

Successful Writing

INTERMEDIATE

Virginia Evans



Express Publishing

Published by Express Publishing

**Liberty House, Greenham Business Park, Newbury,
Berkshire RG19 6HW**

Tel: (0044) 1635 817 363

Fax: (0044) 1635 817 463

e-mail: inquiries@expresspublishing.co.uk.

[http: //www.expresspublishing.co.uk](http://www.expresspublishing.co.uk).

© Virginia Evans, 2008

Design & Illustration © Express Publishing, 2008

Colour Illustrations: Nathan

First published 2008

Third impression 2011

Made in EU

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Publishers.

This book is not meant to be changed in any way.

ISBN 978-1-903128-50-3

Acknowledgements

Author's Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff at Express Publishing who have contributed their skills to producing this book. Thanks are due in particular to: Sean Todd (Editor in Chief), Andrew Wright (senior editor), Anna Miller (editorial assistant), Mary Stevenson (senior production controller), the Express design team, Tony Boyle (recording producer) and Erica Thompson, Anne Whitman, Steven Gibbs and Sally Pierce for their support and patience. We would also like to thank those institutions and teachers who piloted the manuscript, and whose comments and feedback influenced positively the production of the book.

Photograph Acknowledgements

© **Reuters** for photographs on p. 48

© **Audio Visual** for photographs on pages: 78, 81, 107

Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders. If any have been inadvertently overlooked, the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

Contents

1	Part A Guidelines for Writing	4
	Part B Letter/Email Writing	16
	• LETTERS/EMAILS	
2	Informal Letters/Emails	20
3	Formal Letters/Emails	26
4	Semi-formal Letters/Emails	34
5	Transactional Letters/Emails	38
	• ARTICLES - STORIES - NEWS REPORTS - REVIEWS	
	- Descriptions	
6	Describing People	42
7	Describing Places/Buildings	48
8	Describing Objects	54
9	Describing Festivals/Events/Celebrations	56
	- Narratives & News Reports	
10	First-person Narratives	60
11	Third-person Narratives	66
12a	News Reports	72
	- Reviews	
12b	Reviews	78
	• DISCURSIVE WRITING	
	- Discursive essays	
13	“For and Against” Essays	82
14a	Opinion Essays	88
14b	Providing Solutions to Problems	94
14c	Letters to the Editor	98
	- Reports	
15	Assessment & Proposal Reports	102
	• REVISION AND EXTENSION SECTION	
	APPENDIX I Linking Words	145
	APPENDIX II Opening & Closing Remarks for Letters/Useful Vocabulary	147
	APPENDIX III Rules for Punctuation	150

UNIT 1

Part A Guidelines for Writing

TYPES OF COMPOSITION

When you write a composition you need to understand the type of writing required. Your piece of writing can be in the form of a **letter**, an **article** for a magazine/newspaper or a **report**.

LETTERS/EMAILS are written to a person (e.g. your pen friend, a newspaper editor, etc) or a group of people (e.g. the students' society, the local football club, etc) for a specific reason (e.g. *to give advice, to make a complaint* etc). They include:

- **Informal letters/emails** to people you know well, written in a personal chatty style.
- **Formal letters/emails** to managers/officials etc, written in a polite formal style.
- **Semi-formal letters/emails** to people you do not know well or people you know but you want to sound polite and respectful e.g. a teacher of yours, your pen friend's parents, etc, written in a polite and respectful style.

ARTICLES are found in magazines and newspapers. The following can be found in the form of an article:

- **Descriptions** of people, places, buildings, objects, festivals, ceremonies etc.
- **Narratives** about real or imaginary events which happened in the past. They can be written in the **first person** (first-person narratives) when the writer is the main character of the story or in the **third person** (third-person narratives) when the writer is describing events which happened to another person or group of people.
- **News reports** about current/recent events (e.g. fires, accidents, etc) written in impersonal style. News reports present facts objectively and unemotionally.
- **Reviews** discussing a film, TV programme, book, restaurant, etc and recommending it or not to the reader.
- **Discursive essays** about arguments concerning particular subjects. They include:
 - **"For and Against" essays** which present the pros and cons on a specific topic
 - **Opinion Essays** which present the writer's personal opinion on a specific topic
 - **Providing Solutions to Problems** which discuss a problem and its causes, making suggestions and mentioning the expected results and consequences
- **Letters to the Editor** which present the writer's personal opinion on a specific topic or the writer's suggestions on a specific problem.

REPORTS are formal pieces of writing and have a specific format and features. They include:

- **Assessment reports** discussing the suitability of a person, place, plan, etc for a particular purpose, job, etc.
- **Proposals reports** discussing suggestions or decisions about future actions.



B As the last band played their final song, I felt sad that the festival was about to end. All the fun moments of the week passed through my mind in a split second. Dancing to the beat of the music, I looked at my friend and said, "I can't wait until next year's Jazz Festival!"

C Dear Aunt Carol,
I'm sorry about not replying to your email sooner but I've been extremely busy. Guess what! I finally found a position as a nursery school teacher in Brighton! Isn't that wonderful?

D Debbie is tall, slim and attractive, with long brown hair and beautiful blue eyes. She likes wearing smart clothes and always looks good.

