

USEFUL LANGUAGE FOR WRITING

Useful language

FORMAL LETTERS

Letters objecting to someone's plans

I am writing to express my concern /disappointment / alarm at hearing ...

I was extremely alarmed/sorry/distressed to hear about your plans to ...

As I think you know, ...

May I point out that ...

I feel I really must object to ...

I am extremely concerned at the thought that ...

It must be very clear that ...

If these proposals go ahead, ... will happen.

Another threat to ... , if these proposals go ahead, would come from ...

I dread to imagine what damage this will cause.

May I respectfully suggest that you ...

I was wondering if you had considered this alternative?

Would it not be possible to ... ?

Letters of complaint

I am writing to complain about ...

I am writing to tell you how disappointed/annoyed I feel about ...

I was amazed/distressed/horrified to find that ...

As you must realise, ...

I am sure you know that ...

I am sure you can imagine ...

I am sure you will appreciate that ...

It goes without saying that ...

At the very least, I look forward to receiving ...

Unless you ... , I am afraid that I will have to take this matter further.

Letters of recommendation

I am writing to you on behalf of ...

I have known X for ... years.

She / He has shown herself/himself to be extremely ...

X would seem to fit the requirements of this job perfectly.

I have no hesitation in recommending X as a ...

Letters to the editor

I am writing about the article on ... , which appeared (in last night's paper).

I am writing with reference to the article you published (in last month's issue).

I have just read your article on ... and I feel I must ...

You raised some issues which I feel strongly about.

At the start of your article, you appear to claim that ...

I am afraid I totally disagree.
I am completely in agreement.
I am sure readers will agree with me when I say that ...

ARTICLES

Sequencing

At first / To start with/In the beginning, ...
Then/Next/After that, ...
The next thing that happened was ...
The next thing I knew was ...
Seconds/Minutes later,
Late on/Some time later,
It wasn't until much later that ...
After some time/After what seemed like years, ...
Finally/In the end, ...
At last, ...

Simultaneous events

Meanwhile/In the meantime,
While all this was going on,
In the middle of all this, ...
During all this time, ...

Sudden or unexpected events

Suddenly/All of a sudden, ...
All at once, ...
Out of the blue, ...
Without any warning, ...
Just when I was least expecting it, ...
The next thing I knew was ...

Rapid events

As quick as a flash, ...
In the wink of an eye, ...
In a matter of seconds/minutes, ...
In no time at all, ...

Looking back

In retrospect, ...
When I think back to what happened then, ...

REPORTS

Introductory comments

I recently visited (the new Leisure Centre) and have prepared the following report for your consideration.
Further to my visit to ... , I have prepared the following report.

The following report relates to my recent visit to ...

General comments

On the whole, I found that ...

Although ... , I should point out that ...

It is a fact that ...

Concluding comments

All things considered, I believe that ...

Taking all these points into consideration, I would recommend ...

I recommend that we look into the possibility of ...

Comparing places or facilities

One of the main differences between X and Y is that ...

X is completely/entirely/totally different from Y in that ...

Unlike X, Y is ...

While/Whereas/Although X is ... , Y is ...

X is a little/slightly/somewhat/a great deal (bigger/more elegant than Y.

X is not quite/nearly as (comfortable/expensive/ convenient) as Y because ...

X is virtually/exactly the same as Y when it comes to ...

PROPOSALS

As requested, I am submitting the following proposal on ...

The purpose of this proposal is to...

I recommend that we ...

I therefore recommend that we should...

It is strongly advised/ recommended...

We feel certain that...

We hope to develop...

I propose that we ...

I propose that radical changes should be made to...

We should also ...

I believe that ...

It is vital...

It would seem sensible...

We could ...

This would be of considerable benefit to...

This course of action would be...

It is a fact that , which means that ...

There appears to be no alternative to ...

If we were to , it would ...

I suggest we... .We would then be able to ...

I feel strongly that we should ...

The best solution seems to be...

The evidence (undoubtedly) points towards...
...these proposals will be given due consideration...
I trust these recommendations...
I trust you will give my proposal your full consideration.

REVIEWS

x has much to recommend it.
X is, at heart, a(n) love/spy/adventure story.
It is based on a book by ...
It is set in the countryside/the future.
The film has a quality cast.
The film was directed by ...
The film score is enchanting/evocative/scary.
The film captures the spirit of ...
The hero/heroine/villain is ...
I felt/thought it was ...
I was impressed by ...
What struck me most was ...
What I liked most/didn't like was ...
The plot was gripping.
The characters were very convincing/very well drawn.
On reflection, I think it was ...
It struck me as being ...
What I didn't understand was how ...
In spite of these few criticisms, I think ...
I would have no hesitation in recommending ...

