

WRITING SKILLS

Letter Writing

(Letters - Personal, Official and Business)

Letters are of two kinds: Personal and Official. Personal letters are those that deal with personal matters. Official letters are those that deal with matters of an impersonal, official, public nature or business discourse.

Personal letters are written to friends and relatives. They are written for a variety of purposes - to convey ideas, news, views feelings; to invite, to accept invitation, to congratulate, to thank, etc. Personal letters are very often informal; they may also be formal such as invitations to important social functions, weddings, etc. A good personal letter is marked by courtesy, naturalness and tone of familiarity.

Official letters, on the other hand, are very formal. They are written for business correspondence and official purposes, and include applications for employment and other things, order, complaints and replies to these. A good official letter is accurate in information, brief and to the point in matter and courteous in tone.

The Parts of a Letter

Most letters have six parts:

1. Heading
2. Inside address (only in official letters)
3. Salutation or Greeting
4. Body
5. Complimentary Close
6. Signature

1. Heading

The address along with the date is known as the Heading of the letter. The heading is written on the top right hand corner of the letter:

15, Road No.6,
Rajinder Nagar, Udaipur -313 001
August 15,2004
or
15 August 2004
or
15th August, 2004

2. Inside Address

The inside address contains the name and full address of the person the letter is written to. It is written close to the left hand margin, at least one space below the date line.

The Registrar
Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati
University Ajmer -305 001

M/s Raman Electricals
22, M.I. Road
Jaipur -302 004

3. Salutation or Greeting

The salutation or greeting is written at the left hand margin. It is written at least two space below the inside address

	15, RoadNo.6, RajinderNagar, Udaipur-313 001 August 15, 2004
.....	
The Registrar Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University Ajmer-305 001	
.....	
.....	
....	
Dear Sir,	

According to the degree of formality, the following forms of Salutation are used. The first word and all nouns are capitalized (My dear Brother).

Most Formal	Sir, Madam,	These forms are used for people addressed in their official capacity. (i.e. designation)
Formal	Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Gentlemen,	
Less Formal	My dear Father / Mother / Uncle, My dear Rajesh / Mohan, My dear Mr. Roy, My dear Mrs. Roy, My dear Miss Roy, Dear Mr. Roy,	These forms are used when one is writing to one's friends / relatives or to those personally known to him / her

Dear Mrs. Roy,
Dear Miss Roy,

Dear Sudhir,
Dear Manali,

The first name is used to show the intimate relationship

4. The Body of the Letter

The body of a letter begins below the Salutation. The body may have several paragraphs and each paragraph should contain only one main idea. It is good to divide a letter into three parts

(i) Reason for writing (ii) Details (iii) Any action required

5. Complimentary Close

The Complimentary Close begins below the Body of the letter. The first word of the Close is capitalized, and the last word of the Close is followed by a comma :

Yours truly,
Very truly yours,

The Close must agree with the Salutation. Sir, and Yours sincerely, do not go together

Personal Letters

My Dear Mr. Roy
Dear Mr. Sumit
Dear Sumit

Sir, Madam,
Dear Sir,
Dear Madam,

Yours sincerely,
Or
Yours very sincerely,

Yours faithfully,
Yours truly,
Yours respectfully,

6. Signature

Signature should be clear enough to be read. No punctuation mark is used after the signature. Titles and degrees are not used with a signature. In case of a business letter, the name of the business concern may appear below the signature

Yours faithfully,

Manish Gupta
(Manish Gupta)

Tasks

1. Write the following letter correctly. Be sure that the closing and the signature are in line with the heading :

23 Rambagh Circle, Chaura Rasta, Jaipur,

11th June, 2004

Dear Mahesh,

Last Saturday we were taken to a visit to the Birla Science Museum, Pilani. The museum has a train layout that fills an entire basement. There are passenger trains, freight trains and even electric trolleys. You must visit the museum sometime. Have you and your family completed your home layout ? Perhaps you could give us some helpful hints when we begin our layout. Come to see us as soon as you can.

Yours very sincerely,

Mohan

2. Write a letter to one of your friends / relatives giving the latest news about yourself.
3. Write a letter inviting a friend to come to your house on your birthday party.
4. Write a letter of application in response to the advertisement given below :

Vacancy for a young man of good education, smart appearance, as Marketing Manager, Free training, Previous experience not necessary, but initiative essential. Apply to Mahesh Electricals, National Highway No.8, Udaipur.