1 Read the extracts (A-G) and decide which type of writing they are from (1-7).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 third person narrative | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 informal email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 formal letter | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 description of a person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 first person narrative | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 description of a festival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 description of a place | |

A Dear Sir/Madam,
I am writing to complain about the service I received during a visit to your restaurant on 8th November.
Firstly, I had booked a table for eight o'clock, but when we arrived, our table was not ready and it was half an hour before we were seated. I was very annoyed.

E When I opened my eyes, bright sunlight was streaming through my bedroom window. As I was about to get out of bed, I heard a noise coming from the kitchen downstairs.



F Aruba is a tiny island in the Caribbean Sea. It is only 29 kilometres off the north coast of Venezuela. With its white sandy beaches and clear blue waters, Aruba is the perfect place for a relaxing holiday.

G It was a bright, sunny morning when Jill Wilson waved goodbye to her mother. "Have a nice day at school — and be careful!" called Mrs Wilson. The birds were singing as Jill stopped on the old wooden bridge to look down at the ducks on the water below.

D To: Ms M Timms, Personnel Manager
From: Mr T Brown, Senior Assistant
Subject: Assessment of Robert Duncan
Date: 15th February, 20...

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assess the suitability of Robert Duncan for the position of Sales Manager for our shop in Brunswick.

E Firstly, all blocks of flats should be provided with large rubbish bins. In addition to this, residents should be allowed to throw out their rubbish only at night. This would result in reducing the amount of rubbish in the streets during the day.

2 Read the extracts (A-G) and decide which type of writing (1-7) they are from.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> proposal report | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> assessment report |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> for and against essay | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> news report |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> review | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> opinion essay |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> essay providing solutions to problems | |

A Four people were killed and eleven were seriously injured when two planes collided on the runway at Leland Airport early this morning.

B All in all, I believe that newspapers play an important role in our lives. They keep us informed about world news as well as providing interesting reading material.

F The cast is excellent and Michael J. Fox is perfect as the voice of Stuart Little. With the use of computer animation, Stuart looks more like a real mouse than a cartoon mouse, convincing viewers that he is a miniature actor. The combination of computer animation and live action is superb.



G Recommendation

I believe that the course of action proposed above will attract more customers to the White Dove Restaurant. Not only will the Italian seafood and vegetarian dishes draw more people to the restaurant, but the live music will also greatly improve the restaurant's atmosphere.



C To begin with, one of the main advantages of studying abroad is that you have the chance to learn another language. Moreover, you experience a different culture and way of life.

UNDERSTANDING RUBRICS

To plan your composition you need to understand the rubric i.e. the composition instructions. Read the rubric carefully and underline the **key words/phrases** which will help you decide what you will write about. Key words/phrases indicate:

- the **imaginary situation** you will write about (e.g. *You are a reporter .. to write about a fire which broke out last night ...*) This can also suggest who you are (e.g. a reporter), what has happened (e.g. fire broke out), etc.
- the **imaginary reader** who is going to read your piece of writing (e.g. *the manager of the company you work for has asked you to write ...*). This will help you decide on the **writing style** i.e. the appropriate style of language - formal/informal, etc you should use.
- the **type of writing** (e.g. *a letter, an email, an article describing an event you attended, etc*)
- the **specific topics** you should include in your answer (e.g. *describe the place and comment on its good and bad points*)

Study the example below.

¹ You work for a travel magazine. Your ² editor has asked you to write an ³ article discussing ⁴ the pros and cons of air travel, including factors such as cost and convenience.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | situation |
| 2 | reader |
| 3 | type of writing |
| 4 | specific topics |

3 Read the rubric below and match the numbers to the following headings:

- reader
- situation
- specific topics
- type of writing

¹ Your ² best friend is spending the summer in your country and needs advice. Write a ³ letter ⁴ advising him where to go and what to do and telling him approximately how much money he should bring.

4 Read the rubric and circle the correct answers to the questions that follow.

You work in a local tourist office. The manager has asked you to write a report on a new restaurant which has just opened in your town. Write your **report** describing the restaurant, the food and the service there and commenting on its good and bad points.



- Who is going to read your piece of writing?
- What is the situation?
- What type of composition should you write?
- What specific topics should you include?

5 a) Read the rubric and underline the key words, then answer the questions.

You are a writer for an international English-language magazine. Your editor has asked you for a short article about a famous person from the twentieth century that you admire. Write your **article** about the person, describing his/her personality as well as the reasons you admire him/her.

- What type of composition is this?
 - A a third person narrative
 - B a formal email
 - C a descriptive article
 - D a review
- Who is going to read your composition?
 - A your best friend
 - B your editor

3 Which of the following statements are true? Circle.

- A You should write about a famous person you have met.
- B You must describe his/her personality.
- C You should give reasons why you admire this person.
- D Your article should be about a famous artist or scientist of the eighteenth century.
- E You may include your own feelings about the person.

4 Which of the following topics *must* you include? Circle.

- A The advantages and disadvantages of being famous.
- B Personal qualities and characteristics.
- C Information about the person's family background.
- D Reasons why you admire him/her.

b) Which of the two people below would *not* be suitable for your article? Why?



