 6 We trust this arrangement meets with your satisfaction.
- 7 I m sorry I haven t been in touch for such a long time.
- 8 I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.
- 9 I thought I d write rather than email for a change.
- 10 Give my regards to Robert.
- 11 Take care and thanks again.

3 Look again at the sentences in the exercise. Which are formal and which are informal? Underline the words and phrases which helped you decide.

4 Match the beginnings and endings of these different letters and emails:

Beginnings

1 Dear Mary and Dave,
Any chance that you two are free next Sat. p.m.?

2 Dear Jane,
Thanks for your letter. It was great to hear from you after such a long time. You asked me what I've been doing. Well,

3 Hi Pete,
Thanks for the invite.

4 Dear Sir/Madam,
I saw an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* for weekend breaks at your hotel.

Endings

It would be lovely to see you some time. Do you ever come to London? We could meet for lunch.
Love
Pat

Can't wait to see you. Let's hope it stays fine.
Love to Ellie. See you then.
Deborah

Let me know asap.
All the best,
Martin

Many thanks. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
Yours faithfully,
James Fox

5 Continue the beginnings with one of these lines.

..... I ve changed my job a few times since I last spoke to you, and as you know, I ve moved to a new flat.

..... We ve got four tickets for that open-air concert i Woodstock. Interested?

..... Could you please send me your brochure and a price list? I would be most grateful.

..... We d love to come.

6 Which one ...

- asks for information?
- invites?
- accepts an invitation?
- gives news?

7 Underline the words and phrases which helped you decide.

Thanks for your attention



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