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ENGLISH

Formal Letter

What is a Formal Letter?

Formal letters are letters used mainly for impersonal discourses. They are used while communicating with officials or associates with whom the writer does not share a personal relation. These letters can be recognised by their tone which is often a combination of politeness and formality and their short length.

Format of a Formal Letter

Sender's Address

Date: (DD/MM/YYYY)

Recipient's Name, _____

Designation & _____

Address _____

Subject: (One short sentence stating the purpose of the letter.)

Salutation, (E.g.: Dear ...,)

Introduction: (Begin by introducing yourself and the purpose of writing the letter.) _____

Body Paragraph: (Explain the situation in detail listing factual information needed to validate your point.)

Conclusion: (End the letter by restating your request or an assurance, whichever is the case.) _____

Thanking you.

Complimentary Ending:

(E.g.: Yours sincerely/faithfully,)

Sender's Signature

Sender's Name

Sender's Designation

Points to Remember

- The date when the letter is written is extremely important as these letters are often saved for further reference.
- Use of modal auxiliaries implies the forcefulness of your request even while maintaining the polite tone.
- Contact details could also include email address and phone numbers, especially where a reply is requested.

Types of Formal Letters

These letters can be broadly classified into three wide categories:

- Business letters
- Letters to officials
- Letters to newspapers

Tips for Writing a Formal Letter

- The subject should address the prime purpose of the letter.
- The letter should begin by discussing the matter at hand stated in the subject.
- The letter should be concise and to the point by avoiding unnecessary details.
- Complex professional jargon should be avoided where simple language is sufficient.
- It is important to maintain a polite yet professional tone throughout the letter.
- Cross checking for spelling or grammatical errors is always helpful.

Sample Informal Letters

Sample 1

Letter requesting for break time extension

Rohit Vare
B/205, Vivekanand Society
S.V. Road
Mahim, Mumbai 400 028
5th January 2015

The Principal
Modal High School
S.V. Road
Mahim, Mumbai 400 028

Subject: Request for an extension in break time

Dear Sir,

With due respect, I, Rohit Vare, studying in Class 9 B would like to request you to consider extending the break time from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes.

Since many of our parents bring us lunch from home, it becomes difficult to go to the entrance to fetch it and finish eating it on time. We are therefore often late for the next lesson and are punished for the same. Also, it is the only time we get to practise for the annual day celebration. This extension will also allow us to play on the school grounds and prevent us from becoming mere book worms.

Your understanding in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully,
Rohit Vare

Sample 2**Letter placing order of books**

Priya Joshi
Bhageshwar Bhavan
Gokhale Road
Mahim, Mumbai 400 016
4th January 2015

The Bookseller
Nitin Book Publishing Company
P.R. Street
Mahim, Mumbai 400 016
Subject: An order for books
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am in need of a few books that are available at your publishing house. I would be extremely grateful if you could send them to me at your earliest. Also, kindly ensure that all of them are of the latest edition.

The books which I need are

1. A Critical History of English Literature by David Daiches 1 Copy
2. The Glossary of Literary Words by M. H. Abrams 1 Copy
3. The Short Oxford History of English Literature by Andrew Sanders 1 Copy

I am willing to pay the delivery charges incurred by you for posting the books to me.

In anticipation of your reply, I remain,

Yours faithfully,
Priya Joshi