BRAINSTORMING FOR IDEAS

- Write down any ideas, words and phrases that you can think of which relate to the specific topics of your composition.
- Group your ideas, crossing out any irrelevant ones, and put them into a logical order.
- Check that your ideas are relevant to the topic(s) in the rubric.

6 a) Read the rubric in Ex. 5a) again and tick the topics that you should include in your article.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • why you admire the person | • personality |
| • looks and appearance | • hobbies and interests |

b) Look at the words/phrases below and say which topic from above they are linked to.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • helped those in need | • entire life was devoted to others |
| • selfless | • donated money to charity |
| • compassionate | • patient |
| • courageous | |

PLANNING THE LAYOUT OF YOUR COMPOSITION

Your ideas should be organised into paragraphs. The layout of most types of writing consists of three parts: an **introduction**, a **main body** and a **conclusion**.

I Introduction

The introduction, i.e. the first paragraph, is a short paragraph whose purpose is to give the reader a general idea of the subject of the composition. It should attract the reader's attention so that he/she wants to continue reading.

II Main Body

The main body usually consists of two or more paragraphs and its purpose is to develop points related to the subject of the composition. The number of paragraphs and the way you divide them depends on the specific topics of the composition. Each paragraph should deal with points related to the same topic. Whenever you discuss a new topic, you should begin a new paragraph. For example, in a for and against essay the main body should have two paragraphs: one discussing the points for, and another discussing the points against.

III Conclusion

The conclusion is a short final paragraph in which you can summarise the main idea of the subject, restate your opinion in different words, make general comments, express your feelings, etc.

7 a) Which of these topics should you include in the *introductory paragraph* of an article describing a person you admire? Circle.

- A final comments about the person
- B who the person is and why you admire them
- C what the person looks like and what type of clothes they like wearing

b) Which of these topics should you include in the *conclusion* of your article?

- A general comments and feelings about the person
- B personal qualities of the person
- C background information and achievements of the person

8 Read the article and label the paragraphs with the headings below. Then answer questions 1-3.

- *final comments/feelings*
- *personal qualities*
- *reasons you admire her*
- *person's name and reason you chose her*

3 Which of Mother Teresa's achievements are mentioned? What examples are given?

TOPIC SENTENCES & SUPPORTING SENTENCES

- Main body paragraphs should begin with topic sentences. A **topic sentence** introduces or summarises the main topic of the paragraph and gives the reader an idea of what the paragraph will be about.
- The topic sentence should be followed by **supporting sentences** which provide examples, details, reasons, justifications and/or evidence to support the topic sentence.

topic sentence → **There are many disadvantages to air travel.**

supporting sentences → Firstly, plane fares are extremely high. For example, if you choose to travel from London to Manchester by train, you will definitely pay less than you would if you travelled by plane. Moreover, being on a plane for hours can be tiring.

Introduction

The person I admire most from the twentieth century is Mother Teresa. I regard her as one of the kindest and most caring people the world has ever known.

Para 1

.....
.....
.....

Main Body

Mother Teresa was a selfless person. She devoted all of her time to others and never put her own needs first. She was also very courageous and never thought about the risks she was taking when looking after people who were sick or dying.

Para 2

.....
.....
.....

What I admire most about Mother Teresa are her achievements. Her entire life was devoted to charity work. For example, in 1952 she opened a centre in Calcutta for the terminally ill, where patients could be cared for and die with dignity. She also won many awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She donated the money from her awards to fund other centres. Even though Mother Teresa is no longer with us, these centres still operate, offering help to those in need.

Para 3

.....
.....
.....

Conclusion

I admire Mother Teresa not only because she was a generous and kind-hearted person, but also because her accomplishments have influenced people all over the world. It is hardly surprising that since her death in 1997 she has been regarded as a true saint.

Para 4

.....
.....
.....

9 Read the article in Ex. 8 again, underline the topic sentences in the main body paragraphs and then replace them with the ones below.

- 1 There are good reasons why I admire Mother Teresa so much.
- 2 Mother Teresa was a truly self-sacrificing person.

1 Who is the article about?

2 What justifications are given to support the statement that "Mother Teresa was a selfless person"?

10 a) Match the topic sentences to the paragraphs. There is one extra topic sentence that you do not need to use.

- 1 For one thing, there are far too many cars on the roads.
- 2 There are many arguments in favour of banning cars from city centres.
- 3 However, a city centre without traffic does have its disadvantages.

A

.....
In the first place, it would help to reduce pollution. This means that the city centre would be a healthier place to live and work in. Furthermore, it would be easier for pedestrians to walk around the centre without having to cross busy roads.

B

.....
For one thing, shop owners would lose business as customers might find it inconvenient to travel to the city centre by public transport. Moreover, for those who live in the city centre, life would become quite difficult as they would not be able to park their cars near their homes.

- b) • Which part of the composition do these paragraphs belong to – the introduction, the main body or the conclusion?
• What do you think the topic of this composition is?
• What type of composition are the extracts from?

11 Read the topic sentence in bold, then choose the most suitable supporting sentences (A - D) to complete the paragraph.

On the other hand, there are arguments in favour of tourism.

.....
.....
.....

