

## Informal emails / letters

Informal emails and letters are pieces of writing we send to people we know well. We usually start an informal email with *Dear* + the person's first name. In the first paragraph we write our opening remarks (e.g. *Hi! How are you?!*) and the reason for writing. We write about the specific topics of our email in separate paragraphs. In the last paragraph we write our closing remarks. (e.g. *Have to go now.*) and sign off with an informal ending (e.g. *Yours*) and our first name.

We use informal style, that is:

- everyday vocabulary  
(*I'm having a great time.*)
- colloquial expressions/idioms  
(*Drop me a line.*)
- informal linkers (*so, and etc.*)
- short verb forms (*I can't, I'll be ...*)

## Useful Language

### Starting an informal email

- Dear Mum/Dad, Dear Aunt Claire,
- Dear Grandpa, Dear Tom/Lucy etc.

### Opening remarks

- Hope you're OK. • How are you doing?
- Hi from Moscow/Rome/Cracow etc.
- Thanks for your email.
- Sorry I didn't write earlier, but I ...
- Sorry for not writing for so long.
- Hi! How are you?
- It was good to hear from you.
- I haven't heard from you for a while.

### Reason for writing

- I wanted to drop you a line to tell you my news/to tell you about ... • I just wanted to ask/remind/thank etc. you ... • Just a quick email to tell you ... • I wondered if you'd like to ... • This is just to let you know ...
- I'm sorry to hear about ... • I was a bit worried and wanted to see if you're OK.

### Making reference to future contact

- Drop me a line sometime.
- I hope to hear from you soon.
- Give me a call later.
- Let me know if you can make it or not.
- I was glad to hear about ...
- Let me know as soon as possible.

### Closing remarks

- Email me soon.
- I'd better get going./Bye for now.
- I must go now./Got to go now.

### Ending an informal email

Yours/Best wishes/Love/Take care etc. +  
your first name

Your older sister has started a new job. Write an email to your English friend to tell him or her about it (120-150 words). Write about:

- where she is working and what her job is;
- what days she works and the hours she works;
- what she did on her first day on the job and whether she enjoyed the day;
- something she has already bought and something she would like to buy with the money from the job.

Dear Claire, *everyday vocabulary*

How are you doing? *opening remarks* Sorry for not writing for so long. I'm doing a lot these days. I wanted to drop you a *quick line* to tell you about my sister's new job. *colloquial expressions*

She's working in a clothes shop when she isn't at university. She's a shop assistant there. She puts the clothes in the right places in the shop. She works two nights a week from 5 pm until 8 pm and on Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm. On her first day she learnt where everything in the shop is. It was a bit tiring but *it's great* to have a job. She wanted a new mobile phone and now she has bought one! Also she'd like to buy some clothes from the shop! *informal linkers*

Drop me a line soon! *closing remarks*

Yours,  
Anna

## Practice

- 1 Rewrite the first paragraph. Use the phrases/sentences from the Useful Language box.
- 2 Replace the closing remarks in the email with other appropriate phrases.
- 3 Suggest a different ending to the email.

# Writing Bank 2

## Informal announcements / notices

Announcements are short pieces of writing that we write to inform people of an event, happening, etc. The information can be good or bad news. Announcements/Notices need to answer *wh*-questions: *who*, *when*, *where*, *what* and *why* and sometimes *how much*. They usually start with a heading (Lost, Bowling Club, etc.) to attract the reader's attention. We use short sentences and the imperative. We can put in **bold**, underline or *italicise* words we want to put emphasis on.

## Useful Language

### Starting

- We're happy/pleased to announce
- New Bowling Club • Attention • Lost!
- Announcement • Dear friends,

### Type of event

- We're pleased to announce (a contest, an end-of-school party, etc.)...
- It's party time! • We're celebrating...
- We/I lost (a dog/a bag etc.)

### Asking for participation

- Join us today! • Come and meet...
- Why don't you come...?
- We meet every... • Be there!

### Giving details on participation

- Everyone's welcome./Anyone can join us.
- You must be (*over 15 years old*).
- Participants/Those interested must have experience in...
- If you like/are interested in...

### Describing special attractions/extras/prizes

- There are prizes for the first three...
- All participants will receive (a certificate of attendance)... • Prizes include...books of...
- Special events include (*a party by the pool, a concert with...etc.*)
- Free snacks and refreshments for everyone.

