Formal Letter Format

1. The Return Address or Heading

- The return address or heading contains the writer's information.
- It is always written on the TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THE PAGE.
- Begin with the writer's P. O. Box information.
- The next line is the name of the city, followed by a comma (,) then the name of the country.
- The following is a basic format and example:

P. O. Box F-1234
Freeport, The Bahamas

2. The Date

- You may choose whether or not to skip a line after the heading. However, the heading and date must be aligned.
- Write the date on the TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THE PAGE in line with the heading.
- You should **NOT** abbreviate the month (example Jan. for January) or use numbers for the month (example 01/17/2019 for January 17, 2019).
- Do **NOT** include the day of the week (Monday, Friday etc) in the date.
- If you choose to, you may use ordinal indicators (for example the "th" in 10th) or you may omit the ordinal indicators.
- You may write either the number or the month first. Variations of the date include:

25th January 2019	January 25th, 2019
25 January 2019	January 25, 2019

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3. The Inside Address

- The inside address includes the information about the recipient of the letter (the person who will receive/read the letter).
- This information includes:
  - The recipient's full name (with Mr. Mrs. Dr. etc. in front of the name)
  - The recipient's title/position
  - The full name of the recipient's workplace/business/organization
  - The full address of the recipient's workplace/business/organization
- The inside address should be written against the **left-hand margin one line below the date**.
- If you do not know the name of the recipient, such as writing to the manager of a company, then simply omit a name and write the other components of the inside address as normal.
- You must include the person's title (Mr. Mrs. Miss, Dr. etc) before the recipient's name in the inside address.
- **Note** that you are allowed to make up information for the inside address. For example, if you are asked to write a letter inviting a local pastor to speak at your school, you may make up the pastor's name, his church's name and church's address. Additionally, if asked to write a letter to the Minister of Education, but you do not know the actual minister's name, it is acceptable to use another name.

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❖ The following is an example of the inside address when all the recipient's information is known:

Mr. Jack Rolle
Manager
Pepper Pot Restaurant
P. O. Box F-4567
Freeport, The Bahamas

4. The Greeting/ Salutation

❖ After the inside address, skip a line and write the greeting/salutation against the left hand margin.

❖ Begin with "Dear" followed by the person's title (Rev. Pastor, Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. etc.) and surname only.

❖ **DO NOT** include the person's first name in the greeting.

❖ Place a colon (:) after the person's surname, **NOT A COMMA (,)**

❖ Examples of greetings include:

Dear Mr. Rolle:	Dear Mrs. Smith:
Dear Dr. Johnson:	Dear Rev. Miller:

❖ If you do not know the name of person to whom you are writing, and you did not use a specific name in the inside address, then you may **NOT** use a name in the greeting.

❖ Instead, you may address the person in the following way: "Dear Sir/Madam:"

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❖ Alternatively, you may address the greeting to the position of the individual or the company to whom you are writing. For example:

Dear Manager:	Dear Mall Store Owner:	Dear Language Arts Teacher:
Dear Principal:	Dear Director:	

5. The Body

❖ The body contains the main information that should be based on the given topic/ writing prompt.

❖ The body begins on the line directly beneath the first letter of the second word of the salutation/ greeting.

❖ More information about the body will be provided in the discussion of the different types of letters.

6. The Closing

❖ Skip one line after the body and then begin the closing at the right hand side of the page. It should be in line with the return address/heading and date.

❖ If the closing is made up of more than one word, **only the first word should begin with a capital letter**. The other words should begin with lowercase letters.

❖ The closing ends with a comma (,).

❖ You may use many different closings. Refer to the list below.