Useful words and phrases

These words and phrases can be used in the following text types, depending on what are asked to write about:

- letters
- essays
- articles
- proposals
- reports
- reviews

Expressing and supporting opinions

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.
I believe/do not believe that ... (because) ...
Personally I feel that ... Let me explain why.
In my opinion, ... Just consider ...
As I see it, ... The reason is ...

It seems to me that... This is because ...
I would argue that for the following reasons.
I feel very strongly that ...
I am convinced that ...
I am of the opinion that ...
I am very much in favour of/against ...
I am completely opposed to ...
The reasons why I believe that ... are as follows.

Opening phrases

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.

People (sometimes) claim that ... but I feel that ...
It is often said/argued that ... However, it seems to me that ...
It is a fact that ...
Over the past few months/years, it seems that ...
Recently, we have all become concerned that ...
Nowadays, we are all realising that ...
In the past, people used to ..., but now ...
These days, it seems that

Making statements

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.

It is clear that ...
On the whole, it appears/seems that ...
We must take into account the fact that
It goes without saying that ...
It is important to remember that ...

Explaining/Expanding ideas and giving examples

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.

... This means that ...
... This is largely due to ...
...For example/For instance, ...
...In other words, ...
Take, for example, the situation in ...

Listing arguments

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.

Firstly/In the first place / To begin with, ...
Secondly/A second area to consider is ...
Another point to remember is ...
Finally, ...
In conclusion, ..
Last but not least, ...

Evaluating ideas, Dismissing contrary arguments

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays and articles.

I think it is true that ...

I totally disagree/agree with the point that...

It is questionable whether ...

I am sure/I doubt whether ...

It is true that ... On the other hand, ...

While nobody can deny that ... , I would like to point out that ...

I agree that ...However, ...

Although it is true that , we must remember that ...

It could be argued that ... However, I would like to point out that ...

Despite all the arguments, I still feel that ...

Notwithstanding the claim that ... , I would argue that...

It may be true that ... , but all too often ...

In no way can I agree that ...

Surely it is completely unacceptable that ...

Persuading

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters and proposals.

I would urge you to consider...

I am sure you will agree that...

Surely you must agree that...

I would urge you very strongly to ...

When you hear the arguments, I am sure you will agree that ...

Evaluating

These words and expressions are especially useful in reports, proposals and reviews.

I was extremely impressed by...

I was rather disappointed by...

While X has much to commend it, I feel that some aspects could be improved.

The problem could easily be solved if ...

I would like to praise the ...

Another area for complaint is ...

My overall impression was that ...

I am sure that visitors/readers/holidaymakers will thoroughly enjoy ...

While some people will love ... , others may feel less happy.

A major problem is that ...

I was less happy with ...

Making recommendations

These words and expressions are especially useful in proposals and reports.

I recommend that we ...

I propose that we ...
We should also ...
I believe that we should ...
We could ...
If we were to... , we could ...
I suggest we... We would then be able to ...

Summarising

These words and expressions are especially useful in letters, essays, articles, reports, proposals and reviews.

All in all, I think that ...
To sum up, I believe that ...
In conclusion, the facts suggest that ...

Describing

These words and expressions are especially useful in articles, reviews, and letters.

Character/Personality

He tends to be ...
She can be ...
He is inclined to be ...
She appears/seems to be ...
Hobbies and interests
He is crazy about ... -ing.
She loves ... -ing.
His greatest love is ...
What she loves most in life is ...
He spends all his time ... -ing.

WRITING AND VOCABULARY

1) FORMAL WRITING (Reports and proposals)

Introduction

-The main purpose/aim of (this report) is to outline/
present / discuss / examine / evaluate...
-This report (outlines/looks at)...

Generalising

-On the whole,...
-In general,...

-This report is based on...

Making recommendations and concluding

-It is clear from customer feedback that...

-With regard to..., the general view seems to be...

-In the light of (this year's experience),...

-Perhaps the most effective way of...

-If the (centre) is to attract more customers, it is vital that...

-It would be a good idea to...

-It is (therefore) believed / obvious that...would be ideal for...

-It would (not) be advisable / practical to...

-We suggest/propose that...

-We suggest/propose + *ing*

-A (more spacious area) would be the solution.../
an effective way of...

-In light of the above, we believe the following

measures should be adopted...

-In the short/long term, we suggest you should consider...

-My recommendations are as follows:...

-In my view, in future, we should...

-To improve the situation, we recommend...

-It is recommended that...

-To sum up,...To conclude,...

-I hope that the plan outlined/presented in this report meets with your approval...

-I hope that the recommendations outlined/

presented in this report will receive your serious consideration.

2) SEMI-FORMAL WRITING

Addressing the reader

-Have you ever wondered (what the college would be like if)...? If the answer is (yes)..., you...

--If you want a different kind of experience,... / As you know,...

