



GUIDE TO  
WRITING FOR

Advanced





**A Guide to Writing for Advanced** provides a straightforward, clear guide to the Cambridge *C1 Advanced* (previously known as CAE) writing exam.

Learners often really struggle with writing in English, and it's not surprising! As both a teacher and learner of languages, I know that writing in any language can be difficult. So, I decided to prepare a guide that really focuses on clearly explaining how to go about writing the six tasks that can appear on the Cambridge *C1 Advanced* (from now on referred to as *C1 Advanced*) writing paper.

In this book you will:

- do exercises to help you improve your writing skills with a specific focus on the six writing tasks on the *C1 Advanced* exam - the **essay, report, proposal, review, formal letter** and **informal letter**
- understand the different **styles of writing** required for each of the writing tasks
- read **27 sample answers** to exam style writing tasks
- get advice on how to use the **grammar, vocabulary and linking words** you already know to improve your writing
- understand how your writing is **corrected and marked**
- get lists of **useful phrases** you can use for each writing task
- **revise key grammar and vocabulary** needed for writing tasks.

A guide to using this book:

- complete **all** the exercises for one writing task type (for example the essay) before moving on to the next one
- at the end of each unit do the corresponding homework task from page 130
- make use of the *Brainstorming* templates on pages 124-129 to help you prepare your writing tasks
- consult the *Language Reference* section on pages 108-123 when doing writing tasks
- use the *Structure* section to help you revise key grammar and vocabulary needed for writing tasks.

While a full answer key is provided, ideally this book should be used in conjunction with an experienced teacher who can correct your writing tasks.

You can find out more about courses and correction services with the author at:

[www.withflyingcolours.eu](http://www.withflyingcolours.eu)



About the author:

Ciara is an English language teacher and author from Ireland with over ten years' teaching experience. She has extensive experience preparing students for English language exams.

Ciara offers a number of courses to students who want to prepare for Cambridge English exams at

[www.withflyingcolours.eu](http://www.withflyingcolours.eu)

Check out the author's other publications:



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# FORMAL LETTER - TASK 1 - LETTER OF COMPLAINT

What kinds of things do you think people write letters of complaint about?  
Have you ever written one?

## THREE STEPS for writing a letter of complaint:

### STEP 1: Say what you are writing to complain about.

In the first paragraph, you must say why you're writing to complain, mentioning when the incident took place, if appropriate.

Use one of these expressions to begin the letter:

I am writing to complain about ...

I am writing to express my disappointment regarding ...

I am writing to inform you about ...

Last Saturday evening, you and a friend went to a restaurant in your town to celebrate your friend's birthday and you had a terrible experience. Write a letter to the manager of the restaurant explaining what happened and why it was unacceptable.  
Finally, outline what compensation you want.

Write your **letter** in 220-260 words.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the experience I had in your restaurant last Saturday evening. I was hoping to enjoy a birthday celebration with my friend but instead had one of the worst nights of my life.

### STEP 2: Respond to the points in the task.

This is where you answer the task, writing two or three main paragraphs. In this case, the task requires you to respond to two points, highlighted here in purple:

Remember to use all the great formal structures you have learned and to organise your ideas well.

Last Saturday evening, you and a friend went to a restaurant in your town to celebrate your friend's birthday and you had a terrible experience. Write a letter to the manager of the restaurant explaining what happened and why it was unacceptable.

Finally, outline what compensation you want.

Write your **letter** in 220-260 words.

Firstly, upon arriving at the restaurant the head waiter insisted that we didn't have a reservation, despite my having made the reservation a month before. While it is understandable that sometimes these kinds of mistakes can happen, we should not have been made to wait standing up for twenty minutes while he prepared a table for us.

### STEP 3: In the final paragraph, explain what you want.

This is the place where you ask for some compensation for the thing you're complaining about. Even though you are annoyed, you should always ask politely.

Here are some phrases you can use:

I would like to request a refund for ...

I would like to request a refund for the flights.

I would like to request a replacement for ...

I would like to request a replacement for the faulty television.

I would like to request a voucher for ...

I would like to request a voucher for a meal at your restaurant.

I would be grateful if you could send me ...

I would be grateful if you could send me a working laptop.

Last Saturday evening, you and a friend went to a restaurant in your town to celebrate your friend's birthday and you had a terrible experience. Write a letter to the manager of the restaurant explaining what happened and why it was unacceptable.

Finally, outline what compensation you want.

Write your **letter** in 220-260 words.

