

WRITING BANK

Personal letter/email

Write a short letter to an English-speaking friend you met on holiday.

- Apologise for not writing sooner and explain why.
- Mention some photos attached and say why you chose them.
- Give some news about yourself and ask your friend for news.
- Invite your friend to visit you and suggest a date.

Use *Hi* or *Hello* in informal letters, *Dear* + name if you don't know the person well.

Use idioms to make your writing more powerful.

Add questions like this to make it more friendly.

Use informal punctuation like dashes (–), dots (...), exclamation marks (!!!) and smileys (☺).

Use short forms and phrasal verbs in informal writing.

NEW MESSAGE

To: lucy@mail.net
From: helena847@mail.net
Subject: Holiday pics

Hi Lucy

I'm really sorry for taking so long to write – I've been up to my eyes with exam revision. Luckily, I've finished now, so I can relax at last. Take a look at the photos I've attached. There's a great one of the two of us on the beach, looking super-cool in our sunglasses! It really brings the memories flooding back, don't you think?

Anyway, now I've finished school, I've got to think about what to study at uni – I'd love to study Art, but my parents want me to do something sensible like ... Business Studies ☺.

What about you? Have you got your uni sorted out yet?

By the way, you promised to come and visit us. This summer would be perfect – is there any chance you could come in the second half of July? We'd love to have you here.

OK, I'd better go. Stay in touch.

Helena

SEND

I've been meaning to write for ages, but never seem to get any free time

incredibly busy with/working flat out on

My favourite one is .../The best one shows ...

Do you fancy coming/You're more than welcome to come

Write soon/Hopefully I'll see you soon/Take care/All the best/Best wishes/Lots of love.

Link paragraphs together with *anyway*, *by the way*, *OK*, etc.

Formal letter (job application)

You are living in Scotland and are looking for work. You see an advertisement for a part-time post as a teaching assistant (teaching a subject you have studied). Write a letter.

- Introduce yourself and say you are interested in the job.
- Describe your experience and qualifications, explaining why they are relevant to the job.
- Mention two aspects of your character, explaining why these are relevant to the job.
- Include information about your CV and references from your previous employer.

A formal letter needs to be written in a formal style; use clear paragraphs for the 1 introduction/aim of the letter, 2 details about yourself and 3 references and CV.

Begin the letter with a formal greeting.

Make sure you explain why points are relevant (answer the question fully).

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing in response to your advertisement for the post of teaching assistant in this morning's *Edinburgh Daily*. I have always wanted to work with children and for that reason I believe this post would be an ideal one for me.

My qualifications are well suited to the job. I graduated in Mathematics from Warsaw University two years ago. I also have some experience of teaching, as I worked as a teaching assistant in Warsaw after graduating. I consider myself hard-working and creative, which are both important characteristics for a teacher who wants to motivate students with interesting lessons.

I enclose my CV and a reference from the headmistress under whom I worked in Warsaw. I would be happy to attend an interview at any time that is convenient for you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
Signature

If you began with *Dear Sir* (or *Madam*) then end with *Yours faithfully*; if you began with a name (*Dear Ms Smith*) then end with *Yours sincerely*.

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms + surname

in reply to/with regard to/in connection with

I would like to apply for this post because/ I would like to express my interest in this post because

well suited to me/ a very interesting one for me

believe I am/would describe myself as

come for/come to

Article

A friend of yours has a blog where she writes about new technology. She has asked you to write an article for her blog, as part of her series 'Unsung inventions', which celebrates great inventions that people often forget about. Recent articles have included 'How the fridge changed the world' and 'Where would we be without bicycles?'. Write your article in 200–250 words.

Try to make your article personal – talk about yourself or people you know.

Use concrete images as well as more descriptive language.

In the second paragraph, you can move from a specific anecdote from your past to a more general point, using present tenses.

Before you write, plan which idioms you'd like to include.

You can start sentences and paragraphs with *and/but*.

Short sentences like this can be very effective, but you also need some long sentences.

Relate your general arguments back to your own story.

Emotional stories can be very powerful in an article.

Before you write, plan which grammar structures you'd like to include.

