

Letters from the Canopy: Mastering Formal Correspondence

Learning objective: To write a formal letter of complaint using appropriate vocabulary, tone, and the organisational features of a formal letter.

Max the monkey has ordered a set of precision measuring tools for his maths experiments, but the package arrived damaged. Using the context provided in the questions, write a formal letter of complaint from Max to the 'Canopy Supply Company'. Ensure you use a formal tone, clear structure (sender's address, recipient's address, date, formal greeting/sign-off), and the vocabulary from the word bank.

Word bank: dissatisfaction · rectify · correspondence · defective · resolution · sincere · expedite · fragile

1. Explain why it is essential to use formal, non-contracted language (e.g., 'I am' instead of 'I'm') when writing a formal letter of complaint. How does this impact the recipient's perception of your request? (2 marks)

2. Draft the 'opening paragraph' of your letter. State clearly why you are writing, mentioning the order number (Order #9924) and the date of arrival (12th October). (3 marks)

3. Justify why Max should include a copy of the receipt showing he paid £45.50 for the items. Why is evidence crucial in formal correspondence? (2 marks)

4. Compose a persuasive paragraph describing the 'defective' nature of the items. Use at least two words from the word bank to explain the impact this has on Max's urgent maths project. (4 marks)

5. Compare and contrast a formal letter to an email. What features are unique to a formal letter, and why might a letter be chosen over an email for a serious complaint? (2 marks)

6. What might happen if Max uses an aggressive or informal tone in his letter? Explain the potential consequences for his request for a refund. (2 marks)

Draw: Sketch the layout of a formal letter, clearly labelling the positions of the sender's address, the date, the recipient's address, and the formal sign-off.



Extension challenge: Imagine the Canopy Supply Company responds with an offer of a £5.00 discount voucher instead of a full refund. Write a follow-up letter as Max, justifying why this resolution is insufficient and proposing a more suitable alternative.