Finish the letter by asking for the compensation. Don't, however, write just one sentence. You should also say something more, like restating why you're disappointed or giving some advice or saying something positive. Sign the letter off with a suitable closing and your full name (first name and surname).

So, the end of your letter will look something like this:

Given that the evening was a complete disaster, I would like to request a voucher for a meal so that I can celebrate my friend's birthday properly. I know that your restaurant has a wonderful reputation, so I'm sure we will enjoy our second visit.

Yours faithfully,  
Robert Mulcahy

### Now, you're going to improve a letter of complaint.

#### EXERCISE 1 - Do a vocabulary exercise with phrases that you can use when writing a letter of complaint.

(a) Use a word from the box to fill in the gaps in these useful expressions for a letter of complaint. There are three words that you don't need to use.

recent    responsibility  
disappointment    say  
take    express  
proactive    lately  
assistance    put

- to \_\_\_\_\_ disappointment
- to \_\_\_\_\_ something into consideration
- a \_\_\_\_\_ experience
- to take \_\_\_\_\_ for
- to provide \_\_\_\_\_
- a huge \_\_\_\_\_
- a \_\_\_\_\_ approach

(b) Use a word from the box to fill in the gaps in these useful expressions. There are three words that you don't need to use.

**A** page:  
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absolutely	unhelpful
make	response
last	grateful
foremost	full
put	total

- a \_\_\_\_\_ refund
- First and \_\_\_\_\_
- to \_\_\_\_\_ someone aware
- an \_\_\_\_\_ attitude
- \_\_\_\_\_ unacceptable
- I would be \_\_\_\_\_ if ...
- I await your \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 2 - What's wrong with this answer?

Read the task on the right and the sample answer below.

Can you find examples of:

- language that is too direct / not polite
- using the incorrect format for a formal letter
- basic vocabulary.

You went to a classical music concert at the National Concert Hall in your city and you had a very bad experience. Write an email to the director of the concert hall explaining what the problems were, mentioning how they could have been avoided and saying what solution you want.

Write your **email** in 220-260 words.

To the director of the National Concert Hall,

**A** page:  
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Three days ago I went to the Beethoven concert with my wife. We had been looking forward to the concert for a long time because we both love Beethoven and going to concerts. Unfortunately, it was a terrible experience.

When we got to the concert hall, there was a long queue outside because there was only one person checking the tickets. It was raining so everyone was getting wet.

If I were you, I would have more people working to check tickets, especially on busy nights. You know how many people are going to the concert so it should be easy.

Then, while we were watching the concert, there were lots of people using their mobile phones to take photos and even to talk to or text people. Can you imagine how annoying that was? The ushers should have done something about it, or an announcement should have been made to say that this was not allowed.

Finally, there was a couple sitting behind us with two children who didn't stop talking for the length of the performance. I can't blame the children as they were too young to know any better. I think you should change the policy so that children under 12 can't go to concerts.

The only positive thing I can say about the whole night is that the music, what little we could hear of it, was amazing.

I want the money back for the cost of the tickets and I also want you to think about the points I have made because people want to be able to enjoy the music when they go to the concert hall.

Goodbye,

John Jones

**EXERCISE 3 - Fill in the gaps.**

Read an improved sample answer and fill in the gaps using phrases from EXERCISE 1. Pay attention to the parts of the phrase that are already used in the text and remember that you might have to change the form of some of the words so that they fit into the sentence. There are two phrases that you do not need to use.

**A** page:  
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to express disappointment	a full refund
to take something into consideration	First and foremost
a recent experience	to make someone aware
to take responsibility for	an unhelpful attitude
to provide assistance	absolutely unacceptable
a huge disappointment	I would be grateful if ...
a proactive approach	I await your response.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_ regarding a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ my wife and I had at the Beethoven concert at the National Concert Hall.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_, on arriving at the venue there was a long queue of people waiting in the rain to have their tickets checked. I recommend (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the amount of guests expected at the concert \_\_\_\_\_ when arranging staff for the evening as it is completely unacceptable that we arrived at our seats soaking wet.

Then, while we were watching the concert, not only were people using their mobile phones to take photos but also to make phone calls and send messages. Clearly, this is (5) \_\_\_\_\_. A (6) \_\_\_\_\_ needs to be taken to avoid this by, for example, making announcements at the beginning of the concert asking people not to use their phones.

Finally, I would like to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ of the fact that there were noisy children attending the event, whose constant chatting was impossible to ignore. The (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of the parents meant that we had no choice but to endure the noise. Banning children under twelve is the obvious solution to this problem.