Yours truly,	Regards,
Sincerely,	Yours sincerely,
Sincerely yours,	Best regards,
Yours respectfully,	Respectfully yours,

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7. The Signature

- Place the signature immediately below the closing and in line with the closing.
- The signature is the writer's full name, written in print or legible cursive.
- You may use your own first and last name, as you are indeed the writer of the letter.
- Alternatively, you may use a fictional name for the signature. Below are 2 examples of **acceptable signatures** for the letter:

*rtia Hepburn burn	**OR**	Portia

- It is unacceptable to use nicknames or to decorate the signature with graphics. Below are examples of **unacceptable signatures**:

~~Portia~~ Hepburn	**OR**	*Portia♥Hepburn♥♪*

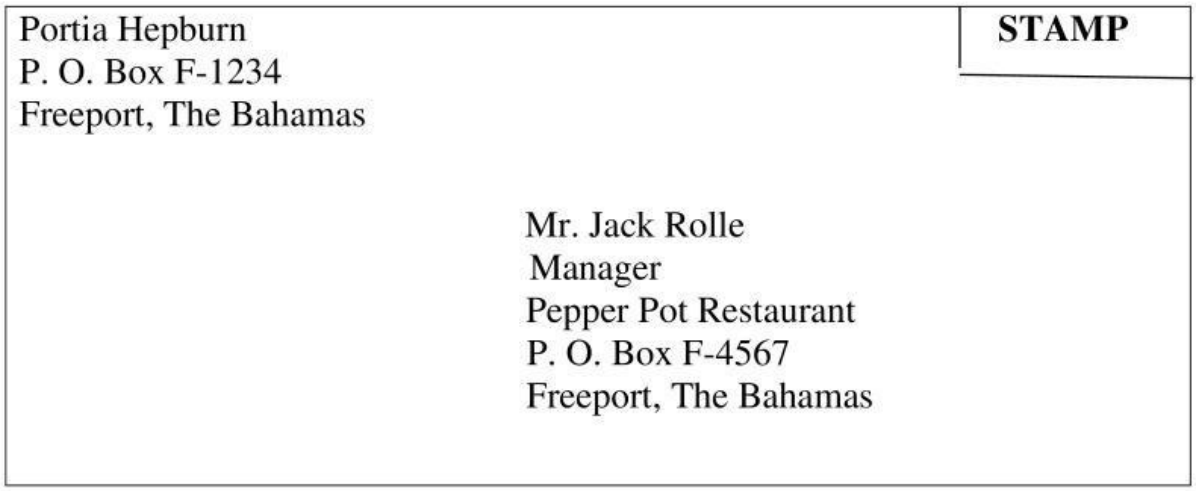
8. Envelope

- The envelope information should come from the letter itself.
- The writer's name (used as the signature of the letter) and address (the return address/heading of the letter) should be placed in the **upper left hand corner** of the envelope.
- The writer may or may not use a title before the name. E.g. Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss
- The same information used in the inside address should be used for the receiver's information in the envelope. This includes the receiver's full name (if it is known and has been used in the letter), title /position, name of company/organization and

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full address. This should be placed in the **center** of the envelope **a few spaces below the writer's information**.

- The information in the heading and the inside address of the letter should be duplicated on the envelope.
- The writer's address is the heading, with the writer's name added to it.
- The receiver's address is the same as the inside address.
- **DO NOT** place the date on the envelope.
- The following is an example of a full addressed envelope:



Types of Letters

Remember:

- All paragraphs should be indented.
- You may choose whether or not to skip a line between paragraphs.

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- ❖ The body should be between three to four paragraphs and contain about 100 words.
- ❖ When writing the body of the letter, it is not appropriate to use informal, conversational, or religious comments such as "I hope you have a good day", "God bless you", "Good afternoon", "How are you?" etc.

The body should always contain the following 4 elements:

A. **Reference:** Explain the reason you are writing this letter. Refer to a letter you received, an advertisement you saw, or an event or issue that prompted you to write.

B. **Information:** Supply more detailed information that is related to the reference.

C. **Purpose**: Give the reasons you are writing your letter. State clearly what you want the person reading the letter to do. This is where you would invite the person, express gratitude, congratulate the person etc.