Speculate about the future.

The video camera - more than just a toy

ENTRY 4

When my parents bought their first video camera, my father filmed everything: meals, sandcastles, day trips, views ... it was wonderful. But the problem was he was making films instead of actually spending time with us. After a while, he got bored with it, and it became another expensive toy gathering dust in the cupboard.

For those being filmed, the novelty soon wears off. And bored relatives back home, forced to sit through hours of endless clips, can find themselves regretting the invention of video cameras too.

But that's not the point. Their true value comes years after the filming. Nowadays, when I watch films of my early childhood, it's always amazing to see my eight-year-old self building sandcastles. And it's plain weird to see my parents looking so fit, young and good-looking, as they once were. I can even watch my grandmother, who died while I was still young.

Without a video camera, all of those moments, those memories, would have been lost forever. I'd never have heard my grandmother's voice or seen her laugh. But now I've got part of my past to show my own children one day. Maybe one day, historians will look at our old films and find it fascinating to see how people once lived. This may sound ridiculous, but just imagine if you found a way of watching people 100, 500 or 1,000 years ago. Wouldn't that be cool?

I'll never forget the day

Unfortunately

Eventually

**fascinating/
incredible/surprising/
wonderful**

**If it weren't for .../
If we didn't have ...**

**crazy/unbelievable/
unlikely**

Involve the reader.

A question is a strong way to end an article.

Report

Look at the results from a questionnaire about computer habits and write a report summarising and commenting on them.

Who was surveyed 100 students aged 18–23 studying at Nottingham College of Further Education	
How often do you use a computer? every day 60 percent most days 25 percent two or three times a week 13 percent once a week or less 2 percent	What do you use your computer for? email, messaging, contacting friends 100 percent work 90 percent news and information 80 percent playing games 55 percent playing music 32 percent watching films 29 percent other 10 percent
What else do you do while you are using your computer? eat and/or drink 80 percent listen to music or the radio 70 percent chat with friends 46 percent watch TV 45 percent nothing 2 percent	On balance, does your computer help you to save time or make you waste time? save time 50 percent waste time 47 percent can't say 3 percent

Begin with an introduction describing the purpose of the report and where the information comes from, as appropriate.

Use headings to organise your report.

Starting with the most important result and working down to less important ones is a logical way to organise each paragraph.

Finish with a conclusion summarising the report in one or two sentences.

Computer habits

Introduction
 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of a survey into computer habits. The information was collected from a group of 100 students aged 18–23 at Nottingham College of Further Education.

How often?
 The most popular answer here was 'every day', which 60 percent of respondents gave. One-quarter use their computers 'most days', with only a small minority (15 percent) using them less than that.

Used for ...?
 Unsurprisingly, 'email, messaging and contacting friends' was the most popular use in the survey, with 100 percent of those questioned using their computers for this. Only slightly less common were the second and third answers: 'work' and 'news and information'. Just over half of those surveyed use their computers for playing games, and around 30 percent use them for listening to music and watching films.

Used at the same time as ...?
 Both eating and drinking and listening to music were popular answers (80 percent and 70 percent, respectively). Of the other answers, chatting with friends and watching TV were popular with almost half of respondents. On the other hand, only a tiny percentage of respondents did nothing else while using their computers.

A timesaver ...?
 Answers here were more or less evenly split between 'saving' and 'wasting', with slightly more saying the former. A very small group were undecided.

Conclusion
 It is clear that computers play a very important role in our interviewees' lives. However, our survey also showed that there is a great deal of variety in how computers are used.

aim/goal/intention

six out of ten/
over half/a majority

those interviewed/
those surveyed/
interviewees

one-quarter
(25 percent), half
(50 percent), one-
third (30 percent),
one-fifth (20 percent)

As expected/As
predicted/Predictably

slightly more than

about/approximately/
some/more or less

In contrast/
In comparison

almost no/very few/
a tiny number of/
hardly any

divided/spread

stating/feeling/
choosing

unsure/not sure

Opinion essay

'Mobile phones should be banned from schools.' Write an essay stating your opinion and justifying it.