Overall, the evening was a (9) \_\_\_\_\_ especially given that the music, what little we could hear of it, was wonderful.

I would like to request a (10) \_\_\_\_\_ for the cost of the tickets and I would be (11) \_\_\_\_\_ if you would take my suggestions into account in order to ensure that all paying guests can enjoy the concert experience.

I await your (12) \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,

John Jones



# FORMAL LETTER - TASK 2 - JOB APPLICATION

Have you ever written a letter to apply for a job? You probably know that in this type of letter you have to explain why you should get the job and do so in a polite way.

## THREE STEPS for writing a job application:

### STEP 1: Say what job you're applying for and where and when you saw it advertised.

This is what you must write in the first paragraph. Follow this format:

Dear Sir,  
I am writing to apply for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ (write the job title) as advertised on/in \_\_\_\_\_ (write the place where you saw the ad - it could be on a website or in a newspaper/magazine) on the \_\_\_\_\_ (write the date of the advertisement).

Then write one more sentence summarising who you are.

You have just graduated from university and you are looking for your first job. You see an interesting job online so you decide to apply, by email. Write to the Recruitment Manager of the company explaining what qualifies you to do the job, why you want the job and what benefit you will bring the company.

Write your **email** in 220-260 words.

Dear Sir,  
I am writing to apply for the position of **Junior Programmer** as advertised on **www.jobs.eu** on the **10th of September 2023**. I have recently graduated from the University of Munich and I feel that I am an ideal candidate for the position.

### STEP 2: Respond to the points in the task.

This is where you answer the task, writing two main paragraphs. In this case, the task requires you to respond to three points, highlighted here in purple.

You have just graduated from university and you are looking for your first job. You see an interesting job online so you decide to apply, by email. Write to the Recruitment Manager of the company explaining what qualifies you to do the job, why you want the job and what benefit you will bring the company.

Write your **email** in 220-260 words.

Remember to use all the great formal structures you have learned and to organise your ideas well.

I have vast experience with all the main programming languages not only through my university courses but also because of various programmes that I have written in my free time. As well as that, I have participated in and won many prestigious programming competitions worldwide, details of which you can see in my CV, which I have attached. Furthermore, having worked for three summers in Robots Inc., located in London, I can safely say that I am accustomed to working both on a team and in an English-speaking environment. Finally, I have a strong interest in the world of robotics therefore I believe that I could bring knowledge, passion and enthusiasm to the role.

## STEP 3: Follow the standard sign-off for a job application.

The final sentence of your letter/email is:

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

or

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. (This one is even more polite.)

Then, sign off with a suitable closing and your full name (first name and surname).

So, the end of your letter will look something like this:

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,  
Suzanne Hynes

## EXERCISE 1 - Use the right linking words.

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You are going to do a gap-fill exercise, focusing on linking words.

When you are finished, you will have a good sample answer for the task on page 39.

Choose the correct linking words/phrases from the list to fill in the gaps. You can use each word/phrase only once. In some cases, more than one answer may be possible. Add capitals where necessary.

furthermore      in spite of  
as well as that      finally  
moreover      and  
not only ... but also ...

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the position of Junior Programmer as advertised on [www.jobs.eu](http://www.jobs.eu) on the 10th of September 2023. I have recently graduated from the University of Munich (1)  I feel that I am an ideal candidate for the position.

I have vast experience with all the main programming languages (2)  through my university courses (2)  because of various programmes that I have written in my free time. (3) , I have participated in and won many prestigious programming competitions worldwide, details of which you can see in my CV, which I have attached. (4) , having worked for three summers in Robots Inc., located in London, I can safely say that I am accustomed to working both on a team and in an English-speaking environment. (5) , I have a strong interest in the world of robotics therefore I believe that I could bring knowledge, passion and enthusiasm to the role.

Were you to give me the opportunity to join Robotics International, I feel that I could make a valuable contribution to your projects (6)  my lack of experience. My enthusiasm for your artificial intelligence projects and admiration for the innovation that takes place in your company would, I feel, more than make up for a lack of extensive experience in the workplace. (7) , with my fresh approach and academic credentials I have no doubt that I could bring valuable insights to any projects I worked on.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,  
Suzanne Hynes

# FORMAL LETTER - TASK 3 - LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Who is the editor anyway?

The editor is the 'boss' of a newspaper, magazine or other publication. They are responsible for all the content. When you write a letter to a publication, you address it to the editor.

