Mastering Formal and Informal Letters

Learning objective: To understand the structural and linguistic differences between formal and informal letter writing in accordance with the Year 6 English curriculum.

Read each flashcard carefully. Use them to test your knowledge of letter structures, tone, and vocabulary choice.

What is the correct formal salutation to use if you do not know the name of the recipient?

Dear Sir/Madam,

How should you end a formal letter if you started it with 'Dear Sir/Madam'?

Yours faithfully,

How should you end a formal letter if you know the recipient's name (e.g., Dear Mr Smith)?

Yours sincerely,

What is the primary difference between formal and informal tone?

Formal tone uses standard English, lacks contractions, and avoids slang, whereas informal tone is relaxed and can use contractions.

Where should the sender's address be placed in a formal letter?

In the top right-hand corner.

What is a 'valediction'?

The closing of a letter, such as 'Yours sincerely' or 'Best wishes'.

True or False: Contractions like 'don't' or 'can't' are encouraged in formal letters.

False. You should use full forms like 'do not' and 'cannot'.

What is a 'salutation'?

The opening greeting of a letter, such as 'Dear...' or 'To whom it may concern'.

When writing to a friend, would you use formal or informal register?

Informal register.

Why is the structure of a formal letter important?

It ensures clarity, professionalism, and shows respect to the recipient.

Give two examples of informal valedictions.

Best wishes, Love, See you soon, or Cheers.

If Max the monkey is writing a formal letter of complaint, should he use slang?

No, he must use formal, professional language.