-Doesn't it just make everyone feel (positive about...)?

-If you have a few hours to spare,...is worth seeing.

Describing location

-Located / Situated (just a few miles away from...), X
is...

Giving your opinion

-X is intended for young(er) people...

-X is popular with (children)...

-In fact, (NEGATIVE OPINION)

- Built (just next to...), X is...
- Some minutes from..., X is...

Giving information

- Throughout its history, X...
- X is by far the oldest...
- Y is the best known...
- What is particularly spectacular is...
- Recent additions/changes include...

- It's clearly been a good idea to...

Giving practical information

- Anyone wishing to (apply)...can/should...
- (We) participate in.../organise.../run...
- (The club) offers/provides a range of (competitive matches for)...
- One of the most popular (features of our club is)...
- Members have the opportunity to.../...are able to

Attitude clauses and phrases

Generally speaking,...

Annoyingly,... Naturally,... Strangely,... Surprisingly,... Evidently,...

Indeed,... In fact,... Admittedly,... Presumably,...

.....

RELATED WORDS AND PHRASES

AGREEMENT

- A great number of people share the view that tourism will have a negative impact on the island.
- Today there is general / widespread agreement that pollution from cars and planes is threatening the future of our planet.
- It is now widely accepted that the universe began with the so-called 'big bang'.

DISAGREEMENT

- Opinions differ about the proper relationship between the mass media and society.
- There is considerable disagreement among experts about the usefulness of these tests.
- There has been a great deal of controversy over abortion in the US.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

- Regular exercise has many benefits, including reducing the risk of heart disease.
- Despite a few problems with the design, the car's advantages clearly outweigh its disadvantages.
- The major drawback of this method is that it can be very time-consuming.
- The downside of running your own business is that you are responsible if anything goes wrong.

CAUSE

- lead to: The research could lead to a cure for many serious illnesses.
- result in: The fire resulted in damage to their property.
- be responsible for: He was responsible for the accident.
- bring about: The war brought about enormous social change.
- give rise to: Poor performance in exams can give rise to depression and even thoughts of suicide.
- trigger: to make something suddenly start to happen, especially a bad situation such as a crisis or a war, or
a medical condition: Certain foods can trigger allergies.
- contribute to: Passive smoking could contribute to the development of respiratory diseases among nonsmokers.
- factor: Cost is often the deciding factor when choosing any product.

EFFECT

- impact on: His work has had an enormous impact on the study of genetics.
- influence on: In his book, he examines the influence of the media on our society.
- affect: (v) The disease affects women more than men.
- influence: (v) She has influenced him a lot.
- implications: The results of the study could have important implications for future educational policy.

EMPHASIZING

- I would like to stress that the research is still at an early stage.
- It should be noted that there are a number of alternative methods available.
- It is worth bearing in mind that 90% of the scientists researching herbicides in the US are employed by chemical companies.
- Factors such as temperature and acidity play a crucial role in determining how well the process works.

- These insects play a vital part in the food chain.
- It is essential that the work is carried out as soon as possible.
- The climate is much colder, especially in the far north.

PROBLEMS

- issue: Issue is used especially about problems that affect a lot of people in society: International terrorism
is the biggest issue (=the most important issue) facing the world today.
Previous governments failed to
address (=try to deal with) social issues such as unemployment and homelessness.
- challenge: something difficult that you must do or deal with, which needs a lot of skill, effort, and
determination: She said she was looking forward to the challenge of starting up a new business on her own.
- difficulty: The company has managed to overcome (=deal with) its recent financial difficulties.
Many people experience difficulty in sleeping at some time in their lives.
- trouble: a problem or several problems that make something difficult, spoil your plans etc: Students of
English often have trouble with phrasal verbs. The company ran into trouble (=started to have problems)
when it tried to expand too quickly.
- setback: something that happens which stops you making progress or which makes things worse than
they were before: Despite some early setbacks, his campaign for the presidency was successful.
- obstacle: Criminal gangs are the biggest obstacle to democratic reform.
- dilemma: The doctors were faced with a moral dilemma.
- vicious circle: Some developing countries get caught in a vicious circle. They cannot afford to pay their
debt repayments, and so the debts get even bigger.
- complication

INCREASE

- increase by (percent): Last year, the number of burglaries increased by 15 percent.
- go up: Last month unemployment went up from 1.6 million to just over 1.7 million.

- grow: The volume of traffic on our roads continues to grow.
- expand: After two years of no growth, the economy started to expand again in 2003.
- double/triple/quadruple: Since 1950, the number of people dying from cancer has almost doubled.
- growth: (n) There has been a huge growth in sales of big 4-wheel-drive vehicles.

