

IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 – teacher’s notes

Description

An activity that introduces task 1 through analysing formality of language and standard letter layout and then gives practice in writing an answer

Time required: 60 minutes plus

Additional materials required:

- none

Aims:

- to raise awareness of levels of formality in letter-writing expressions
- to brainstorm a sample task 1
- to analyse a sample answer by examining letter layout
- to write a task 1 answer

Procedure

1. Ask students what they have to do in task 1. (They need to write an informal, semi-formal or formal personal letter of at least 150 words.)
2. Write ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ on the board. Ask students to discuss in pairs what these words mean using examples from real life, and any language associated with each. Point out that for ‘semi-formal’ situations, it is better to use formal language still as this is polite.
3. Whole-class feedback and discussion.
4. Hand out worksheet 1. Students work through it individually, then check in pairs.
5. Whole-class check.
6. Explain that for task 1, candidates need to use the appropriate level of formality of language in a letter. Ask if any of them have ever written a letter in English and if so, who to and why?
7. Hand out the sample task. Elicit how formal it should be and why. Tell students that they must include all the bullet points in their answers or they will be penalised. Students brainstorm in pairs some ideas about what they could write about each bullet point.
8. Change the pairs. Students exchange ideas.

9. Hand out the sample answer on part 1 of worksheet 2. Tell students to ignore the numbers for the moment, to read the letter and then discuss with a partner if they think it is a good answer and why. Point out that in IELTS they do not need to write any addresses. Remind students what the assessment criteria are (task achievement; coherence and cohesion; lexical resource; and grammatical range and accuracy).
N.B. This is a model answer and would receive a band 9 mark as it fully meets all the assessment criteria.
10. Ask students to do part 2 of the worksheet. Students match the numbers with the labels A–J.
11. Hold a class discussion about the letter: the functions and positions of the labels, the formality of the language used and the content.
12. Ask students to write their own version for homework, using some of the expressions they saw earlier.

IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 – answer keys

Key to Worksheet 1

		Formal/ semi-formal	Informal
Letter openings	Thanks for your letter.		✓
	It was great to get your letter.		✓
	Thank you for sending me your brochure.	✓	
	I'm writing to ask you a favour.		✓
	My reason for writing is to apply for the job I saw advertised.	✓	
	Sorry for not writing for so long.		✓
	I must apologise for not contacting you sooner.	✓	
	Unfortunately, I am writing to complain about the ...	✓	
	I am writing with reference to your letter ...	✓	
Signalling the end of a letter	I must go now.		✓
	I look forward to hearing from you.	✓	
	I'll finish now as I'm running out of space.		✓
	Bye for now		✓
	If you have any further questions, please contact me again.	✓	
Letter closings	Yours faithfully	✓	
	Hope to hear from you soon		✓
	Yours sincerely	✓	
	Best wishes	✓ *	✓ *

* *Speakers of English would almost certainly disagree about the formality/ informality of this.*

Key to Part 2 of Worksheet 2

1. B
2. J
3. A
4. F
5. G
6. D
7. C
8. I
9. H
10. E



IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 – Student’s Worksheet

Worksheet 1

For the IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 you are asked to write an informal, semi-formal or formal letter. Tick the correct column(s) for each letter expression below according to its level of formality. One expression could be used in a semi-formal or an informal letter.

		Formal/ semi-formal	Informal
Letter openings	Thanks for your letter.		
	It was great to get your letter.		
	Thank you for sending me your brochure.		
	I’m writing to ask you a favour.		
	My reason for writing is to apply for the job I saw advertised.		
	Sorry for not writing for so long.		
	I must apologise for not contacting you sooner.		
	Unfortunately, I am writing to complain about the ...		
	I am writing with reference to your letter ...		
Signalling the end of a letter	I must go now.		
	I look forward to hearing from you.		
	I’ll finish now as I’m running out of space.		
	Bye for now		
	If you have any further questions, please contact me again.		
Letter closings	Yours faithfully		
	Hope to hear from you soon		
	Yours sincerely		
	Best wishes		

IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 – Student’s Worksheet Worksheet 2

Part 1

The Accommodation Officer ¹
Barnwell College ²
Long Road
Eaton

9 November 2009 ³

Dear Sir or Madam ⁴

Request to change room ⁵

I am writing to ask if I could please be given another room in college. ⁶

At present I share a room with another student who, unfortunately, is very noisy. This makes it very difficult for me to study. I have asked this student on many occasions to let me work quietly but there has been no change. He plays his radio or watches TV constantly and often invites friends round for parties which last till late in the night.

I have tried working in the library but it is not open at all the times I need. I am very worried about this situation, as I have to finish my final year project this term and have my final exams coming up at the end of the year.

I would be most grateful if you could please give me a room by myself or a room sharing with a student who is quiet. ⁷

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your help. ⁸

Yours faithfully ⁹

Jan Hutt ¹⁰

Part 2

Read the letter again then match the numbers in the letter to the labels A–J below.

N.B. In the IELTS General Training letter candidates do not need to write any addresses.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | The date | F | The greeting phrase |
| B | The job title of the receiver of the letter | G | The topic of the letter |
| C | A request for action | H | The letter closing |
| D | The reason for writing | I | A polite sentence signalling the end of the main part of the letter |
| E | Signature of sender | J | The receiver’s address |



IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 – Sample Task

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You live in a room in college which you share with another student. However, there are many problems with this arrangement and you find it very difficult to work.

Write a letter to the accommodation officer at the college. In the letter

- describe the situation
- explain your problems and why it is difficult to work
- say what kind of accommodation you would prefer.

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