5. Write a letter to the Principal of your school requesting him to issue you the Character Certificate.
6. Write a letter to Messrs. Jain Pustak Mandir, Chaura Rasta, Jaipur ordering the book Modern English by B.P. Asthana. Also request them to send the book by VPP.

Dialogue Writing

A dialogue is a conversation or talk between two persons. It also means exchange of views. A dialogue is very close to a personal and informal chat. It is through dialogue that one learns to use words, phrases and expressions appropriate to important situationally-governed communicative functions, and the way they ought to be delivered. A dialogue focuses on 'what to say' and 'how to say'. 'What to say' relates to the content and 'how to say' means the form of communication. It also enables us to use speech devices such as intonation and stress to show meaning and attitude. Dialogue should be spontaneous; to make them spontaneous dull, stilted and archaic expressions should be avoided.

How to write a dialogue

The following steps are to be followed in writing / developing a dialogue :

1. Select situations for dialogues from the real world.
2. Collect data / ideas related to the theme of the dialogue.
3. Keep in mind the addressor, the addressee and their relationship (formal / informal)
4. Select appropriate lexis and structures in accordance with the register (variation of language according to use).
5. Make it consistent and avoid self-contradiction.
6. Make it coherent by arranging the thoughts logically and systematically.
7. The language of a dialogue should be simple, direct and concrete.
8. A dialogue should be free from artificiality of formal English.
9. Too much use of slang and colloquialism may mar the intended meaning/s of a dialogue.

Given below are the examples of some dialogues. Study them thoroughly.

An Educational Tour

Suppose you want to join an educational tour arranged by your school. You have to seek permission from your father to join the tour. Write a dialogue between you and your father.

Father : How many students are joining the tour?

I : About fifty.

Father : How many days will you spend on the tour?

I : About eight days.

Father : What are the charges per head?

I : The charges are rupees five hundred per head. The school will pay for the railway fare.

Father : Which places and towns will you visit?

I : We shall visit Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaipur. We shall see the City Palace and Saheliyon ki Bari at Udaipur. We shall also see the Fort of Jodhpur and the Hawa Mahal in Jaipur.

Father : What arrangements have been made for boarding and lodging?

I : Our teacher has got hotels booked at all places. Our booking has been confirmed.

Father : That's good. You can join the tour, but you will keep me in touch with your visit.

I : Thanks father. I shall be writing to you daily about our tour

Seeking Admission

Suppose a student wants to get admission in a college. Write a dialogue between the student and the principal.

Student : Good morning, Sir.

Principal : Good morning. Please sit down.

When did you pass your higher secondary examination?

Student : In June this year, Sir.

Principal : In which division did you pass it?

Student : In first division. I stood first in my school and got 80% marks.

Principal : That's very good! Are you interested in games?

Student : Yes, Sir. I play cricket.

Principal : Have you ever been a captain of a team?

Student : **Yes**, Sir, I was the captain of our school cricket team.

Principal : That's good. We shall be glad to take you.

Student : Thank you very much, Sir.

Life in The Hostel

Manish lives in a boarding school. He has now come home on a short holiday. His mother is very anxious to know how he lives there, what he eats there, and so on.

Mother : Manish dear, do they give you any milk to drink, at the
boarding house ?

Manish : Yes, mother, they do.

Mother : When do you get your breakfast ?

Manish : We have our breakfast at 7o' clock.

Mother : Do you get any chapatis for breakfast ?

Manish : Yes, we do.

Mother : Are the chapatis prepared in desi ghee ?

Manish ; Yes, mother, they are.

Mother : Manish, do you get hot water for bath ?

Manish : Yes, we do in the winter season.

Mother : Do you all clean rooms in the boarding house ?

Manish : No, mother, we have a servant for cleaning the rooms.

Mother : Do you live alone in your room ?

Manish : No, I have room mates.

Mother : What do you do in the evening ?

Manish : Play tennis.

Mother : What do you do at night ?

Manish : We study.

Exercise

Compare the two pairs of sentences given below:

- (a) What subjects did you study for your B.Sc.?
- (b) Please tell me what subjects you studied for your B.Sc.
- (a) Does it indicate your personality?
- (b) Do you think it indicates your personality?

Both questions marked (a) and questions marked (b) ask for the same items of information. But question (a) is rather abrupt and sounds to be little rude. Question (b) is more polite and tactful.

In polite conversation, people use expressions like please tell me or Do you think.....? to introduce questions. Let's look at some such expressions.

