

Letters from the Canopy: A Formal Correspondence Task

Learning objective: To understand and apply the features of formal letter writing, including appropriate tone, structure, and vocabulary, while writing from the perspective of an original character.

Read the passage below written by Nova the owl. Then, answer the questions to demonstrate your understanding of formal letter structure and tone. Pay close attention to how Nova addresses her recipient and the level of formality used.

To the Head Librarian of the Forest Archive, 12 Oak Hollow Road, Woodland Heights. 14th October. Dear Head Librarian, I am writing to you today to request permission to access the restricted collection of ancient star charts. As a nocturnal observer of the constellations, I have a profound interest in how our ancestors mapped the night sky. Furthermore, I would be most grateful if you could confirm whether there is a fee for this service, as I have saved £15.50 specifically for the purchase of historical maps. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. Yours sincerely, Nova.

Word bank: correspondence · sincerely · formal · recipient · perspective · respectful · enquiry · furthermore

1. Identify two features in Nova's letter that indicate it is written in a formal style rather than an informal one. (2 marks)

2. Why does Nova use the phrase 'Yours sincerely' instead of 'Best wishes'? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the tone of this letter with a postcard you might send to a friend. What changes would you need to make to the vocabulary? (3 marks)

4. Justify why Nova has included her specific budget of £15.50 in the letter. How does this detail affect the recipient's view of her request? (2 marks)

5. What might happen if Nova had addressed the letter 'Hey there' instead of 'Dear Head Librarian'? Discuss the potential impact on the success of her request. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a formal letterhead for Nova's stationery. Include a sophisticated logo that represents her love for astronomy and her scholarly nature.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are the Head Librarian. Write a formal reply to Nova's letter. You must include a professional greeting, a clear response to her enquiry, and a polite closing. Ensure your vocabulary is rich and your tone remains formal throughout.