

A Letter to a Friend: Mastering Formal and Informal Correspondence

Learning objective: To structure a letter effectively using appropriate tone, including an address, salutation, paragraphs, and a formal or informal sign-off.

Follow the prompts below to write a letter to a friend or a historical figure. Ensure you use a clear structure and include specific details to make your writing engaging. Remember to check your punctuation, especially when using commas in addresses and after the greeting.

Dear Leo, I hope this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying your latest poetry project under the oak tree.

Word bank: Dear · Yours sincerely · Best wishes · Furthermore · In addition · Consequently · However · Following our recent conversation · I am writing to tell you about · On the other hand · I look forward to hearing from you

1. The Opening: Start by stating the purpose of your letter. Why are you writing today? Begin with: 'I am writing to you because...' (2 marks)

2. Main Body Paragraph 1: Share a specific piece of news or a detail about your day. Use a connective to link your thoughts. Start with: 'Recently, I have been...' (3 marks)

3. Main Body Paragraph 2: Ask the recipient a thoughtful question about their life or interests. Start with: 'I am curious to know...' (3 marks)

4. The Closing: Offer a polite sign-off and look forward to the future. Start with: 'I would love to hear your thoughts on...' (2 marks)

5. Explain why it is important to adjust the tone of your letter depending on who you are writing to. Compare and contrast a letter to a friend versus a letter to a headteacher. (4 marks)

6. Justify your answer: What might happen if you used 'Yours sincerely' when writing to a close family member? Would the letter feel different? Explain why. (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are writing a letter from the perspective of Nova the owl to a scientist. Write a 'Greater Depth' version of your letter, incorporating sophisticated vocabulary and a formal tone. Then, rewrite the same letter as if it were a quick, informal note left on a branch for Pip the caterpillar. Compare the two versions: how does your choice of vocabulary change the meaning and the tone of the message?