## THREE STEPS for writing a letter to the editor:

### STEP 1: Refer to the article and say why you are writing.

In the first paragraph, you must say what article you're writing about. Then, you should explain why you're writing the letter. It's usually to disagree with something in the article. There is some flexibility with the choice of words, but this is a good model to use:

You read this extract from an article in a local newspaper:

*School holidays for children are too long. They waste 12 weeks during the summer on doing nothing, playing computer games and sleeping. Children should learn as much as possible while they're young.*

You decide to write to the editor of the newspaper, disagreeing with the views expressed and explaining why you disagree.

Write your **letter** in 220-260 words.

Dear Editor,  
I am writing in reference to the article "                    ." (write the name of the article) which was published in your newspaper on the                      (write the date of the publication of the article).

Then, write one sentence explaining the purpose of the letter.

Dear Editor,  
I am writing in reference to the article "children spend the summer doing nothing", which was published in your newspaper on the 10th of August. I would like to propose an alternative point of view, explaining many important aspects of children's development overlooked by the piece.

### STEP 2: Respond to the points in the task.

This is where you answer the task, writing two or three main paragraphs. In this case, the task requires you to respond to two points. Look at the task in STEP 1 and identify the two points that have to be written about.

Remember to use all the great formal structures you have learned and to organise your ideas well.

As a teacher, I know better than anyone the importance of school when it comes to learning mathematics, developing reading skills and so on. However, it is a well known fact that children learn not only from books but also from the world around them. Free time allows children to develop their imaginations, their autonomy and their personalities, all of which will serve them well when it comes to the world of work. Furthermore, the summer months offer families a valuable opportunity to spend more leisure time together, making for happy, well-adjusted young people.

### STEP 3: End the letter politely - try to say something positive.

Write one final summarising sentence to finish. Even though you are probably writing to criticise something, it's a good idea to try and say something positive at the end. A great way to do this is by using a **contrast linker**.

Here are some examples:

- Although this is a well-written article, I cannot agree with the writer's views on homeschooling.
- While this article is very interesting, it should have been better researched.
- This article provides a lot of food for thought. However, it unfortunately lacks balance, which I hope you will take into account when writing about this subject in the future.

### EXERCISE 1 - multiple-choice cloze.

You are going to do a multiple-choice cloze exercise, focusing on grammar. When you are finished, you will have a good sample answer to the task on page 41. **A** page: 144

	A	B	C	D
1.	of	in	to	for
2.	which	that	what	when
3.	giving	to explain	explaining	saying
4.	nobody	someone	anyone	you
5.	Although	Then	In addition	However
6.	so	also	too	not
7.	whom	them	these	which
8.	spending	to spend	passing	to pass
9.	like	for	as	in
10.	should	must	better	ought
11.	Were	If	Had	Was
12.	motive	cause	purpose	intention
13.	far	soon	well	much
14.	lacks	misses	exceeds	has

Dear Editor,

I am writing in reference (1) ..... the article "children spend the summer doing nothing", (2) ..... was published in your newspaper on the 10th of August. I would like to propose an alternative point of view, (3) ..... many important aspects of children's development overlooked by the piece.

As a teacher, I know better than (4) ..... the importance of school when it comes to learning mathematics, developing reading skills and so on. (5) ....., it is a well-known fact that children learn not only from books but (6) ..... from the world around them. Free time allows children to develop their imaginations, their autonomy and their personalities, all of (7) ..... will serve them well when they enter the world of work. Furthermore, the summer months offer families a valuable opportunity (8) ..... more leisure time together, making for happy, well-adjusted young people.

Playing computer games and sleeping too much are also mentioned (9) ..... particular problems. Regarding the latter, studies show that youngsters in our society simply don't get enough sleep, therefore we (10) ..... to encourage this behaviour instead of worry about it. (11) ..... children to sleep more, so the research says, they would be better able to learn and concentrate. The playing of computer games also shouldn't be a (12) ..... for concern as this activity develops hand-eye coordination skills as (13) ..... as critical thinking and empathy.

All in all, while interesting, this article (14) ..... balance and research. I suggest you take this into account when writing about this subject in the future.

Yours faithfully,  
Drake Donovan

# FORMAL LETTER - TASK 4 - OPENING LINES

A good start is important! In this lesson you are going to:

- choose the correct verb to complete the opening sentences for a variety of formal letters.
- write the opening paragraphs for a variety of formal letters.

## EXERCISE 1 - Opening lines.

- to enquire about something
- to inform someone about something
- to compliment someone on something
- to write in reference to something
- to complain about something

Using the expressions in the box, fill in the gaps in each of these opening sentences.

