Formal Letters

Tips for writing a formal or business letter

A formal letter is a letter to someone you don’t know.

Some Examples:

- Job Application letter
- Letter of complaint
- Letter to newspaper
- Letter of enquiry
- Letter to Solicitor

Tip

*It is a good idea to make a copy of an important letter. Most libraries have photocopiers you can use.*

Layout of a formal letter

Make sure you know the layout of a formal letter – where everything goes. This is almost the same as a personal letter.

- ✓ Your Address
- ✓ Date
- ✓ Name and address of company/organisation/ business etc
- ✓ Greeting
- ✓ Content (what you are writing about)
- ✓ Sign off
- ✓ Signature
Layout of a Formal or Business Letter

Look at the sample letter on page 80 as you read this.

Your **address** is always on the top right of the page.

Write the **date** below your address.

Then write the **name and address of company/business/organisation** you are writing to.

Your **Greeting** is more formal. If you do not know the name of the person you are sending the letter to, you could write:

- Dear Sir or Madam
- Dear Sir/Madam
- Dear Editor or Dear Manager

If you know the full name of the person you could write:

- Dear Mr Smith or Dear Ms Jones

The main part of your letter is why you are writing

Keep to the point and say why you are writing:

- I am writing to complain

Give the information you need.

Ask for the information you require.

If you are enclosing something let them know in the letter:

- Please find enclosed

Your **Sign off** should be formal:

- Yours sincerely (usually if you know the name of the person)
- Yours faithfully (usually if you do not know the name of the person)

**Signature:** Write your first and last name
Evening Herald
Middle Abbey Street
Dublin 1

Dear Sir or Madam

I would like to place a personal advertisement in your newspaper on the 20th June 2005.

Please find enclosed my advertisement and also a cheque covering the cost.

Please contact me at my above address if you have any queries or you can phone me at 086 1234567.

Yours faithfully

Mary Byrne
Fill in some details using the layout guide. You do not have to write a full letter. Get to know where everything goes.

Your Address

Date

Name and address of company

Greeting

Content

Sign off

Signature
Fill in the letter using your own details. Write to NALA, 76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1 asking them to send you a copy of the Read Write Now workbook.

1. Your address 5. Content
2. Date 6. Sign off
3. Their name and address 7. Signature
4. Greeting

1. ________________
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2. ________________

3. ________________
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4. ________________

5. ___________________________________________
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   ___________________________________________

6. ________________

7. ________________
Example of Letter asking for an application form

6 Mountain View
Limerick Road
Limerick

30th September 2005

The Manager
Glenview Country House
Rathkeale
Limerick

Dear Sir or Madam

Please forward me an application form for the position of Bar Manager in Glenview Country House, as advertised in the Irish Independent on 29th September 2005.

Yours sincerely

Michael Byrne
Replying to an advertisement

Write a letter to The Manager, Glenview Country House, Rathkeale, Limerick asking for an application form for the position of Assistant Manager. You saw the position advertised in the Evening Herald today.
Job application letter

Write a letter applying for the job of Bar Manager in Glenview Country House, Rathkeale, Limerick. Briefly let them know your experience and let them know your CV and application form are enclosed.

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Letter of complaint

You went out to dinner with your family to the Happy Eaters Restaurant, Naas, Co. Kildare. You had a bad experience. Examples: you were ages waiting to order, waiting for the food, food cold, spilled, overcharged. Write a letter of complaint to the manager.

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