

Mastering Formal and Informal Letters with Kit the Fox

Learning objective: To understand the structural and linguistic differences between formal and informal letter writing, and to apply appropriate register for specific audiences.

Read the front of each flashcard carefully. Try to recall the definition or the rule before reading the answer provided after the pipe symbol. Use these cards to improve your precision in written communication.

What is the term for the opening greeting of a letter, such as 'Dear Sir/Madam' or 'Hi'?

Salutation.

Which register should you use when writing to a headteacher or a business manager?

Formal register, which uses standard English, no contractions, and a professional tone.

How should you conclude a formal letter if you know the recipient's name?

Yours sincerely.

How should you conclude a formal letter if you do not know the recipient's name?

Yours faithfully.

What is the 'valediction' of a letter?

The closing expression used before the signature, such as 'Best wishes' or 'Yours faithfully'.

True or False: Contractions (like 'don't' or 'can't') are acceptable in a formal letter of complaint.

False. Formal writing requires full forms, such as 'do not' and 'cannot'.

Explain why it is important to include a clear address and date in a formal letter.

It ensures the recipient knows exactly who sent the letter, from where, and on what specific date for professional record-keeping.

Compare and contrast the tone of an informal letter to a friend versus a formal letter to a local councillor.

Informal letters use colloquial language, slang, and contractions to express closeness. Formal letters use objective, polite, and precise language to convey information or requests clearly.

Justify why Kit the Fox would use bullet points in a formal letter of enquiry.

To present information in a concise, organised, and easily readable format, making it efficient for the recipient to process specific details.

What might happen if you used an informal tone in a formal letter of application?

The recipient might perceive the writer as unprofessional, disrespectful, or lacking the necessary maturity for the position being applied for.

What is the purpose of the 'body' paragraphs in a letter?

To structure the main message logically, with each paragraph focusing on a single theme or point.