### Describing an object

- It is a/an
- **opinion:** beautiful, cute, etc.
- **size:** huge, small, etc.
- **age:** young, old, etc.
- **shape:** round, square, etc.
- **colour:** red, blue, white, etc.
- **origin:** Chinese, British, etc.
- **material:** cotton, leather, etc.

### Contact details

- If you are interested in..., call (*John, Mrs White*) on (222 2222)
- To join us, call...
- If you have seen it, please...
- Call (*Sue*) on...for more details.

You are studying in England. You've lost your mobile phone. You think you left it in the library. Write a notice about your lost phone to put up in the library. In your notice:

- say what the circumstances were of you losing your phone;
- describe the phone;
- give one reason why the phone is important to you;
- give your contact details.

**bold words to emphasise**

**what**

**where**

**when**

**what time**

**imperative**

**contact details**

**LOST! - MOBILE PHONE**

I lost my phone in the library on Tuesday at lunchtime. It's a black phone with round buttons. I need the phone to speak to my family. Also, there are lots of photos on the phone of my family and friends.

Please call the Grand Hotel on (90) 765 48498 or email: [pawelk@gmail.com](mailto:pawelk@gmail.com)

## Practice

- 1 Read the announcement below and answer the questions.

### CYCLING CLUB

Do you like riding your bike on summer nights? Come and join the Newtown School cycling club outside the Town Hall for our first ride of the year **on Friday, 28th May at 7 pm.**

You don't need to have any cycling experience, but you must be over 15.

Bring your own bike and refreshments. For more information email [sam.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sam.johnson@gmail.com) or call 187 87988.

- 1 What is the announcement about?
- 2 When is the event?
- 3 Where is the event?
- 4 What do you need to bring?
- 5 Can anybody take part?
- 6 How can you contact the club?

- B Rewrite the part in the announcement that contains contact details. Then suggest another way to start the announcement.

## Postcards

Postcards are brief pieces of writing we send to people we know well, usually while we are on holiday. We write them to inform people of our news. Postcards are informal in style. We can omit personal pronouns, articles and auxiliaries and use informal linkers, participles and greetings, contracted verb forms and everyday language.

## Useful Language

### Starting a postcard

- Dear + person's first name, • Dear all,
- Dear Mum/Dad etc., Hi Pawel, etc.

### Where you are writing from

- Greetings from ... • I'm in ... . It's great.
- I've just reached ... .
- We're here in ... on a ... .

### Activities you are doing right now

*I'm writing this postcard while ... (waiting for the bus to come/having coffee at a seaside café etc.)*

### Describing accommodation

*The hotel is great, it has (a great view of the sea/a huge swimming pool, etc.)*

### Activities you do/did/have done/are going to do

- Every morning I/we (go swimming/go sightseeing etc.)
- Yesterday we (visited/ hired a car and .../ went on a boat ride etc.)
- We've already visited (the aquarium/the museum etc.)
- We've tried local dishes
- Tomorrow/Next week we are going to ...

### Describing the weather

- The weather's great/fine/terrible.
- It's getting chilly/hotter etc.
- It hasn't stopped raining for ...
- Right now it's raining/snowing ...
- It's hot and sunny/freezing cold/boiling hot.

### Commenting on something particularly good/bad/funny about the holiday

- I tried (*fried snails*) but they were disgusting.
- We went sightseeing on an open-top bus – it was awesome.
- We waited to buy some souvenirs but we couldn't understand a word – it was so confusing.

### Describing your feelings

- I'm/We're having a really great time.
- It's the best holiday we've ever had.
- It was the worst holiday ever.

### Asking about the recipient's news

- What about you? • What are you up to?
- How's your (holiday?)
- I hope you're OK/having a great time/holiday etc.

### Ending a postcard

- See you (*soon/in three weeks*)
- Wish you were here/Best wishes/Kisses/xxx/ Love + your first name

You are on holiday. Send your English friend a postcard. In your postcard:

- write where you are;
- write about the weather;
- say what you do every day;
- describe some food you liked.

informal greeting

Hi Ben, informal linker

omission of article

Greetings from Portugal! My dad and I arrived on Sunday and we're having a great time. Weather's hot and sunny and there's a beautiful beach near our hotel. It's my favourite place to go. Swim every morning a little then sunbathe until lunchtime. Go sightseeing in the afternoons then go to a fish restaurant in main street in evenings. Trying local dishes every time. Ate Portuguese cheese last night. It was delicious.

short verb forms

omission of personal pronoun

use of participle

Wish you were here,

Igor informal ending

## Practice

1 Read the model below. Why isn't it appropriate? Think about: *chatty language, omission of pronouns/ articles/ auxiliaries, layout, length*

Dear Jim,

I am writing to you from Elk, a beautiful town in Poland. My family and I decided to come here this summer, however it is raining while I am writing this postcard to you. Hopefully it will be hot again soon.