1. Can you tell me
2. Could you (please / kindly) tell me
3. I wonder if you could tell me
4. I hope you don't mind my asking, but I'd like to know

The above sentences have been arranged in order of increasing politeness - expression (1) is polite and (4) the most polite.

Now ask polite questions to seek information in the following situations

- (a) At the enquiry counter of a bus station, you want to find out when the last bus for your town leaves. Ask the clerk at the counter.
 - (b) Your friend borrowed a book from you a few days ago. He has not yet returned the book. Ask your friend why he has not returned the book he borrowed from you.
 - (c) You applied for housing loan. You, however, don't have any information whether it has been sanctioned. Ask the Manager of the bank when your application for the loan will be considered.
 - (d) A Salesman has come to your school selling Oxford English Dictionaries. Ask him how much a dictionary would cost ?
2. All of us need to complain about something or other. We can make complaints rudely or in a polite way. Some of the polite ways of introducing complaints are as follows :
- (a) Sorry, but.... (you're shouting at me).
 - (b) I'm sorry to say this, but....
 - (c) I'm really sorry to trouble you, but....
 - (d) I regret to bring to your notice

How will you make complaints in the following situations ?

- (a) Your brother and sister are preparing for a competitive examination. Your neighbour's children play music very loudly till midnight. Complain to your neighbour.
 - (b) The passenger sitting next to you in the bus keeps smoking non-stop. The smoke makes you feel sick. Complain to the Conductor.
3. Write a dialogue between mother and son about the significance of cleanliness in everyday life.
4. Ravi was reading a book. Raman, his friend came to see him. Raman saw the book in Ravi's hand. He put a few questions to Ravi about the book. Write a dialogue between Ravi and Raman.
5. The school has reopened after the summer vacation. The boys and girls are standing in groups. Three friends - Sheela, Ramesh and Kamal - meet in front of the school hall and talk about their holidays. Develop a dialogue.

SPEECH

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defined speech as a "formal talk that a person gives to an audience." In connection with a play it means a group of lines that an actor speaks." Speech is different from debate which means "a formal discussion of an issue at a public meeting". In a debate two or more speakers express opposing views and then there is often a vote on the issue. Discussion differs from speech, for the former may be formal or informal whereas the latter is always formal. While preparing a speech, the following points should be kept in mind –

- ÷ A speech presupposes the presence of an audience. It, therefore, should begin with a relevant address.
- ÷ The tone of your speech should be formal.
- ÷ Make short sentences.
- ÷ Excessive illustrations, exemplifications, etc. mar the beauty of a speech.
- ÷ A speech should have a proper beginning and should not end abruptly.
- ÷ A speech avoids the excessive use of technical jargans unless it aims at a particular audience.

Study the following speech on Education

Respected Chairman and august audience

I am thankful to the organizers for having provided me the opportunity to speak on 'Education' amongst an august audience such as you are.

Dear friends, education is not an end but a means to an end. Therefore, the purpose of education should be to fit ourselves for life. In fact, when we say that all of us must be educated, we mean that all of us can do whatever job is suited to our brain and ability, and secondly, that we can realize that all jobs are necessary to society, and that it is very bad to be ashamed of one's work, or to scorn someone else's.

Thank you so much

1. Prepare a short speech of 60-80 words on the following :

- (a) A speech to be delivered in the Farawell Party to the students of class XII.
- (b) A speech to be in the Cultural Function of your school (As cultural secretary)
- (c) A speech to be delivered as a contestant for the post of General Secretary of your School Students' Union.

ESSAY

Essay as a form of composition is the expression of the writer's knowledge of a certain subject. It also includes his opinions about the topic. The essay, thus understood, may contain the narrative or the descriptive elements, but it will also

contain comments and criticisms representing the writer's own point of view. A composition merely in the form of a simple narrative or statement of facts related to a particular topic would not be a true essay unless the writer subjects that to appraisal and criticism by giving a revelation of his own mind. Its nature is, therefore typically personal. The essay presents information in an interesting, easy and clear form. Its practice helps in cultivating the skill of selecting the most useful information on the given topic.

Essays should be written strictly according to method. The paragraphing should be proper. There should be a clear line of thought or argument governing the arrangement of the material and giving coherence to the ideas. A composition will not be a true essay if each paragraph is treated as an isolated unit having no connection with the paragraph, preceding it or following it. An essay is not a mere collection of disjointed paragraphs. It must be considered as a whole, and each paragraph must be made to contribute to the total effect.

