

An informal letter or email

What is an informal letter/email?

We write informal letters and emails to people we know personally. We normally give news about what is happening in our lives and often ask for news about the other person. The layout and style of language is different from that of a formal letter.

Structure

Address and date	<p>Some people may think the address is not important in an informal letter. It is very unlikely that someone will always remember your address, so it is always a good idea to include it. Remember, this is the address they have to write to for the letter to reach you. The recipient's address is on the envelope.</p> <p><i>In a letter the address and date should be in the right hand corner. If you are writing to someone outside the country, always include your country and post code.</i></p> <p><i>In an email you write your name and/or address in the first box before your composition, the name of the recipient in the second box, and you write what the text is about in the subject box.</i></p>
Greeting	<p>Begin with a suitable greeting, such as <i>Hi Peter!</i> / <i>Dear Peter,</i> / <i>Hello!</i> / <i>Hey!</i></p>
First paragraph	<p>Explain why you are writing and/or respond to a person's news, we ask about our friend's/family's health, we thank him/her for their previous letter/email.</p> <p>TIP: <i>Remember that exclamation marks and dashes can help you achieve an informal, 'chatty' style.</i></p>
Middle paragraph (s)	<p>Give information and/or ask questions. Use a new paragraph for each new topic.</p> <p>TIP: <i>Remember to use informal, colloquial expressions.</i></p>
Closing	<p>Finish your letter or email and say goodbye. Remember to write your name at the end.</p> <p>TIP: <i>Use a suitable closing expression, such as Take care! Write soon! Regards, Lots of love, Love, Best wishes,</i></p>

Content

- Use informal language, including contractions (*I'm, isn't*) and colloquialisms (*it'd be cool*).
- Make your writing sound more informal by using exclamation marks (!) and dashes (-).
- Even though it is informal, do not forget the **punctuation and spelling**. If you are using contractions, remember to put the apostrophe in the correct place.
- Use a variety of verbs and phrasal verbs.
- Remember to use your discretion, try not to go overboard. Don't use expressions like *Hey dude!* or *What's down?* with someone if you wouldn't say it to their face, for example your father, or someone you respect.
- Think about your reader. Ask him/her questions.
- Use P.S. to add a short message after the complimentary close. Use it especially to write down something that you may have forgotten in the body of the letter.

Greetings

Hi (there/Peter)! • Hello! • Dear Peter, • Hey!

Thinking about the person you are writing to

Hope all's well. • How are you? • Hope you are well. • How are things? • How's it going?
• How's everything going? • How's life? • I haven't heard from you in ages. • What's up?
• How have you been? • I hope things are going well with you these days. • I hope you
are doing fine. • What's new?

Responding to a previous letter or email

Thanks for your letter/email • It was great to hear from you! • It was so nice to hear from
you. • I'm fine thanks. • I was glad to hear from you. • You asked me about/if... • You
wanted to know about/if... • Thanks for asking about... • What you said about...

Apologizing

I'm sorry I haven't written for ages/a while, but... • Sorry for not writing earlier. • Sorry
about +noun/verb+-ing...

Reason one is writing

I am writing because ... • The reason I am writing is because ... • I wanted to ... • I would
like to ...

Giving interesting news

You won't/You'll never believe this, but... • Guess what? • Did I tell you that...? • I've got
to tell you about... • I bet you don't know that...

Responding to news

Sorry to hear about... • Glad to hear that you're all well • Good luck with ... • Hope you
feel better soon.

Asking for something

Can you please...? • Is it ok if you ...? • I want to ... • Would you mind ...? • I was
wondering if...

Advising and suggesting

If I were you, I'd... • You should/ought to... • Why don't you...? • How about+verb+-ing...?
• You could try... • It would be a good idea to...+infinitive.

Adding information

What else? Oh yes... • I also wanted to tell you about... • Anyway, I... • By the way,... •
also • as well • too • what's more • besides • and

Passing on greetings from someone else

My parents send (you) their love. • Marco says hi. • My mother sends (you) best wishes.

Closing

I'd better go. Keep in touch. • Looking forward to hearing from you. • Write soon. • Love •
Lots of love, • Bye (for now), • Take care, • That's all for now. All the best, • See you
soon, • Send my (regards) love to... • See ya! • Best wishes, • With love, • Keep in
touch!

STRUCTURE

Greetings

- Dear (name), Hello (name), Hi (name)

Beginning the informal email/letter

- Thank you very much for your email/letter
- It's nice to hear from you
- How are you doing?
- It's been such a long time since (*we last saw each other*)

Introducing the topic

- Do you remember the last time (*we saw each other*)?
- I was thinking it would be great if we could (*meet, see each other*)
- I'm thrilled to tell you that I have (*finished my exams, studies*)

Ending the email/letter

- I hope to see you soon
- Please, drop me a line as soon as you can
- Once again thank you
- Give my regards to (*your family, wife, husband, boyfriend, etc.*)
- Please, let me know your thoughts about (*my plan, our trip*)
- I'm looking forward to seeing you again

Saying good-bye

- All the best /Best wishes/Lots of love

Example 1:

Your friend has invited you to come on a beach holiday this summer. He/She also wants to know if you would like to go on a surfing course while you are on holiday. Write a reply.

9 Clover Grove
Pocklingate
Brockton

19 January 2009

Hi Jess,

Thanks for your letter. It was great to hear from you! I'm sorry I haven't written for ages, but I've been busy revising for my exams.

Thank you so much for your invitation to come on a beach holiday with you this summer.

I'd love to see you – and your family too!

You wanted to know if I fancied going on a surfing course. Well, I've never surfed before but it looks cool. I'd be up for giving it a go! What will the course cost? Do I need to buy any special clothes or equipment? Let me know!

Anyway, I'd better go. I've got loads more studying to do!

Thanks again for the invite.

Write soon!

Love,

Ana

P.S. My mum and dad send you their love.

Include your own address and the date in an informal letter (but not in an email).

Use a suitable greeting

Use suitable functional language (for example for thanking, apologizing, or responding to an invitation)

Use contractions

Use colloquial expressions and informal language









Ask questions

Use suitable closing expressions

Add any extra information after the abbreviation 'PS'

Example 2:

You have been writing to your pen friend for a couple of weeks. In this week's email you want to tell her about your family.

							
Previous	Next	Reply	Reply All	Forward	Delete	Attachments	Print
From: María (maria@terra.es)							
To: Alice (alice@hotmail.com)							
CC:							
Subject: My family							

Hi Alice!

How are you? Hope you're well! Thanks for your last email. This time I'm going to tell you a bit about my family.

My mother's name is Amparo and my father's name is Juan. My mother's 45 years old and my father's 55. My mother's a doctor and my father's a dancer. I love them both very much.

I have a horrible little brother and no sisters. His name is Fernando. He goes to the same school as me. He's 8 years old. He loves playing football, videogames and annoying me! I like playing basketball and going out with my friends. I don't like school because my teacher is always angry.

We have one dog called Bobbi. He's always happy.

Well, that's all for now. I hope to hear from you soon.

Love,

María xxxooo