- A Firstly, tourism can help reduce unemployment in an area because of the jobs it provides for local people.
B Furthermore, tourism can spoil the natural beauty of an area.
C What is more, the profits from tourism can be used to improve roads, hospitals and schools.
D In addition, restaurants and souvenir shops overcharge customers.

12 Read the topic sentences below and think of appropriate supporting sentences to complete each paragraph, as in the example.

e.g. Catherine is a very pretty teenager.
She is tall and slim with dark skin and long curly hair. She usually wears jeans and T-shirts.

- 1 My father is a handsome man.

.....
.....
.....

- 2 Nicole is a very sociable person.

.....
.....
.....

13 Read the paragraphs below and think of appropriate topic sentences to complete them.

A

.....
.....
First of all, it is cheaper than buying designer clothes which can be very expensive. What is more, if you make your own clothes, you can design them exactly the way you want them.

B

.....
.....
To begin with, medical research can be very expensive. Moreover, such research can take years to show successful results. Last but not least, lots of time is often wasted on experiments which do not work.

LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

- Linking words/phrases make your writing more interesting to the reader, and easier to understand.
- Some linking words (e.g. *and*, *because*, *but*, *so*, *since*, etc) can join two short sentences into one longer sentence.
e.g. *He is clever. He is hard-working.* →
*He's clever **and** hard-working.*
Ann is happy. She passed her exams. →
*Ann is happy **because** she passed her exams.*
- Some linking words/phrases (e.g. *In addition*, *What is more*, *However*, *On the other hand*, etc) show how ideas are related either between two sentences or two paragraphs.
e.g. *I have written to you three times already.* →
I still have not received a reply from you.
*I have written to you three times already. **However**, I still have not received a reply from you.*

first complaint { Firstly the employees who delivered the cooker were extremely rude and careless. While installing the appliance they made a considerable mess, then they left without tidying the kitchen up.

adding more points →

second complaint { **Furthermore**, after they had gone, I noticed that the cooker was badly scratched and the operating instructions were missing. ...

Linking words/phrases can be used to:

- **show time:** when, whenever, before, while, as soon as, etc
- **list points or show sequence:** first(ly), to start with, next, finally, etc
- **add more points:** furthermore, moreover, in addition, and, also, what is more, etc
- **show cause or effect:** because, since, as a result, so, consequently, etc
- **give examples:** for instance, for example, such as, especially, etc
- **show contrast:** however, on the other hand, despite, though, etc
- **introduce a conclusion:** all in all, to conclude, to sum up, finally, etc (for more examples see Appendix I)

14 Circle the correct linking words/phrases, as in the example.

- 1 Mobile phones are expensive **but** /so they are very convenient.
- 2 She is very generous and shares everything. **Since/On the other hand**, she can be moody at times.
- 3 Growing your own vegetables is cheaper than buying them. **Even though/What is more**, home-grown vegetables are usually tastier.
- 4 Many young people are taught computer skills at school. **Despite/As a result**, they have a better chance of finding a job.
- 5 I admire Jackie **because/therefore** she has found happiness in both her professional and private life.
- 6 Air travel is the most expensive form of transport. **All in all/However**, it is the fastest.

15 Read the extract and fill in the correct linking words from the list below.

for example, what is more, as a result, on the other hand

Watching films at the cinema has many advantages. To begin with, modern cinemas are usually equipped with the latest technology. 1) , films have better picture and sound quality. 2) , you can see all the latest films as soon as they are released.

3) , going to the cinema has certain drawbacks. 4) , the price of a ticket can be expensive and cinemas are often crowded, especially at weekends.



16 Choose the correct linking word/ phrase to join the sentences.

- 1 Simon failed the exam. He had not studied enough. (**since, while**)
- 2 Ordering take-away food is very convenient. It can be rather expensive. (**although, such as**)
- 3 Aaron wanted to go to the football match. His mother wouldn't let him. (**but, therefore**)

- 4 Adventure holidays can be very tiring. They can be quite dangerous. (**but, and**)
- 5 It started getting cold. I put on a jumper. (**so, as**)
- 6 The hairdresser said it was perfectly safe. The chemicals in the dye made my hair turn green. (**even though, also**)

17 Replace the linking words/phrases in bold with synonymous ones from the list below.

despite, as, even though, such as, therefore

- 1 **While** I was walking home I saw an accident.
- 2 He was born in Poland **so** he can't be Spanish.
- 3 Your mechanic took three days to fix my car, **in spite of** the fact that it required only minor repairs.
- 4 There are many places to visit in Rome **like** the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain, and the Pantheon.
- 5 **Although** Rachel is allergic to dogs, she loves them.

WRITING TECHNIQUES

There are a variety of writing techniques you can use to make your composition more interesting to the reader.

