

FORMAL LETTER WRITING CHECKLIST

Take a look at the following checklist to see if your letter meets the necessary requirements of formal letter writing.

Component	Description	Check
Sender's address	A formal letter will normally begin with the address of the sender. It is written in the top left hand corner of the paper. The address will begin with the sender's followed by the company name (if any) and end with the location. Every aspect of the location: street, suburb, city, etc. should be written on a separate line.	
Date	The date will be written either directly under the sender's address or under the recipient's address. Most often in the format of <u>DD Month YYYY</u> (e.g. 28 Jan 2013).	
Recipient's name, title and address	The recipient's name, title, company (if any) and address (actual location) will follow.	
Salutation	A formal letter will always begin with a greeting. You should address the recipient by name (eg. Dear Mr Smith). If you don't know their name, write Dear Sir or Dear Madam; and if you do not know their gender, write Dear Sir/Madam.	
Heading	After the salutation, there is usually a heading. Quite often it is <u>underlined</u> or rendered in bold (or both). A heading should immediately alert the recipient of the purpose of the letter (Request for a refund, Inappropriate behavior at the bus interchange, etc.)	
Formal register	Adopt a formal register when you write a formal letter in order to be taken seriously. Avoid sentence fragments, contractions, unnecessary abbreviations and overly emotive language.	
Body	A formal letter should be written in a series of short, clear and concise paragraphs designed to inform the reader of your intentions for writing in the most direct way possible.	
Complimentary Close	The writer will normally say something complimentary to the recipient before ending his letter. It should not be anything elaborate – a short sentence expressing good will is sufficient. Most importantly, write <i>Yours faithfully</i> or <i>Yours sincerely</i> before signing your name at the bottom.	

FORMAL LETTER SAMPLE

Study the sample below to see how a formal letter may be written. Take note that this is not the only way a person may write a formal letter and that there are many variations.