There are beautiful lakes and forests here, therefore I go for long walks every day or canoe down the river Elk. I am enjoying that very much. Most afternoons we go sightseeing and then we have dinner at excellent restaurants in the centre of the town. Last night I tried a local fish dish. It was a very interesting meal.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Nikolai

2 Rewrite the model as a proper postcard.

# Writing Bank 4

## Stories

Stories are written in the first person (*I/we*) or third person (*he/they*) and are about a series of events, real or imaginary. Stories consist of:

- an **introduction** in which we set the scene (*who, when, where, what*).
- a **main body** consisting of two or more paragraphs where we develop our story, presenting the events that lead to the climax event. We present the events in the order they happened.
- a **conclusion** in which we write what happened at the end of the events and how people felt.

We can use a variety of past tenses as well as a variety of adjectives or adverbs to make our story more interesting to the reader. We should always decide on the plot before writing a story. We link our ideas with appropriate words, *e.g. as soon as, while, before, first, etc.*

You're studying in England. The college magazine has asked its readers to send in stories entitled *A Day to remember*.

Write a story (120-200 words) with this title.

### A Day to Remember

variety of adjectives

set the scene

events in the order they happened

feelings


I woke up early on the day of the exam. It was a wet and windy day. I've often been late for college on rainy days because bad weather affects my bus so I quickly put on my raincoat and left the house.

I ran towards the bus stop but before I got there I realised I didn't have my ID with me. I ran back home, got it and ran as fast as I could to the bus stop.

As I got close, I saw the bus leaving. I waved my hands wildly but the driver didn't notice me. I decided to get a taxi. I was lucky to find one but the traffic was terrible on the main road. We moved about 500 metres in half an hour! The driver tried to use smaller, quieter streets but they were crowded too. We reached college 15 minutes before the exam would start. I paid the taxi driver and ran up the stairs, but I slipped and fell on the ground. I tried to get up but my leg was very sore.

Then I saw a friend of mine. He kindly helped me stand up and offered to give me a lift home. "But the exam starts in a few minutes," I said. He looked at me then said "The exam isn't on the 4th, it's on the 14th." I was so surprised I couldn't say a word.

## Practice

- 1  Read the rubric and find the key words, then answer the questions.

A travel magazine has asked its readers to send in stories about a travel experience. Write a story (120-180 words) to send to the magazine.

- 1 Who is going to read your story?
- 2 Who should your story be about?  
A a friend of yours  
B yourself
- 3 What should the story be about?  
A your daily routine  
B childhood memories  
C an experience away from home

- 2 Read the story below and answer the questions.

- 1 What's the weather like when the story starts?
- 2 Where does the story take place – indoors or outside?
- 3 What problems do the people in the story have?
- 4 What happens in the end?

1 ► Johnny and Brenda began climbing the mountain on a fine morning. It was the first day of their holiday and they wanted to get a spectacular view of the sea.

2 ► They walked for four hours, then, just before they got to the top, clouds and thick fog appeared. Suddenly it was hard to know whether or not they were walking towards the sea. They sat down, ate their lunch and waited for the weather to get better, but it got colder and the fog got thicker. Then it started to rain.

3 ► They walked for hours without seeing anyone or any buildings. It got dark. They tried to ring the hotel but there was no mobile phone signal. Finally they came to an empty old cottage with no door. It was cold but at least they were out of the rain.

4 ► They spent all night there. When it got light, they were amazed to see the hotel at the end of the cottage's garden. They felt relieved.

### 3 Read the story again. Which paragraph(s):

- present(s) the events
- sets the scene
- ends the story
- contains the characters' feelings

### 4 Number the events in the order in which they happen. Then use the list to retell the story in the first person. (I...).

- 1 The weather changed.
- 2 They stopped and ate.
- 3 They found a cottage to spend the night in.
- 4 They walked up the mountain.
- 5 They tried to use their phones but they didn't work.
- 6 They realised they were close to their hotel.

