

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

Sample layout of a formal or business letter



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

The diagram illustrates the layout of a letter with the following sections and labels:

- Your Address**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to three horizontal lines.
- Date**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to two horizontal lines.
- Name and address of company**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to three horizontal lines.
- Greeting**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to one horizontal line.
- Content**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to seven horizontal lines.
- Sign off**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to one horizontal line.
- Signature**: An oval label with an arrow pointing to one horizontal line.

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

	1. _____ _____ _____
	2. _____
3. _____ _____ _____	
4. _____	
5. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	
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

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, over-charged. Write a letter of complaint to the manager.