The essay has three parts - the beginning, the middle and the end. The opening paragraph in an essay is always very important. It is worthwhile to spend considerable thought on a striking opening paragraph. It should introduce the reader to a perfectly definite idea bearing on the theme. The writer can use any device for an effective beginning according to the demand of the theme. Whatever device of introduction is used, the reader should be able to get from the first paragraph a clear idea of what the subject of the essay is. The middle forms the main body of the essay, shaping the gradual development of the subject. The end or the concluding part of the essay is as important as the beginning. It should lead the theme to a satisfactory and not an abrupt end. It should sum-up the argument and the writers' opinions.

Essays can be classified under four basic categories.

1. Those requiring a certain amount of facts - knowledge,
2. Those requiring the writer to explain and amplify a given idea
3. Those involving a discussion and
4. Those requiring no special fact, knowledge, but demanding originality of treatment and excellence of style.

How to write an essay

1. Give considerable thought to the subject.
2. Create proper sequence so that ideas fall into their natural order.
3. Present the important ideas in clear and attractive language.
4. Observe the rules of coherence and unity. The beginning, the middle and the end should show smooth transition.
5. Keep the essay free from monotony by adding variety both in the matter and the means.

Suggested Topics for Essay Writing.

1. The Heroes of the Indian freedom struggle. 2. Rajasthan: A Tourist's Paradise. 3. A Visit to a Historical place. 4. My Hobby. 5. Modern Age is the Age of Computers. 6. The festival I Like Most. 7. The Role of Television. 8. The Child is the Father of Man. 9. The Aim of My Life. 10. Indian Society & the Status of Women. 11. The Hazards of Environmental Pollution. 12. The Mobile Handset to Students : A Boon or a Curse. 13. My First Day at School. 14. If I were the Prime-minister of India. 15. My Duty as a Citizen of India.

Report Writing

A report is a statement / description of events or experiences prepared for someone else's consideration. It is supposed to be a detailed examination of a situation or a problem, action taken or of the finding of an investigation. It is supposed to be written in a clear, informative way, often drawing conclusions and giving suggestions for course of action.

Information is the life-blood of communications, and much of it flows through the medium of reports - oral or written. Reports can be as short as a few sentences and as large as a few hundred pages. A scope of reports ranges from narrow to very wide, covering almost any topic.

A report has a heading, it is followed by the name of the place where it is written and the date of writing. The actual report is then presented in short paragraphs. In writing a report, the following principles may be kept in mind :

1. Make sure that your report meets a real need for information.
2. Make your report legible. To make a report legible, special care must be taken to write clearly and legibly.
3. Make your report readable. Clarity, conciseness and an organised presentation of contents contribute to the readability of a report. In this connection the following points are worth noting:
 - (a) Use short sentences.
 - (b) Prefer the simple to the complex.
 - (c) Prefer the familiar words.
 - (d) Exercise economy and avoid unnecessary words.
 - (e) As far as possible use action verbs.
4. Focus on achieving accuracy and validity. Accuracy and validity may be ensured by using appropriate words and structures (very often passive voice).

Look at the following newspaper report on Students' Strike

Deoli, Oct, 16 : The students of S.S. School Deoli went on an indefinite strike on 16th October, 2014. They are demanding exemption from computer fee. A large number of students assembled in front of the school with banners in their hands. They were shouting slogans in support of their demands. After some time the agitation

turned violent. The students entered the school premises, damaged furniture and other valuables. The Principal considering the situation tense, suspended the classes and called the leaders of the students for negotiation. The strike has been called off for the time being. Some amicable solution is expected soon.

Exercise

1. Imagine that Panchayat elections are to be held in your area next month. With the announcement of election dates, the political parties have become active and have started holding public meetings to woo the voters in their favour. Prepare a report on the political scenario. You may use the words given in the box.

Public meetings, banners, preparation, voters, campaign, political parties, law and order situation, manifesto, administrative alert, slogans, opportunity

2. You are the President of your school union. Write a report on the Union's activities to be published in the school magazine.

election, Oath ceremony, cabinet, cultural night, inaugural function, class tournaments, various competitions, annual function, NSS camp, prizes, results, declare, distribution

3. You were a witness to a bus accident. Write a report giving details of the accident, such as people injured, lives lost, traffic jam, demonstration by the local people, visit of the Home Minister and the announcement of relief.