

Letter Writing

A letter is one side of a conversation by post. We write letters to communicate with our friends and families living away from us. We write to express our feelings, to get information, to invite others to a wedding and to request someone to do a job. There are three main types of letters: personal, official and business. Personal letters are of two types:

- i. Formal
- ii. Informal

Formal Letters

Formal letters consist of business letters, letters to newspapers, applications, notices, complaints and invitations etc. The language of such letters is formal and precise. They deal only with the subject in question and unnecessary details are avoided.

Informal Letters

These are written to relatives and friends. They may contain many details other than the specific matter for which they are written. The language of such letters is simple and casual. One may introduce sentiments and emotions according to the mood.

So, let us see, what is the proper format and other requisites of writing a letter.

Every letter, whether formal or informal, have these parts:

- i. the writer's address/the address of the person to whom letter is written
- ii. the date
- iii. the salutation
- iv. the body
- v. the complimentary closing
- vi. the signature

Now study the following letters carefully to see how and where each of the above part is placed in the letter.

An application of a father to the Headmaster/Headmistress of his son/ daughter requesting him/her to grant leave for one week.

15, Sarwar Road,
Lahore Cantt.
August 8, 2003

The Headmaster,
Central Model School,
Lahore

Sir,

This is to inform you that my son, Salim, a student of 10th A, has fallen seriously ill. The doctor has advised him rest for one week. So, he is unable to attend the school. I shall be grateful if you grant him leave from August 8 to 13. Please find attached the doctor's medical certificate.

I assure you that on his recovery, I will help him catch up on the missed work.

Yours truly,
Muhammad Aamir

A son's letter to a father telling him about his performance in the English test.

2, New Hostel,
Lower Mall,
Lahore
8th August, 2003

My dear Father,

I feel very happy to inform you that my performance in the paper of English was very good. I attempted all the questions and was able to finish writing the paper in time.

The questions on grammar and composition were easy to attempt. The poetry section was a bit difficult, but anyway, I managed to do the required questions. I was left with no time to revise and to correct the mistakes, which I might have made in a hurry to write more. However, I am satisfied with my performance on the whole.

By the blessings of Allah and a reward for my hard work, I hope to get good marks. I am sure you will remember me in prayers for my success in the examination.

Regards and love to mother, sisters and brothers.

Yours affectionately,
Ahmed

In both of these letters the address is given at the top right hand side and then the date which can also be written as 8th August, 2003 or August 8, 2003. In the second letter no address of the person to whom it is written is given because in an informal letter a son or daughter knows the address of his/her father. The following table shows the relevant salutations and complimentary closes which are used in letters.

Addresses	Salutations	Complimentary closes
To relatives	Dear Father / My dear Father, Dear Mother / My dear Mother, Dear Sister, Dear Uncle, Dear Cousin etc.	Yours affectionately, or Your affectionate or loving son/ daughter/ niece, etc.
To friends	Dear Friend, Dear Saba, My dear Saba etc.	Yours sincerely or Your sincere friend or Yours
Business letter	Dear Sir / Dear Madam	Yours faithfully Yours sincerely
Editor of a newspaper / Headmaster / Headmistress	Dear Sir / Madam	Yours truly or Yours faithfully
Teachers, Professors, or Principal / Headmaster / Headmistress (Letters / Applications)	Sir / Madam	Yours obediently

EXERCISES

1. Tick (✓) the right choice.

- i. You are writing a letter to a friend. How would you salute him?
- a) Dear Friend b) Dear Madam
c) Respected Sir
- ii. You are writing an application to the Headmaster requesting for a leave. Would you start as
- a) How are you?
b) My application will find you in the best of health.
c) This is to inform you that I am not well.
- iii. You are writing a letter to your father thanking him for the gift. Your first words would be
- a) I miss you. b) I see you.
c) I feel very pleased.
- iv. You have written a formal letter. How would you write the complimentary close?
- a) Yours sincerely b) Your loving...
c) Your loving son, Ali
- v. Where will you write your address?
- a) In the middle of the page
b) On the left side of the page
c) On the top right hand side of the page