To begin or end your essay you can:

- **address the reader directly** i.e. write as if you were speaking to him/her.
e.g. *You can imagine what life would be like without water.*
- **use direct speech** to give somebody's exact words, **a quotation** from a famous person or someone who has influenced your life, **a proverb** or **a saying** (i.e. a well-known phrase). In all cases it is necessary to use quotation marks.
e.g. *After all, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."*
- **use a rhetorical question** i.e. a question that does not expect a reply.
e.g. *What would modern society be like without computers?*
- **You can start a narrative by setting the scene** i.e. by using the senses to describe the weather, atmosphere, surroundings and also to create mystery and suspense.
e.g. *It was a cold winter's night. The wind was blowing hard as Jack was walking down the dark empty street.*
- You can also use **a variety of adjectives, adverbs and verbs** to make your composition more attractive to the reader.
e.g. *"Hold on!" Helen screamed to Bob as she desperately tried to help him get out of the freezing water.*

18 Read the following beginnings and endings and identify which writing technique(s) the writer has used in each.

1 Why are people so obsessed with the weather? In my opinion, the climate plays a major role in the way we behave.
.....

2 I am sure that most of you, at some point in your lives, have considered starting your own business. However, I doubt that many of you have actually done so.
.....

3 It was a dark, stormy night. Frank was alone in the wooden cabin at the top of the snow-covered mountain. The wind was howling and Frank was afraid. Suddenly, there was a strange scratching at the door.
.....

4 Mason woke up to the sound of rain drumming on the rooftop. Exhausted from the previous day, he slowly got out of bed and made himself a cup of coffee and some breakfast. He decided to call in sick as he felt too weak to go to work.
.....

5 All in all, adolescence can be a difficult time. But as George Bernard Shaw once said, "Life is not meant to be easy; but take courage, it can be delightful."
.....

- 19** a) Match the beginnings to the endings. What types of writing are the extracts from?



BEGINNINGS...

- A** It was an autumn morning. Marianne, still in her pyjamas, turned on her laptop and sat at the kitchen table. Thinking of the amount of work she had to do, she sighed. "How am I ever going to get this done?"
- B** I am sure most of you have been influenced by an advertisement at some point in the past. In my opinion, advertising simply persuades people to buy things they don't need.
- C** Mr Norton is our Chemistry teacher. I'll never forget the first time we met him. He was in the school lab wearing a long, white coat, and he was about to mix two very strange-looking liquids. "Keep back, lads," he said. "This is a very dangerous experiment."

...ENDINGS

- 1** All in all, even though Mr Norton looks like a mad scientist, he is one of the kindest and most understanding teachers I've ever had. I am sure that if you had met him, you would agree with me.
- 2** It was 4 pm and she was exhausted but happy. "Well, I suppose what they say is true — The early bird catches the worm," she thought to herself as she turned off her laptop.
- 3** In conclusion, I think that advertising should be controlled so that consumers are not misled and persuaded to purchase goods they don't need. After all, as Alan H. Meyer, an American advertising executive, said, "The best ad is a good product."

- b) In which extract(s) has each of these writing techniques been used?

- quotation
- proverb/saying
- addressing the reader directly
- direct speech

- 20** Read the extracts and replace the words in **bold** with synonymous ones from the lists.



most extraordinary, impressive, huge, comfortable

- A** The interior of the hotel is very **1) nice**. It has a **2) big** reception area with **3) nice** leather chairs and sofas for the guests. The **4) nicest** feature, however, is the marble fountain which was constructed at the beginning of the century.

paused, crept, whispering, peered

- B** Suddenly Jack heard someone **1) saying**, "At last I've found you." He **2) stopped** at the top of the stairs and **3) looked** down into the dark hallway. Just then, a young boy **4) came** out of the shadows.

UNDERSTANDING WRITING STYLE

The writing style you should use depends on the type of composition you are writing, the situation and the intended reader. Therefore, you should not use the same style of writing for every composition. The two main types of writing style are **formal** and **informal**. However, not all styles of writing fall under these categories. For example, in a letter to somebody you do not know very well or in an article for a student's magazine, the style used is neither formal nor informal, but a blend of the two, known as **semi-formal**.

FORMAL STYLE is characterised by:

- formal expressions, advanced vocabulary, longer sentences
e.g. *Taking everything into consideration, it can be said that the facilities offered are of poor quality.*
- formal linking words/phrases (i.e. However, Nevertheless, In addition, Consequently, etc.)
e.g. *Mobile phones are extremely useful for people who travel frequently. However, they can be dangerous.*
- no use of short forms (i.e. I'm, there's ...)
e.g. *I would be grateful if ... (instead of: I'd be grateful if ...)*
- impersonal tone, i.e. use of the passive, no description of feelings
e.g. *Late this evening, 20-year-old Tim McCormack was pulled to safety after being trapped under debris for more than ten hours.*
- factual presentation of the information
e.g. *The Town Hall, constructed in the late 1800s, was seriously damaged by fire in 1909.*

INFORMAL STYLE is characterised by:

- everyday/colloquial expressions, vocabulary and idioms.
e.g. *I thought I'd drop you a line ..., Thanks a million ..., etc*
- frequent use of short forms
e.g. *I won't be able to come to your party as I'll be away on a business trip.*
- informal phrasal verbs
e.g. *Lucy takes after her father. She's ...*
- simple linking words/phrases (i.e. but, so, because, and, etc)
e.g. *It rains a lot here, so you'd better take an umbrella with you.*
- shorter sentences
e.g. *Thanks a lot for the invitation. I'd love to come.*
- personal tone i.e. use of first person (I/We)
e.g. *I've got great news. I've found a new job.*
- descriptive tone i.e. use of adjectives/adverbs etc for vivid description
e.g. *It was a bitterly cold winter morning.*

