

WRITING

INTRODUCTION

In this section we will be discussing communication. Since we are for the most part born with the ability to make sounds, we always have to communicate with people we live with. You communicate with your age mates, with people who are older than you, with people with different social standing or younger than you. For this reason, it is important that you are mindful of how you communicate.

In this lesson, we will have our attention on informal letter writing, specifically to a friend (a written communication to a friend). We choose to write letters to friends when we have difficulty speaking to them directly or when the distance does not permit us to have face to face interactions with them.

By the end of this section, you should be able to

- compose an informal letter to a friend.

Key Ideas

- A letter is one of the written communications to an audience (a person or office).
- An informal letter is a letter that is not written in a formal or official way (not written to an office or title/office holder).

LETTERS

A letter is a written or printed message, typically sent from one person to another, containing information, thoughts, or feelings. It is a type of communication that can be formal or informal, personal or professional.

Letters can also be:

1. Handwritten or typed
2. Sent through postal mail or email
3. Long or short

There are several purposes for which letters are written or sent. A few of them are:

1. Communication with friends and family
2. Business correspondence
3. Official notifications

4. Personal expression and reflection
5. Historical record keeping

In this digital age, letters have evolved to include;

- Emails
- Text messages
- Social media messages
- Online forums and discussions

However, traditional handwritten letters in many cases still hold sentimental value and are often cherished for their personal touch and emotional significance. Now, let us turn our attention to one of the types of letters.

Informal Letters

An informal letter is a letter that is not written in a formal or official way (not written to an office or title/office holder). Since there are different ways of talking to people, so also there are different ways of writing letters. Informal letters can be semi-formal or friendly. A semi-formal one is written to relations of the writer who are much older than the writer. They could be parents, uncles, aunties of the writer, and others. But we will be looking at one that is written to friends. Regarding this, we are going to look at the features and format of an informal letter to a friend.

Features of Informal Letter

Informal letter is written to people who are close to the writer. These people may be friends to the writer - family members, relatives and others. Since this kind of letter is not formal, the language or tone is also informal. This letter does not restrict the writer to a particular topic. It is dependent on the message you want to communicate or convey to your audience. This letter could be written to inform the audience about something, educate, invite, enquire about the well-being of the audience, and others.

It is worth noting that in informal letter writing one can use the contracted form of words such as *won't*, *can't*, instead of *will not* and *cannot* respectively. This letter is chatty in form unlike a formal letter where one is restricted to formal language usage.

1. Format for Informal Letter

The following is the format of an informal letter.

- a. Address: This is written in the top corner of either the left-hand side or the right-hand side of the paper. It informs the reader of where the letter is written from or who is writing the letter.
- b. Date: It is written under the address. It helps the audience to know when the letter was written.
- c. Salutation: It serves as a form of greeting. It is done with - Dear+name of the recipient/audience. *E.g. Dear Sallah*

- d. **Introduction:** It is where the writer opens the conversation. The writer can say a word of greetings, and also indicate the reason/idea for writing the letter.
- e. **Main Body:** It is in the main body that the writer provides the details of the letter. This could be divided into paragraphs, depending on the number of points or ideas one wants to discuss.
- f. **Conclusion:** This serves as the ending note of the letter. It should be ended in a friendly manner. The writer could summarise all the points discussed in the main body.
- g. **Subscription:** It can be done by saying yours ever, your loving friend, and others. Then the name of the writer follows. *E.g.* Likpa, Nlankan, Boahemaa, Adzo, and others.

BELOW IS A SKETCH LAYOUT OF AN INFORMAL LETTER.

Writer's Address
Date

The writer's address is written at either the top left-hand corner or the top right-hand corner of the page.

This date will help the receiver know when exactly you wrote the letter

Salutation

Dear + name, (Dear Kay, Dear Glo, Dear Ofori,)

Body- Introduction

Start your informal letter with an introduction to set the tone of the matter that is going to be discussed.

Main Body (Could be in paragraphs)

Explain the reason behind the letter and provide the details as elaborate as you wish to.

Conclusion

End the informal letter on a friendly note.

Subscription

Your lovely/loving friend or Yours ever,

Nana Akua, Ms Boat.

Activity 15.1

Think about the following personalities carefully and pick out those you can write an informal letter to your headteacher, the chief of your community, your mother, a sister of yours, your classmate, the Chief Executive Officer of your District.

Activity 15.2

Invite three of your colleagues and write out with them an introductory paragraph to a letter you are asked to write to your former schoolmate who is now in a different school, inviting them to your school's 50th anniversary celebration.

Activity 15.3

One of your closest friends has travelled abroad for a very long time. Discuss with a colleague and write out a letter to her/him, telling her/him the developments that have taken place in your community.

Review Questions

1. Explain when a letter is considered informal.
2. What are the items that constitute the format of an informal letter?
3. Plan an informal letter on a topic of your choice.

Answers to Review Questions

1. When the letter is written close relations/acquaintances of the writer.
2. Address, date, salutation, body introduction, the main body, conclusion, and subscription
3. To be done by the learner

Extended Reading

- Dadzie, A.B.K and Grant, N. (2008). New Gateway English for Senior High School Book 1 (2nd ed.). Longman Publications
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