

Formal Letter & Email Writing Frame

English

Level 2 Writing

Layout templates · planning grid · exam-style task · self-marking checklist

How the Writing exam marks a letter or email (27 marks per task)

Roughly one third for **spelling, punctuation and grammar**, one third for **communication** (clear, detailed, relevant ideas that match the purpose and audience), and one third for **form and structure** (correct layout, paragraphs, logical order, formal tone). You must hit the suggested word count – answers that are far too short lose marks in *every* strand.

Layout 1 – Formal letter

14 Park View
Brookford
BF2 4LN

19 September 2026

Mr J. Okafor
Customer Services Manager
Brookford Leisure Centre
Mill Lane
Brookford BF1 2AB

Dear Mr Okafor,

Re: Cancellation of Saturday swimming lessons

Paragraph 1 – why you are writing (one or two sentences).

Paragraph 2 – the main point, with detail and evidence.

Paragraph 3 – second point / effect on you or others.

Paragraph 4 – what you want to happen and by when.

Yours sincerely,
Priya Shah

Yours sincerely when you used a name. **Yours faithfully** when you wrote "Dear Sir/Madam". Never "Yours truly", "Kind regards" or "Thanks" in a formal letter.

Layout 2 – Formal email

To:	j.okafor@brookfordleisure.co.uk
From:	priya.shah@email.com
Subject:	Cancellation of Saturday swimming lessons

Dear Mr Okafor,

Same four paragraphs as the letter. Emails are not shorter or more casual just because they are emails – the exam marks them the same way.

Yours sincerely,
Priya Shah

A clear, specific **subject line** is part of the format marks. "Complaint" is weak; "Complaint about cancelled lessons – 12 September" is strong.

Exam-style task

You recently completed a short first-aid course run by a local training company. The course was advertised as "fully certified, small groups, all equipment provided". In fact there were 22 people in the group, the trainer arrived 40 minutes late, and you were told the certificate would cost an extra £15.

Write a formal letter or email to the training company's manager. Explain what went wrong, how it affected you, and what you would like them to do about it.

Suggested word count: 200–250 words. **(27 marks)**

Planning grid – fill this in before you write (5 minutes)

Purpose (why am I writing?)	Audience (who? how formal?)
Para 1 – reason for writing	Para 2 – problem 1 + detail
Para 3 – problem 2 + how it affected me	Para 4 – what I want + by when

Useful formal phrases

- I am writing to express my disappointment with...
- I was assured that... however...
- This was particularly frustrating because...
- As a result, I was unable to...
- I would be grateful if you could...
- I trust you will treat this matter seriously.
- I look forward to your response within 14 days.
- Should you require further information, please contact me on...

Self-marking checklist

- ☐ Sender address, date, recipient address (letter) / To, From, Subject (email)
 - ☐ Correct greeting and matching sign-off
 - ☐ Opening sentence states the purpose
 - ☐ At least four paragraphs in a logical order
 - ☐ Every point from the task covered (what, effect, what you want)
 - ☐ Specific detail: numbers, dates, names, times
 - ☐ Formal tone – no slang, no contractions (don't → do not)
 - ☐ Mix of sentence lengths; some joining words (however, although, as a result)
 - ☐ Within the word count (200–250)
 - ☐ Apostrophes, capital letters and full stops checked
 - ☐ Their / there / they're and your / you're checked
 - ☐ Read it once as the manager – is it polite but firm?

Write your answer here (200–250 words)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Model answer and commentary

Written at a secure Level 2 pass standard – 231 words

Want a tutor to mark your work? Functify Learning runs live 10-week Functional Skills Level 2 English and Maths courses (small groups, mock exam included) and a 5-day self-paced revision course. Start with our free mini mock test at funtifylearning.co.uk.

To:	manager@swiftfirstaidtraining.co.uk
From:	d.mensah@email.com
Subject:	Complaint about First Aid at Work course – Saturday 12 September

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my disappointment with the first-aid course I attended at your Brookford centre on Saturday 12 September.

Your website advertised the course as "fully certified, small groups, all equipment provided". Unfortunately, none of this matched my experience. There were twenty-two people in the room, which meant that most of us had less than five minutes each to practise on the manikin. In addition, the trainer did not arrive until 9.40 a.m., forty minutes after the advertised start time, and no explanation or apology was given.

Most importantly, at the end of the day we were told that the certificate would cost an additional £15. This was not mentioned anywhere in the booking information. As I need the certificate for my job as a nursery assistant, I felt I had no choice but to pay, but I believe this charge is unfair and misleading.

I would be grateful if you could refund the £15 certificate fee and confirm in writing that future advertising will state the true group size and total cost. I look forward to your response within 14 days. Should you require further information, please contact me on 07700 900123.

Yours faithfully,
Daniel Mensah

Why this scores well

- **Format:** full email header with a specific subject line; "Dear Sir or Madam" correctly paired with "Yours faithfully".
- **Communication:** all three parts of the task are answered (what went wrong, effect – "less than five minutes each", "no choice but to pay" – and a clear request with a deadline). Every claim has a specific detail attached.
- **Structure:** five short paragraphs, each with one job; connectives ("Unfortunately", "In addition", "Most importantly", "As a result") signpost the argument.
- **SPaG:** no contractions, consistent past tense, correct apostrophes and capital letters; a mix of short and complex sentences.

Try it: cover the model answer, write your own response to the task on lined paper, then mark both against the checklist. Where does yours fall short?