### 5 Read the extracts below and complete the gaps with the linking words and phrases.

- a) *At first, and, As soon as, then, Suddenly, before, As*

1) .....I arrived at the supermarket I got a trolley and started doing my shopping. It took me about an hour  
 2) .....I reached the till. 3) .....two men entered and ran towards the cashier. 4) .....I thought they were some friends of hers but 5) .....I realised they were robbers. They asked us to get down on the ground and asked the cashier to give them the money she had. 6) .....the cashier was putting the money in a bag we heard a police siren. The men panicked, dropped the bag 7) .....ran towards the exit. The police officers arrested them and took them to the police station.


- b) *but, then, As, Suddenly, so, At first, For a few minutes*

1) ..... I was driving home, it started to snow. The road became dangerous. 2) ..... a deer ran out of the forest and into the road. It was too late to change the direction of the car, 3) ..... we hit it. I stopped the car and got out. The deer lay in the road. 4) ..... I thought it was dead, 5) ..... it opened its eyes. 6) ..... it stood still, 7) ..... it walked back into the forest.

### 6 a) To make stories more interesting, you can use the following adjectives and adverbs instead of words we use a lot. Copy the table and put them in the right box, as in the example.

*tiny, enjoyable, nasty, highly, brilliantly, enormous, delightful, extremely, successfully, unsuccessfully, horrible, little, remarkably, huge, absolutely, fabulous, pleasant, unpleasant, giant, terrific, terrible, wicked, attractive, unattractive*

BIG	<i>enormous</i>
SMALL	
BAD	
GOOD/NICE	
VERY	
WELL	

- b)  Replace the words in bold in the extract below with suitable ones from the grid above.

I used a **1) big** knife to chop up some lettuce for the barbecue. I did it too fast and gave myself a **2) bad** cut on the finger. It was **3) very** painful. I went upstairs and showed it to my wife. She bandaged it up **4) well**. Of course, it didn't look very **5) nice** but it was possible to cook. Then we heard a sound from the kitchen. We came downstairs and saw a **6) small** dog on the kitchen table. The barbecue meat was gone.

### 7 You are studying in England. Your teacher is collecting stories about an experience of yours. Write a story (120-200 words) with the title *An unforgettable journey*.

# Writing Bank 5

## Informal messages / notes

Informal messages, or notes, are short pieces of writing we write to inform people about something, ask them to do something for us, arrange a meeting, etc.

Messages provide all the information needed without being chatty. We usually omit words, such as **personal pronouns** (*I, you, etc.*) **articles** (*a/an, the, etc.*), **auxiliaries** (*am, have, etc.*) and **greetings** (*Dear, Yours, etc.*).

We can use the imperative, informal linkers, participles and short verb forms. We don't usually write them in paragraphs.

## Useful Language

### Starting a message

Person's first name only, e.g. *Tony/Mark*

### Reason for writing the message

- Need to work late.
- Had to go shopping.
- Got phone call from Janusz.
- Richard just called and...
- Couldn't wait for you.
- Had to go to the (*supermarket*).

### Making arrangements for later

- Be back in... (*an hour*)
- I won't be late.
- Call you later.
- See you at (*the cinema*).
- Call me if you have any problems.

### Making suggestions

- How about...?
- We could (meet)...

### Asking for a favour

- Can/Could you...?
- Please, (...take it to...)

### Ending a message

- Thanks.
- Cheers.
- See you.

You offered to cook a meal for your English pen friend but you need to take your dog to the vet. Leave a note for your friend. In your message:

- explain why you need to go out;
- ask your roommate to go shopping for the food you need;
- tell him/her where to buy the food;
- tell him/her you are paying for the shopping.

James,  
Max ill so taking him to vet's. Can't get food for meal. Can you go shopping? Need rice, red peppers and a leek. Go to Brown's - they've the best veg. Pay you back tonight. Won't be long.  
Cheers,  
Ivan

Informal linker: James,  
use of participle: Max ill so taking him to vet's.  
omission of article: vet's.  
omission of personal pronoun: Can't get food for meal.  
use of imperatives: Go to Brown's - they've the best veg.  
short verb forms: Pay you back tonight. Won't be long.

## Practice

1 Read the model below. Why isn't it appropriate? Think about:

- layout
- way it starts/ends
- chatty language
- omission of pronouns/articles/auxiliaries

2 Rewrite it to make it appropriate.

Dear Sophie,

Jackie telephoned this afternoon. She is sick and she asked me to take her to the doctor's. I said yes. Unfortunately this means I cannot come with you to the aerobics class. Would you mind if you go on your own? I might be late. If I finish early, I'll call you so that we meet for coffee. Alternatively we could have dinner together. Please send me a text message to let me know if you agree.

Best wishes,  
Louise