SEMI-FORMAL STYLE

SEMI-FORMAL STYLE is characterised by:

- less formal language
- less frequent use of short forms, formal linking words/phrases or the passive
- respectful, polite tone

Compare:

Formal: *I would be grateful if you could reply at your earliest convenience.*

Semi-formal: *I look forward to receiving your reply as soon as possible.*

Informal: *I can't wait to hear from you.*

21 Use phrases from the list to fill in the blanks in the sentences, as in the example. Then, say which are written in formal and which in informal style.

assess the suitability, porcelain-white skin, were seriously injured, drop by, am entitled to, point in favour of, with flying colours, won't be able to make it, to my mind, don't miss it

- 1 The purpose of this report is to ... *assess the suitability* ... of Robert Hulson for the position of Assistant Manager.
= *formal style*
- 2 I believe I
..... a full refund.
- 3 Well, I've got to go now.
..... when you arrive in town.
- 4 A
of working from home is that one can plan one's own working schedule.
- 5 Two drivers
..... after their cars collided on the M4 late last night.

Unit 1 Part A Guidelines for Writing

- 6 Guess what! I passed all my exams
- 7 With its long, black hair, beautiful blue eyes and
....., it was the most exquisite doll Mary had ever seen.
- 8 living abroad
is something everyone should experience at least once in their lives.
- 9 ! I bet it's going
to be a box-office hit!
- 10 I'm really sorry, but I
..... to your graduation party.

22 Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow.

A Which is better, classical or pop music? Some people believe that classical music is superior. However, I believe that both types of music offer something different to the world of entertainment.



B I would be grateful if you could attend to this matter as soon as possible. I hope to hear from you soon regarding the outcome of the situation.
Yours sincerely,
Matthew Drake

C Anyway, that's my news for now. I hope you're enjoying the holidays as much as I am. Write back soon and let me know how you're getting on.
Love,
Harry

D The purpose of this report is to assess the suitability of Fairfax Eateries as caterers for the firm's annual spring party.

E The rescue team began their search for the lost skiers at dawn. The missing family was located a few hours later by a search helicopter, and they were lifted to safety. No one was injured, but they were taken to hospital suffering from the cold.

F Suddenly, the door opened. Tracey stared in horror as the dark figure in the doorway raised its arms over its head.

G Dear Mr and Mrs Smith,
I'm writing to thank you for the kindness you showed me during my stay with you and your family in March.

a) What type of writing is each extract from?

b) Which extracts use:

- 1 short forms?
- 2 factual presentation of the information?
- 3 everyday expressions, idioms and informal phrasal verbs?
- 4 formal expressions, advanced vocabulary and longer sentences?
- 5 formal linking words/phrases?

23 What style of writing should you use in the following situations: Write F (for formal), S (for semi-formal) or I (for informal). Why?

- a a letter of complaint to the manager of a department store
- b an article for a teen magazine on the latest trends in clothes
- c an email to your friend asking him for advice on which university to attend
- d a news report about an accident that happened in your town
- e a letter to a former teacher of yours, thanking him for his advice

24 The extracts below are written in the wrong style. Replace the words/phrases in bold with more suitable ones from each list.

the slightest, reached, collapsed, firstly, what is more, was not

- A 1) **For starters**, the ironing board 2) **wasn't** high enough. For example, when I unfolded it, it only 3) **came up to** my waist. 4) **And then**, whenever I put 5) **a little bit of** pressure on the board, it 6) **fell down**.

I've met, also, really love, dull moment, in common

- B I 1) **am enjoying myself immensely at** university. 2) **I have had the opportunity to meet** many interesting people and there is never a 3) **shortage of activities** on campus. 4) **In addition to this**, my roommate, Becky, is a wonderful person. We have so much 5) **to share** that I feel as if I've known her all my life.

what is more, however, full of comical scenes, extremely realistic, computer-generated images

- C The script is simple and straightforward 1) **but** it is 2) **really funny**. 3) **Another thing is**, all the 4) **things made by the computer** are 5) **lifelike** and the characters are truly convincing.

EDITING YOUR ESSAY

You should always edit your piece of writing before handing it in. In order to do this, you should make sure:

- you have used complete sentences and that the words are in the correct order (i.e. subject, verb, object, etc).
- you have used the correct grammar (e.g. past tenses for narratives).
- you do not repeat the same words, phrases, expressions, etc.
- there are no spelling errors.
- you have used the correct punctuation. (e.g. commas, full stops, question marks, etc) [See also Appendix III]
- you have indented the paragraphs (i.e. have begun the first line of each paragraph further in from the margin).

25 Read the extract and label the underlined mistakes using the following key: S (for spelling), P (for punctuation), WW (for wrong word) or G (for grammar). Then correct the mistakes, as in the example.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|-------|
| 1 | <i>"Its → "It's</i> | 5 | |
| 2 | | 6 | |
| 3 | | 7 | |
| 4 | | 8 | |

1) ^P "Its a party invitation," said Sue as she tore open the envelope. Paula, her sister, came 2) runing into the living room and squealed with excitement when she saw the white card. "It's from Danny," she cried. Both girls knew that Danny 3) made the 4) better birthday parties in the neighbourhood. He and his family had moved there from 5) america two years before. His father was a 6) successfull lawyer, so they lived in the nicest part of town. Danny had invited the girls to his party the previous year, but they hadn't gone. They both had had the flu and they were 7) such ill that they had had to stay in bed. They were very disappointed that they 8) hadn't been able go to the party. This time, though, would be different.

