

Lesson Plan: How to Write a Formal Letter By Michael Berman

Editor's note: This week's article is also available in Adobe Acrobat format for easier printing. To download the article in Acrobat format please go to www.eltnewsletter.com/formalletter.pdf. If you do not have the Acrobat Reader necessary for viewing files in Acrobat format, please download it for free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>.

In addition, Michael Berman has this week published a new book which is available only in electronic format. Titled *ELT Through Multiple Intelligences*, it contains over 350 pages of teaching tips and ideas as well as 120 ready-to-print worksheets for use in the classroom. It is available online from www.netlearnpublications.com

LESSON PLAN:

HOW TO WRITE A FORMAL LETTER

OBJECTIVES:

To provide the preparatory work necessary to facilitate the writing of formal letters. An ordering activity will be used to present the recommended lay-out of such letters. A "Spot the Mistakes" exercise will be used to focus on common errors and a relatively easy Questionnaire will be set in which success should be assured to help Promote positive self-esteem.

ACTIVITIES:

The lesson consists of three stages that are outlined below:

An ordering activity for group work with cards: Each group will be given a set of cards to order and I will circulate during the activity to provide any assistance required. This caters for the Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence Type – for those of us who learn through movement. The correct version will then be displayed on the OHP. **Timing 15 minutes**

Find the deliberate mistakes for pair work: To vary the forms of interaction, this time the learners will be asked to work on the activity in pairs and photocopies will be provided. The correct answers will then be elicited, making use of the OHP once again. **Timing 20 minutes**

A Questionnaire through which the learner can find out how much they know about letter writing: The students can work on this individually and photocopies will be provided for this purpose. The incentive of a fabulous mystery prize will be offered as a carrot for the winner! **Timing: 15 minutes**

MATERIALS:

27 Cavendish Road
London NW6 2DT

The Personnel Officer
Secure Guards Ltd
320 The High Street
London SE8 0ER

20/6/00

Dear sir,

I am applying for the post of Security Guard advertised in "The Standard" yesterday and I am enclosing a copy of my CV as requested.

As you can see, I have worked for five years as the Prime Minister's personal bodyguard and before that I was in the army. My commanding officer and the Prime Minister can both supply you with references and their addresses can be found on my CV.

My experience in the army included working in Northern Ireland and the Falklands. I have also accompanied the Prime Minister on his overseas trips. I notice that the advertised vacancy involves working overseas and I am very keen on travelling, which is why I have chosen to apply for this post.

I hope you will give my application serious consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Strong

Richard Strong

HOW NOT TO WRITE A FORMAL LETTER!

There are grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, punctuation mistakes, mistakes in the order of the paragraphs, and also mistakes in the lay-out. Work in pairs and see how many you can find!

19 avenue road
Ealing W6 OER

Majestic Hotel
Bournemouth
Hampshire HR4 PMT

The nineteenth of January

dear Julia Rambert,

I am interesting in the job of Waitress advertised on “Metro” this morning and I am enclosing a copy of my CV.

I hope you will consider my application carefully and I look forward to hear from you.

I am working as waitress in my own country since five years before I came here and my former employer can provide you with a referee.

I imagine that you cater mainly for overseas tourists so I belief my language skills would be usefull. In addition to speak both portuguese and english, I also can understand spanish.

yours faithfully,

Maria Chagas

Maria Chagas

19 Avenue Road
Ealing W6 OER

The Majestic Hotel
Bournemouth
Hampshire HR4 PMT

19/6/00

Dear Julia Rambert,

I am interested in the job of Waitress advertised in "Metro" this morning and I am enclosing a copy of my CV.

I worked as a waitress in my own country for five years before I came here and my former employer can provide you with a reference.

I imagine that you cater mainly for overseas tourists so I believe my language skills would be useful. In addition to speaking both Portuguese and English, I can also understand Spanish.

I hope you will consider my application carefully and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Chagas

Maria Chagas

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WRITING FORMAL LETTERS?

Read the following statements, then decide if they are true or false:

1. When the letter starts *Dear sir* we end it with *Yours sincerely*,
2. You can end a letter to someone you know with *Best wishes*,
3. The first paragraph of the letter should explain your reason for writing.
4. You should start a new paragraph for each sentence.
5. You should leave a space between each paragraph.
6. *Ms* is the title used for a married woman.
7. *Master* is the title used for a man.
8. If you are writing a formal letter, it is not a good idea to use contractions.
(*I'm* is the contraction of *I am*
can't is the contraction of *cannot*)
9. When you are writing an application for a job, it is a good idea to say what a wonderful person you are. For example, *I am intelligent, honest and I work very hard.*
10. When you apply for a job, it is a good idea to use a recycled envelope.