D. **Conclusion**: End the letter with a polite remark, or ask for a specific time frame to respond.

✓ Although these 4 elements must be part of the body, it is possible to combine some elements or organize 2 parts into

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one paragraph. For example, when writing a letter of congratulations, it is possible to combine the reference and purpose into one sentence. For example, "I extend congratulations to you **[purpose]** for your recent promotion as President of the Environmental Club at our school **[reference]**.

- ✓ Thus, students do not have to put the 4 parts of the body in the same order or in separate paragraphs, so long as the four components are part of the letter.
- ✓

Letters of Complaint/Concern

In a letter of complaint/concern you must write to an individual or organization, usually to complain about a product, service, or the state of a facility. Write about the problem by describing and giving details about the problem, and also request that something be done about the problem.

All letters of complaint should contain the following basic elements:

A. Name the product/service/facility you are complaining about and give the date when the problem first happened. For example, "I visited the Bahamian Delights Restaurant on October 1st, 2019, to eat dinner with a few friends."
B. Address the person's position- Pastor, Manager, Principal etc.
C. If you paid for a product or service, state the amount of money you spent on it. For example, "Our bill was $134.86."

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D. Clearly express your complaint.

E. Give **at least 2 details** about the problem you had. For example, the food was cold, you received the wrong order, the waiter was rude etc.

F. Explain the inconvenience caused, meaning how the problem negatively affected you. For example, "The poor service ruined my birthday dinner, I could not enjoy the food because it was cold etc."

G. Make a request for the problem to be corrected. You may ask for a refund of your money, ask for a replacement for a product, or request that a property be repaired or renovated.

Note: Your request should be firm, but you must be polite. Do not threaten the person or make insulting statements. For example, the following statements are too aggressive: "If you do not refund my money I will come to your business and have the police arrest you" **And** "I demand that you fix the building or I will sue you for everything you own". Instead, try one of the following ways to request a resolution to the problem:

- "I request a refund for …"
- "Please address this problem by changing…"
- "I would like for you to fix this problem by doing…"

H. End the letter by addressing a specific time frame to address the issue. For example, "I look forward to your response by October 21, 2020."

Below is a writing prompt for a letter of complaint. On the following page is an example of how this prompt may be answered in an acceptable manner. As you read, note the major elements of complaint letters that were just mentioned.

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Prompt: You recently purchased a new cellphone at a local phone company. However, it started malfunctioning shortly after. Write a letter complaining to the manager of the store, explaining the inconvenience caused, and requesting that the matter be resolved in a satisfactory manner.

P. O. Box F-4711
Freeport, The Bahamas

November 1, 2019

Manager
BTC
P. O. Box F-1234
Freeport, The Bahamas

Dear Manager:

I am writing this letter to complain about an I-Phone X cellphone that I purchased from your BTC branch downtown.

I bought the phone on September 30th, 2019, but it started to malfunction recently. On October 28th, 2019, I noticed that the screen freezes up after a while. Additionally, the phone charger has a shortage that prevents it from properly charging my phone. As a result, I sometimes cannot make phone calls and send messages.

I request that, as the manager of this store, you kindly provide me with a replacement phone. If that is not possible, then I will accept a full refund of the phone's price, which was $827.16.

I will keep the phone and wait for a response by November 16, 2019. Thank you for considering my request.

Regards,
Kristen Davis

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Kristen Davis
P. O. Box F-4711
Freeport, The Bahamas

STAMP

Manager
BTC
P. O. Box F-1234
Freeport, The Bahamas

WRITING PROMPT

FORMAL LETTER-WRITING (10 MARKS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Write **ONE** of the following letters. The body of the letter should contain approximately 100 words. Please begin your letter on a new page.

2A. (a) You have noticed that the garbage in your community has not been collected for a long time. Write a letter to the Director of Department of Environmental Health, expressing your concern. In your letter state **TWO** problems that have developed as a result of the lack of collection and request that the matter be addressed.

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