26 Put the following steps into the correct order.

- A ☐ **Brainstorm** for ideas and group them into **main topics**.
- B ☐ Read the **rubric** carefully and underline the **key words**. Identify the type of writing, the situation, the intended reader and the style of writing.
- C ☐ Edit your essay **correcting** any spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc errors.
- D ☐ Write your essay in the correct **style**, using appropriate **linking words/phrases** to join your ideas and various writing techniques to make your piece of writing interesting.
- E ☐ **Plan** the layout of your essay. Make sure you have a separate paragraph for each main topic. Write a **topic sentence** for each main body paragraph.

UNIT 1

Part B Letter/Email Writing

TYPES OF LETTERS/EMAILS

There are various types of letters/emails, such as:

- letters/emails of application
- letters/emails of complaint
- letters/emails to the editor etc.

The type of letter/email you should write depends on the reason for writing (i.e. to give your news, to invite somebody to a party, etc to make a complaint, to apply for a job, etc). Depending on the rubric, you may be asked to write a letter/email for more than one reason (i.e. to give your news and ask for advice.) The most common reasons for writing a letter/an email are:

- giving/asking about **news**
- **thanking** someone
- **accepting/refusing** an invitation
- giving/asking for **advice**
- **congratulating** someone
- making **suggestion** etc
- giving/asking for **information**
- **inviting** someone
- **apologising** for something



1 Read the extracts (A-F) and decide what type of letter each is from (1-6). Which key words helped you decide? Underline them.

A I really hope you can come to my party. I'm sure we'll have a wonderful time.

D I received your leaflet in the post. I am very interested in the course and would be grateful if you could give me some more information.

B I'm writing to ask you what you think I should do about Robert. I'd really like your advice as he's been ...

E I have enclosed my CV. I would be grateful if you could consider my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

C I'm having a fantastic time on holiday. I went sailing yesterday and I'm going to take part in a diving competition this afternoon. I can't wait!

F I am writing to complain about the dishwasher which I purchased from your company last Monday.

2 The paragraphs in the email below are in jumbled order. Put them into the correct order, then identify the type of email.

A Unfortunately, I won't be able to come as I'll be at a seminar in Berlin that week. It's a pity I'll miss your big day, but I promise to make it up to you.

B Anyway, thanks again for the invitation. I wish you both all the best for the future.
Love,
Margaret

C Dear Rachel,

I'm writing to thank you very much for the invitation to your wedding. I'm really happy the two of you are finally tying the knot.

1 letter of application

2 letter giving news

3 letter of invitation

4 letter asking for information

5 letter of complaint

6 letter asking for advice

LAYOUT OF LETTERS/EMAILS

All letters/emails should include the following:

- an **appropriate greeting** (e.g. *Dear Sir/Madam, Dear Aunt Claire, Dear Mrs Baker*, etc);
- an **introduction**, in which you write your **opening remarks** (e.g. *Hi! How are you?*) and **reason(s) for writing** (e.g. *I'm just writing to congratulate you on passing your exams, I'm writing to apologise for ... , We were thrilled to hear that ... , I was sorry to hear ...* etc);
- a **main body**, in which you write about the specific topics of the letter/email in detail;
- a **conclusion**, in which you write your **closing remarks** (e.g. *Please forgive me – it won't happen again, I promise; Looking forward to seeing you ...!, Please write soon, Take care!, Can't wait to hear from you, I'd better sign off now, That's all for now*); and
- an **appropriate ending** (e.g. *Yours faithfully* + your full name, *Lots of love* + your first name).

WRITING STYLE IN LETTERS/EMAILS

The writing style you should use (i.e. **informal**, **formal** or **semi-formal**), depends on **who you are writing to**. More specifically:

- when you are writing to someone you know well (i.e. a close relative, your best friend, etc.) you should use informal style.
- when you are writing to someone you do not know, or to someone who is in authority (i.e. the manager of a hotel, a doctor, etc) you should use formal style.
- when you are writing to someone you do not know very well, or someone you want to be polite and respectful to (i.e. a friend's parents, your teacher, etc) you should use semi-formal style.