**A** page:  
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(a) You ordered a pair of shoes online and the ones that came in the post were not the correct ones. This is not the first time that this has happened.

I am writing to .....  
an order I made with your company recently. The shoes which arrived in the post were not the ones I had ordered and, furthermore, this is not the first time that this mistake has been made.

(b) You write a letter to the editor of a magazine disagreeing with an article they wrote about people in their 30s living with their parents.

I am writing  
..... the  
article "Living with your parents"  
which was published in your  
newspaper on the 14th of June. I  
found your article offensive, poorly  
researched and disrespectful.

(c) You were in a restaurant last night and it was wonderful.

I am writing to ..... you  
and your staff ..... the  
wonderful experience I had in your  
restaurant last night.

(d) You want to do work experience in a company but they haven't advertised any positions.

I am writing to .....  
the possibility of doing work  
experience in your company.

(e) You want to offer your social media services to a business.

I am writing to .....  
you ..... the social media  
services my business offers to  
companies such as yours.

## EXERCISE 2 - Now it's your turn.

- Write the opening paragraph for each of these letters.
- The first sentence must always begin with 'I am writing ...'.
- Then, you can finish this sentence in an appropriate way, using a verb or expression from EXERCISE 1, or something different if you prefer.
- Then write one more sentence which could complete the first paragraph of the letter.

**A** page:  
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(a) You are really happy with the package holiday you and your family just went on.

I am writing ...

.....  
.....

(b) You are a business owner writing to the head of a university offering students a number of work experience positions in your company.

I am writing ...

.....

(c) You have just written a book and you're writing to a publishing company asking them to publish it for you.

I am writing ...

.....  
.....

(d) You are writing to the local authorities complaining about the public transport situation in your town.

I am writing ...

.....  
.....

(e) You write a letter to the editor of a newspaper disagreeing with an article they wrote about teaching children foreign languages.

I am writing ...

.....

## FORMAL LETTER - TASK 1 - LETTER OF COMPLAINT

### EXERCISE 1 - Vocabulary exercise. .... page 36

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) to express disappointment        | (b) a full refund          |
| to take something into consideration | First and foremost         |
| a recent experience                  | to make someone aware      |
| to take responsibility for           | an unhelpful attitude      |
| to provide assistance                | absolutely unacceptable    |
| a huge disappointment                | I would be grateful if ... |
| a proactive approach                 | I await your response      |

### EXERCISE 2 - What's wrong with this answer? ..... page 37

- language that is too direct/not polite
- using the incorrect format for a formal letter
- basic vocabulary

To the director of the National Concert Hall,

Three days ago I went to the Beethoven concert with my wife. We had been looking forward to the concert for a long time because we both love Beethoven and going to concerts. Unfortunately it was a terrible experience.

When we got to the concert hall, there was a long queue outside because there was only one person checking the tickets. It was raining so everyone was getting wet.

If I were you, I would have more people working to check tickets, especially on busy nights. You know how many people are going to the concert so it should be easy.

Then, while we were watching the concert, there were lots of people using their mobile phones to take photos and even to talk to or text people. Can you imagine how annoying that was? The ushers should have done something about it, or an announcement should have been made to say that this was not allowed.

Finally, there was a couple sitting behind us with two children who didn't stop talking for the length of the performance. I can't blame the children as they were too young to know any better. I think you should change the policy so that children under 12 can't go to concerts.

The only positive thing I can say about the whole night is that the music, what little we could hear of it, was amazing.

I want the money back for the cost of the tickets and I also want you to think about the points I have made because people want to be able to enjoy the music when they go to the concert hall.

Goodbye,

John Jones

### EXERCISE 3 - Fill in the gaps. .... page 38

- |                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. express disappointment    | 7. make aware          |
| 2. recent experience         | 8. unhelpful attitude  |
| 3. First and foremost        | 9. huge disappointment |
| 4. taking into consideration | 10. full refund        |
| 5. absolutely unacceptable   | 11. grateful           |
| 6. proactive approach        | 12. response           |

## FORMAL LETTER - TASK 2 - JOB APPLICATION

### EXERCISE 1 - Use the right linking words. (suggested answers) ..... page 40

1. and
2. not only .... but also ...
3. As well as that
4. Furthermore
5. Finally
6. in spite of
7. Moreover

## FORMAL LETTER - TASK 3 - LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### EXERCISE 1 - Multiple-choice cloze. .... page 42

