

Formal e-mails and letters are sent to people you don't know well (e.g. Director of Studies) or people in an official position, when you want to apply for a job or a course, to make a complaint, to ask for information about a trip, etc. They are written in a formal style, in a polite, impersonal tone.

• **Characteristics of formal style:**

**Vocabulary:**

- Use advanced formal vocabulary (don't use colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs):

*I am writing to enquire whether...* (NOT: I want to ask if...)

- Use formal linkers: consequently, furthermore, however, therefore, for this reason... Use linkers to structure your text: first of all, in addition, finally...

*I have worked as a primary school teacher for ten years and therefore have experience working with children.*

**Grammar:**

- Use passive voice: be + past participle: *I can be contacted...* (NOT: You can contact me...)

▪ Use long and complex (subordinate) sentences: *I am writing to apply for the position of part-time shop assistant which was advertised in this week's edition of the Frankfurt English News.*

- Don't use the imperative: *You may contact me by telephone at the above number.* (NOT: *Ring me at the number I've given you.*)

**Punctuation:**

- Use full forms of verbs: *I would be grateful if...* (NOT: I'd be grateful if...)

*I would like to apply...* (NOT: I'd like to apply...)

- Don't use exclamation marks.

**Structure of formal e-mails and letters:**

A formal e-mail or letter should consist of:

1. **A formal greeting**, there are two possibilities:

Dear Sir/ Madam, → when you don't know the person's name.

Dear Mr Squires, / Dear Ms Braun, → when you know the person's name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) and the surname only.

2. **1<sup>st</sup> paragraph:** an introduction in which you write your opening remarks and mention your reason/s for writing.

3. **2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> (etc) paragraphs:** a main body in which you write the main subject(s) of the e-mail/letter in detail, starting a new paragraph for each topic.

4. **Last paragraph:** a conclusion in which you write your closing remarks.

5. **A formal ending**, there are two possibilities:

Yours faithfully, → when you don't know the person's name.

Yours sincerely, → when you know the person's name.

6. **Your signature and full name:** sign your name on the left, then print it below the signature.



Woodrow Wilson

**Letters applying for a job/course:**

1. **Introduction:** include the name of the job/course, where and when you saw it advertised:

I am writing in response to your advertisement in (+ magazine/newspaper)/ on (+ website) ...

*I am writing in response to your advertisement in The Evening Standard of 9<sup>th</sup> May. I am very interested in any vacancies you have for a cook in summer camps in France.*

With reference to your advertisement in/on...I am interested in applying for the position of... *teacher.*

2. **Body paragraphs:** provide ...

- Your age, present job (use present continuous) and/or studies: *I am a nineteen-year-old university student. I am working as a ... cook in a school in Santa Cruz.*

- Your qualifications (use present simple/ present perfect): *I have a degree in Media Studies. I have a diploma in interior design. I have recently finished secondary school.*

▪ Your experience (use present simple, past simple, present perfect): *I have experience ... with children/ in public relations. I have worked as an assistant cook in several restaurants in Puerto de la Cruz. Last winter I worked as a cook for families on skiing holidays in France.*

▪ Skills and personal qualities that are suitable for the job/course (use present simple):  
*I believe I am suitable for this job because I enjoy working with children. I also speak some French as well as Italian and English. I consider myself punctual and responsible.*

• **Examples of qualifications:**

To have a certificate/diploma/degree in ... : *I have a degree in Journalism.*

To have the GCSE (= the General Certificate of Secondary Education)

To have the A-level (= the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education)

To have a Bachelor's degree in .... awarded by (name of university: La Laguna University) in (year):

*I have a Bachelor's degree in Education awarded by La Laguna University in 2008.*

Examples: a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration/ Education/ Engineering/ Journalism/ Law/ Mathematics/ Medical Science/ Nursing/ Pharmacy/ Psychology/ Technology/ Veterinary Science ...

To have a Master's degree, for example, a Master of Architecture/ of Business Administration/ of Computer Science/ of Education/ of Geography/ of Journalism/ of Laws/ of Mathematics/ of Music/ of Psychology/ of Sports Science... (For more, visit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master's\\_degree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master's_degree) )

To have a PhD degree (when you write a thesis).

• **Examples of skills:** to have a driving licence/license, a good level of (written/spoken) English, computer skills ... To be a good cook/ dancer...

• **Examples of personal qualities:** to be creative, energetic, enthusiastic, good at ... (listening to people, sport), hard-working, mature, patient, physically fit, punctual, responsible, sociable, well-organized...

To like helping people, working with children, working as part of a team, working by yourself...

**3. Last paragraph:** say when you are available for interview, where and when you can be contacted, references you can send, a remark that you hope your application will be considered...:

*I will be available for interview in April / any weekday morning.*

*I may be contacted at the above (email) address or by telephone on 660 356903.*

*Please contact me if you need any more information.*

*I enclose/attach references from my last two employers. I enclose/attach my curriculum vitae.*

*I hope that my application will be taken into consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.*

**Letters asking for information: (student's book, page 115)**

**1. Introduction:** when you are asking for information about something (a job, a competition, a course, a hotel...), you should first say what kind of information you want:

I am writing with reference to ... *your advertisement in the newspaper yesterday.*

I am interested in ... *an intensive course and I would be grateful if you would send me further information.*

**2. Body paragraphs:**

First of all, I would like to know a little more about ... *the courses.*

Your advertisement says that ... *it is for young people.* But could you please tell me ... *how old I must be to apply?* In addition, I would appreciate more information about ... *the length of the courses.* / Could you please send me information about ...? / I would also like some information about ...

Finally, I would appreciate it if you could ... *send me an application form.*

**3. Last paragraph:**

I look forward to hearing from you at the (email) address above or by telephone on... *660 21 22 48.*

Thank you in advance. / I would like to thank you in advance.

• **Differences between formal e-mails and formal letters:**

In a formal letter you write your address (street, city or village, postcode, maybe also telephone number and email address) without your name in the top right-hand corner. Then, you write the date on the right, below your address. Write the month as a word (25 April 2013). Finally, the address of the person you are writing to should be written on the left, one line below the date. Include the person's full name (Emily Evans) if you know it, position of the person (The Personnel Manager) and/or name of the company, street, city or village, and postcode.

In a formal email you write your email address in the *From* field, and the email address of the person you are writing to in the *To* field. Write a subject that will draw the attention of the reader.