

## Layout for a formal letter

Sender's address and other contact info:  
Email  
Telephone  
Fax

Date

Recipient's address  
Reference number if available

Dear..... (If name is unknown use Sir/Madam)

- It may be appropriate to start with a reference line  
*Re:.....*
- Do not use contracted forms - write all words in full.
- Use formal standard English - no slang
- Keep sentences precise and get straight to the point
- Keep business letters focussed and do not waffle on!
- If complaining, be polite and use intelligent vocabulary.

Sum up your main point and state that you look forward to a response to your letter / query / complaint etc if appropriate.  
*Thank you, in advance, for taking time to respond to my ....*

Yours faithfully – (if greeting is to Sir/Madam)  
Yours sincerely – (if name is given)

## Layout for an Informal letter

Sender's address

Date

Dear.....

- You may have more than 2 paragraphs. Depending on who the recipient is you will have varying levels of informality.
- It is generally accepted that in informal letters contracted forms can be used: *can't* instead of can not; *haven't* instead of have not etc.
- You may also use a more colloquial language register – chatty tone that you might use in speech / mild slang words.
- Punctuation can be less formal: exclamation mark! used to signify shock or a joke; dashes - instead of commas; brackets used to separate additional ideas/references...

Degree of intimacy with recipient will determine the way you sign off:  
Best wishes / Kind regards / Yours truly / *With love...*