

Writing letters - Formal language

When we write in English, we often use different language from when we speak.

For example, we **say** "I want" but we **write** "I would like". "I would like" is more formal.

With your partner, look at the words on the left side of the table below,

Try to match these words with the same meaning on the right side of the page. Write the number beside the word with the same meaning.

Look at the examples to help you. The examples are marked in **bold** letters.

EVERYDAY ENGLISH		FORMAL ENGLISH	
1	I want		I would like to enquire about
2	Can I		As you can see from the attached letter from my school
3	I want to ask you about	1	I would like
4	If you have any questions		Don't hesitate to contact me
5	Please call me anytime you like	2	Could I
6	If you look at the letter from my school with this letter, you will see that		If you have any queries
7	Is it possible for you to		Thank you for your time and attention
8	Thank you for reading my letter		I look forward to hearing from you
9	I will be very happy to meet you		Would it be possible to

Look at the letter on the next page.

1. Who is the letter for?
2. Who is writing the letter?
3. Is it a good letter? Why /why not?
4. What kind of language is in this letter? Everyday English or formal English?
5. Which of these should you use when you write a letter like this?
6. Work with a partner and change all the everyday English words in **bold** to more formal English to make the letter better. You can use page 1 from the lesson to help you find the right words. All the words you need are on page 1.

Social Welfare Office,
12 O' Connell St,
Dublin 1.

Dear Mr Ryan,

I am writing to you because **I want to ask you** about changing my social welfare payment method. I am a student at a language school called "Integrate Ireland Language and Training", where I study English full-time every week. Learning English is very important for me and **I want** to dedicate all my time to improving my English for the moment. **If you look at the letter from my school I have with this letter, you will see that** I have class for twenty hours a week, but I also spend another ten hours studying in the library of the school.

I hope you can help me with this problem. Every week I must go to collect my money and this is very difficult for me. **Is it possible** to have my payment transferred directly to my bank account? This would be very helpful for me, as I do not have a lot of free time at the moment.

If you have any questions, please call me anytime you like on my mobile number - 0871234567. **Thank you for reading my letter. I will be very happy if you answer my letter,**

Yours sincerely,

MF Hamid

Mr F Hamid.

Writing letters – formal language

MODULE: Dealing with officials/ letter writing

LEVEL: R1 Transition/ A2 of the common European framework of reference for languages/

<p>Time: 2 hours</p>	<p>Focus: Introducing appropriate vocabulary for writing formal letters. Increasing students' awareness of the difference between formal and everyday English.</p>
<p>Class organisation: Plenary/ small groups or pairs /plenary</p>	<p>Type of activity: Building vocab, Formal vs informal language, reading and writing.</p>
<p>Can be adapted to; Any group or level of language learners who are not familiar with differences between written and spoken English. Low level Business English students who may need to produce a lot of formal correspondence in English.</p>	<p>Prerequisites: Students should already be familiar with the layout of a letter. This lesson is not intended to be on how to write a letter. Rather, it focuses on the language used in letters.</p>
<p>FETAC:</p>	
<p>ELP: page 27 "I can write a short letter requesting information".</p>	

For this activity you need...

A class set of worksheets page 1,2 and 3.

N.B.

In Class Procedure at a Glance

Step 1. Explain to the class that they are going to learn about the difference between spoken and written English. You can start the discussion by asking them if they write the same as they speak in their language. Elicit a few examples from the class. How is it different? Are the sentences usually longer or shorter? Ask them why do they think there is a difference between the way we write and speak? What would happen if we wrote things down exactly as we said them?

Step 2. From the discussion in step 1, write one or two very clear examples on the board. A good example might be, Can I take a day off next week? And Would it be possible to take a day off next week? Explain the difference in tone and effect to the students.

Step 3. Proceed to the worksheet. The first exercise is to introduce the vocabulary. Read through the instructions with the class and make sure everybody follows them. If they are a very weak group you could do the first example with them .

Step 4. In pairs let learners work down through the vocabulary together.

Step 5. Let each pair take it in turns to feed back the answers while checking that everyone understands.

Step 6. With the first page completed students should be ready to move on to practising the vocab on page 2 and 3. Again read down through instructions with them making sure everything is clear.

Step 7 Students can either work alone or in pairs while they try to replace the words in bold with their more formal alternative. All the alternatives can be found on the first page.

Step 8. Get the students to volunteer to read back what they have written line by line. At this correction stage, check that everyone understands the effect of the more formal English.

Step 9. Give the class supplementary activities to consolidate what they have learned. A very simple letter to write, either for homework or in class depending on how much time you have left. Keep the instructions simple and tell them to use the example letter as a template to help them with the new letter.