(See Appendix II for examples of each style.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF:

a) INFORMAL LETTERS/EMAILS

- **greeting**
(e.g. *Dear John*, *Dear Mum*, etc.)
- **informal language**
(e.g. *I've been meaning to write to you for ages*; *Don't worry*; *By the way*; *It was a piece of cake*; *I'll pick you up*; *We can give it a try*, etc)
- **ending**
(e.g. *Yours/Love/Best wishes/Regards/etc + your first name*)

b) FORMAL LETTERS/EMAILS

- **greeting** (e.g. *Dear Mrs Davis* — when you know the person's name — *Dear Sir/Madam* — when you do not know the person's name)
 - **formal language** (e.g. *I am writing with regard to your advertisement*; *I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience*; *The product which was delivered, proved to be faulty*; etc)
 - **ending** (e.g. *Yours sincerely/ faithfully + your full name*)
- * **Note:** when you begin with *Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms Marcus*, you should end with *Yours sincerely + your full name*. When you begin with *Dear Sir/Madam*, you should end with *Yours faithfully + your full name*.

c) SEMI-FORMAL LETTERS/EMAILS

- **greeting**
i.e. Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms+person's surname (e.g. *Dear Mrs Marcus*)
- **semi-formal language**
- **ending**
(e.g. *Regards/Best wishes/etc + your first name or full name*)

3 Mark the phrases as F (for Formal) or I (for Informal).

- 1 I would also appreciate some information about
- 2 Well, I must go now
- 3 Please accept my sincere apologies
- 4 You are cordially invited to attend
- 5 I am writing in response to your advertisement
- 6 Thanks for the invitation to your dinner party
- 7 I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction with
- 8 I look forward to meeting you in person
- 9 Just a quick note to tell you
- 10 I am writing to bring to your attention the
- 11 Please do not hesitate to contact me
- 12 I'm so sorry to hear you're having problems with
- 13 Write back soon
- 14 We regret to inform you that
- 15 I won't take no for an answer

Unit 1 Part B Letter/Email Writing

4 Read the situation below and answer the questions that follow.

This is your last year at school and you are unsure of what course to take at university. You have decided to write a letter to, asking for advice.

- a) What style should you use if you are writing to: A a friend? B your former teacher? C a careers advisor?
- b) First match the beginnings and endings and then say which of the people in part a) each email is addressed to.

BEGINNINGS...

- 1 Dear Karen,
Hi! How are you? I'm writing because I've no idea which course to take at university next year. I really need your advice!
- 2 Dear Mrs Arnold,
I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to ask you for some advice about which course to take at university next year.
- 3 Dear Sir/Madam,
I am writing to enquire whether you can advise me on which course to apply for next year at university.

...ENDINGS

- A Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to hearing from you.
Best wishes,
Amy Milton
- B I would be extremely grateful if you could advise me on what to do. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.
Yours faithfully,
Amy Milton
Amy Milton
- C What do you think I should do? Please write back soon and tell me.
Love,
Amy

5 a) Read the pairs of expressions (1-10) and the letters which follow, then choose the most suitable expression to complete each gap.

- 1) Hi — just a quick note / I am writing
2) thank you very much / say thanks a lot
3) all your help / your kind assistance
4) getting ready / preparations

- 5) Your contribution / What you did
6) played a big part / was very important
7) making sure / ensuring
8) occasion / whole thing
9) went so well / was such a success
10) tell you how much I appreciate / thank you enough for

Dear Gavin,

A

- 1) to
2) for
3) with
4) for
the end-of-term party.
5)
6)
in 7)
that the 8)
9)
I can't 10)
..... all your hard work.
Love,
Becky

Dear Mr Conway,

B

- 1) to
2) for
3) with
4) for
the end-of-term party.
5)
6)
in 7)
that the 8)
9)
I can't 10)
..... all your hard work.
Best wishes,
Becky Jones

- b) Which letter is informal, and which letter is semi-formal?
What type of letter are they?

- 6** Match the beginnings to the endings, then identify what type of letter each pair is from. Finally, say whether each pair has been written in formal or informal style.

BEGINNINGS...

- 1 I'm writing to tell you my wonderful news ...
- 2 I would greatly appreciate it if you could provide me with some information regarding ...
- 3 Thanks a lot for your invitation. We'd love to come ...
- 4 I can't tell you how sorry I am that I ruined ...
- 5 I am writing to draw your attention to the terrible treatment I received from ...
- 6 I am writing to apply for the post of music teacher as advertised in ...

...ENDINGS

- A Once again, I'd like to say how very sorry I am about ...
- B I enclose my CV and would be glad to attend an interview at your earliest convenience.
- C Well, that's all for now. Write back and tell me what you've been up to.
- D Let me know if you want us to bring anything to the party. See you on the big day!
- E I look forward to receiving the information and would be grateful if you could reply as soon as possible.
- F I insist on a written apology. I trust this matter will receive your immediate attention.

- 7** Read the rubrics below and answer the questions.

- A You have seen an advertisement in the local newspaper for a teaching job. Write a letter to the headmaster of the school, applying for the job.
- B A friend you haven't seen for months is getting married in the summer and has invited you to the wedding. Write an email accepting the invitation.
- C You have just returned from a trip to South America. Write an email to your English pen friend telling him/her all about it.
- D You are the secretary of a language school and have received a letter from someone interested in learning French. Write a letter in reply, informing the person about the courses offered at your school.
- E You recently bought a box of your favourite breakfast cereal. On opening it, you found that the box was half empty and the remaining contents were no longer fresh. Write a letter to the manager of the cereal company complaining about it.
- F Your cousin has recently won first prize in a short story competition. Write an email congratulating them on their success.

- 1) What type of letter/email should you write for each rubric?
- 2) Who is going to read your letter/email?
- 3) What style should you use in each letter/email?
- 4) How would you begin and end each letter/email?
- 5) Can you suggest appropriate opening and closing remarks for each letter/email?