DECREASE

- decrease by (percent): The average rainfall has decreased by around 30 percent.
- go down: The percentage of fat in our diets has gone down.
- fall: The number of tigers in the wild has fallen to just over 10,000.
- drop: At night, the temperature drops to minus 20 degrees.
- decline: decline is used about numbers or amounts, and also about the level or standard of something:
In rural areas, the standard of living continued to decline.

ADMIRE

- respect / look up to: The children need someone they can look up to.
- think highly of: Most of the students and staff think very highly of Dr. Smith.
- have a high opinion of
- highly regarded/respected: a highly respected surgeon

ADVANCED

- sophisticated / high-tech (equipment) / state-of-the-art (technology)

SURPRISING *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

- amazing / unbelievable / incredible / astonishing / staggering
- come as a surprise / come as a shock / amaze / astonish

SURPRISED *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

- amazed / astonished / speechless / be taken aback (He was taken aback by the news)

EXCITING *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

-thrilling / gripping / exhilarating / action-packed

BORING

-dull / tedious / monotonous / uninspiring

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

-attractive / good-looking / gorgeous / striking / stunning

BEAUTIFUL PLACES *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

-breathtaking / stunning / awe-inspiring / striking / spectacular

-spotless: very clean

UGLY PLACES / PEOPLE *(Avoid using "colourful" vocabulary in formal writing!)*

-unattractive / unpleasant / unsightly / hideous (=extremely ugly)

-filthy: very dirty

IN BAD CONDITION (PLACES)

-in bad condition / dilapidated / run-down

NEW

-latest / brand-new / innovative (idea or system)

OLD

-old-fashioned / outdated / obsolete

VERY

-absolutely / extremely / highly / incredibly / remarkably

GOOD PERFORMANCE / PIECE OF WORK

-excellent / outstanding / impressive / exceptional

GOOD FOR A PARTICULAR JOB, PURPOSE, ETC

-suitable / right / proper / appropriate / be suited to

WRONG INFORMATION / NUMBERS

-incorrect / inaccurate / misleading

NOT REASONABLE / NECESSARY

-unjustified / unreasonable / without good reason

RELAX

-unwind / wind down: Set in spectacular countryside, the Shiga Hotel is the perfect place to unwind.

-make someone feel at ease

-relaxed / feel at ease / laid-back (not easily worried or annoyed) /

NERVOUS

-tense / uneasy / anxious / be under stress

PUBLIC SERVICES

-facilities: The facilities at the hotel were excellent -- tennis courts, swimming pool, several bars and a good restaurant.

-amenities: things such as shops, parks, or restaurants that make living or working in a place more pleasant

I prefer this part of the city because there are plenty of good amenities.

COMPARISONS

-a great deal / far / much + comparative (cheaper / more economical than)

-a bit / slightly / barely + comparative (cheaper / more economical than)

-by far / easily the + superlative (This is easily the best solution we can think of)

VERY MUCH / NOT VERY MUCH

-dramatically / significantly / slightly

AND

-As well (as) / in addition to: Over 600 people will lose their jobs, in addition to the 400 people who left the company last year.

-In addition: A fifth of the world's population lives on less than \$1 a day. In addition, over 100 million children are living on the streets.

-Furthermore / Moreover: used at the beginning of a sentence when adding an important fact that is connected with what you have just said: The drug has strong side effects. Furthermore, it can be addictive.

IF

-as long as / on condition that / provided that

OR

-alternatively: You can go up into the mountains. Alternatively, you can stroll around one of Switzerland's

delightful cities where the old mixes with the new.

-on **THE** one hand ... on the other (hand)

BECAUSE

-As / since: As it was a hot day, they decided to leave all the windows open. Since it is difficult to predict

how the climate will change, it is not possible to say which countries will suffer the most.

-thanks to

-DUE TO/OWING TO + NOUN

The delay was due to a problem with the ship's engines.

-DUE TO/OWING TO + THE FACT THAT + subject + verb

The men did most of the work in the fields. This was partly due to the fact that the men were stronger.

BUT/ALTHOUGH

-While / whereas / by contrast

-However: *However* is usually used in the middle of a sentence, separated from the rest of the sentence by

commas: Jack and his family managed to escape before the soldiers arrived.

Other families in the village,

however, were less lucky. Or it comes at the beginning of a sentence: He began his academic career as a

mathematician. However, his main achievements were in the field of nuclear physics.

-Nevertheless: *Nevertheless* is usually used at the beginning of a sentence, or at the end.

-IN SPITE OF/DESPITE + NOUN

Despite his lack of formal education, he became one of the world's leading mathematicians.

-IN SPITE OF/DESPITE + verb + ING

This was a dinosaur that weighed only 10 tons, in spite of being some 28 metres long.

-IN SPITE OF/DESPITE + THE FACT THAT + subject + verb

Many people are worried that cellphones may be dangerous to health, despite the fact that most of the research suggests that there is little risk.