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 8. b  |
| 2. a | 9. c  |
| 3. c | 10. d |
| 4. c | 11. a |
| 5. d | 12. b |
| 6. b | 13. c |
| 7. d | 14. a |

## FORMAL LETTER - TASK 4 - OPENING LINES

### EXERCISE 1 - Opening lines. .... page 43

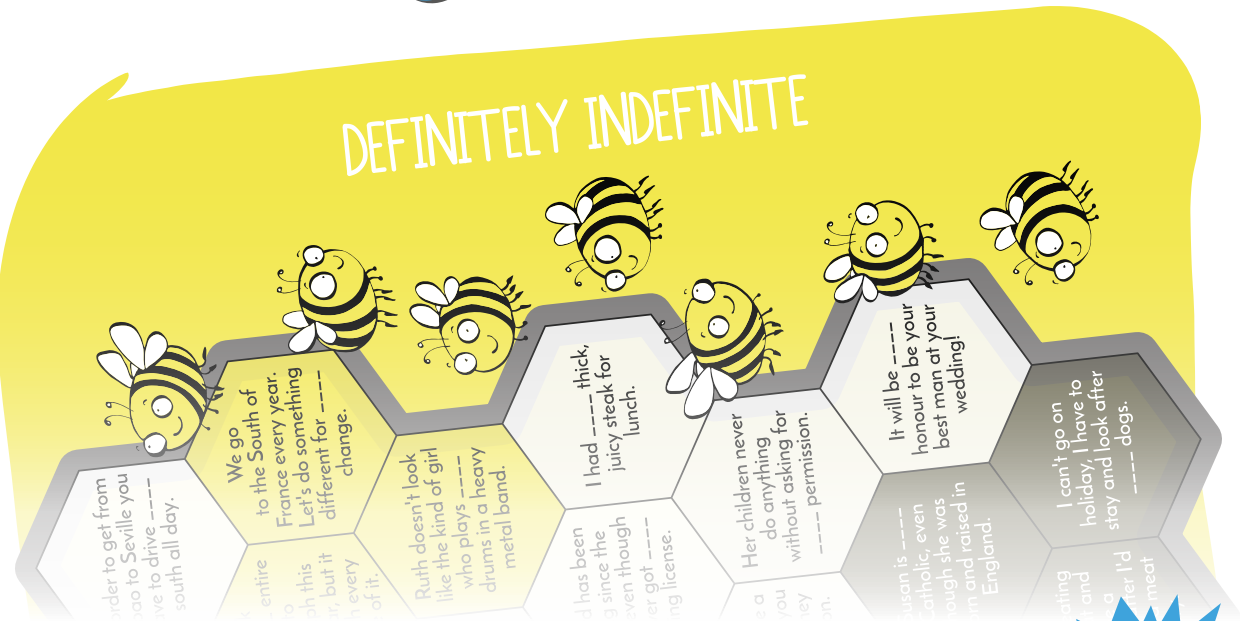
- (a) I am writing to **complain** about an order I made with your company recently. The shoes which arrived in the post were not the ones I had ordered and furthermore, this is not the first time that this mistake has been made.
- (b) I am writing **in reference to** the article "Living with your parents" which was published in your newspaper on the 14th of June. I found your article offensive, poorly researched and disrespectful.
- (c) I am writing to **compliment** you and your staff **on** the wonderful experience I had in your restaurant last night.
- (d) I am writing to **enquire about** the possibility of doing work experience in your company.
- (e) I am writing to **inform** you **about** the social media services my business offers to companies such as yours.

### EXERCISE 2 - Now it's your turn. (suggested answers) ..... page 44

- (a) I am writing to compliment your company on the quality of the holiday we just enjoyed in Malta. Never before have I experienced such high levels of customer care.
- (b) I am writing to inform you about a number of work experience positions available in my company which your students might like to apply for. I am in need of ten programmers for the summer months and your university has a wonderful reputation for computer skills so I would like to offer this opportunity directly to you.
- (c) I am writing to enquire about the possibility of getting a book which I recently wrote published by your company. I have written the next bestseller and am looking for a company like yours to get my work on the bookshelves.
- (d) I am writing to complain about the availability and price of public transport in our town. Retired people are fed up with having to wait a long time for buses and pay a very high price when they finally come.
- (e) I am writing in reference to the article 'Don't teach languages in kindergarten' which was published in your newspaper on the 1st of April. As a kindergarten teacher and a mother of bilingual children, I couldn't disagree more with your views.




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