
UNIT 2 FORMAL LETTERS - 1

Structure

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to make you aware of some of the special features of formal letters. We shall also discuss the general format of such letters. Two types of formal letters will be discussed in detail :

- i) letters of request
- ii) letters of complaint

After completing this unit, you should be able to write formal letters to make requests and complaints.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 we introduced you to some basic concepts in communication. In this unit and the next, we shall discuss one type of written communication—a formal letter.

By 'formal' behaviour we mean that our behaviour is in accordance with certain rules, customs and conventions that are observed in our society. For example, people holding important positions in the government may have to observe certain formalities in the discharge of their duties. The Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs may, for instance, be required to pay a 'formal' call on the Ambassador of an important country when he arrives in the capital and takes up his new assignment. On certain occasions, we may have to wear a 'formal' dress because this is required by custom.

In the same way, there are occasions when we have to use formal communication. For example, when we receive money from somebody, we are required to give a formal receipt, that is, a receipt according to commercial custom and having a revenue stamp on it, so that it is considered regular and in good order even for legal purposes.

2.2 FORMAL STYLE OF COMMUNICATION

In spoken or written communication also we can be formal or informal, depending on the situation and our relationship with the person to whom we are speaking or writing.

For example, the language that we use at home with our family or with intimate friends is the most informal. By contrast, the language that we use outside the home becomes progressively more formal. We are likely to use formal language with strangers, business associates, people

of official reports, business letters, legal documents, etc. Certain fields of human activity are usually associated with formal language, for example, business, law, government.

What are the linguistic indicators of a formal style, especially in written language? You must have noticed that certain items of vocabulary are never used except in formal situations.

Examples

Formal	Informal
commence	begin
conclude	end
deteriorate	get worse
aperture	opening

Many phrasal verbs are characteristic of informal style.

Formal	Informal
encounter (verb) (= meet unexpectedly)	come across/run across (a friend)
inflate/enlarge	blow up
investigate	look into
extract (verb)	take out
deceive	take in

Similarly, certain grammatical structures are more common in formal writing, for example, the use of the passive voice and the use of *it* as an impersonal subject. Thus, in the instructions given to candidates at an examination we may find :

'It is suggested that candidates spend thirty minutes on each question.'

'Full marks can be obtained by showing all the steps in the solution of the problems.'

Less formal ways of saying the same things would be :

'We suggest that you spend thirty minutes on each question.'

'You can get full marks if you show all the steps in the solution of the problems.'

You must have noticed from the examples given above that in formal written language the speaker does not refer directly to himself or his readers and avoids the pronouns *I, you, we*.

The use of contracted forms of words is generally absent in formal writing. You will not normally find a sentence like :

The *meeting'll* commence at 4 p.m.

Instead you may come across

The meeting *will* commence at 4 p.m.

The placing of a preposition (at the beginning or at the end of a relative clause or an interrogative sentence) can also distinguish formal and informal styles :

Examples :

She longed for a friend *in* whom she could confide. (formal)

She wanted a friend she could talk to freely. (informal)

In which street do you live? (formal)

Which street d'you live *in*? (informal)

There are various degrees of formality as the examples below show :

When his father died, Ramesh had to look for a job.

After his father's death, Ramesh had to find a job.

On his father's decease, Mr. Ramesh Chandra was obliged to seek employment.

At the outset we may tell you that it is not always necessary to use a very formal style even in rather formal situations. In your formal letters as well, while you may retain the form of such a letter, you should as far as possible avoid sounding too stilted or pompous. It is always a good idea to appear natural and friendly

2.3 FORMAL AND INFORMAL LETTERS

In the course of our life, we all have to write both formal and informal letters. Let's first discuss the difference between the two.

As you are aware, informal letters are likely to be in the form of extended long-distance private conversation. But, at the same time, they are not really different from other kinds of writing. For instance, in a letter to a relative or a friend, you may wish to describe a place or a person, tell a story, or even have an argument. In these private letters, you may use whatever serves you best. These letters are therefore rather varied in their style and content.

Formal letters, on the other hand, are generally more 'set' in their style and phraseology, although the conventions change from time to time. They are usually written, for example, when you want to request an organization to do something for you, or when the decisions of the government have to be conveyed to the people concerned and records have to be kept.

What are these formal letters? These include, for example, letters of enquiry, applications for jobs, letters to newspapers, orders for goods, letters asking for travel and hotel reservations, etc. There may be semi-formal (also called demi-official) letters written to business/professional colleagues and addressed by name.

You will no doubt realize the importance of formal letters, and how often you may have to write them in the course of your life.

2.4 ESSENTIALS OF A FORMAL LETTER

A formal letter has to observe the form usually adopted for such communication. There are certain things that one should keep in mind, when writing a formal letter.

- Keep your letters as brief as possible. Remember that the person you're writing to hasn't the time to go through a long, rambling letter. If he receives such a letter, he's likely to slip it in at the bottom of his pile of incoming mail, with the thought that he'll look at it when he has more time.
- In fact, most formal letters are restricted to one or two main points. Most of them do not exceed one page of single-space typing, and very few are longer than two pages. Topics that are too complex to be treated within the space of the usual formal letter are generally made the subject of reports. If the situation requires a letter as well, you can send a covering letter with your report and state the main points and the conclusion.
- Your letters should be clear, precise and complete. This suggests that all the information should be given, but unnecessary details should be avoided. Care should be taken to highlight the main points. These points should be arranged in a logical sequence.

Read the letter given below in the light of these suggestions.

Dear Mr. Kumar,

We are today in receipt of your letter of 6 October in which you have asked for the catalogue and prices of our watches. We often receive such enquiries particularly at this time of the year when we know most dealers order fresh stocks for Diwali.

In accordance with your request, we have enclosed our latest illustrated and descriptive catalogue showing the range of watches we manufacture. Separately, we have also enclosed a copy of our price-list-cum-discount schedule. As you will notice, our watches range from the traditional types to the latest in quartz, with prices that would suit all sections of society.

You must be aware that we are India's largest manufacturers of watches, and this position has been established after years of hard work. We assure you that you will be fully satisfied with our products, and you can place your orders with us unhesitatingly.

We might add that our watches carry a two-year guarantee against manufacturing defects. A copy of our standard guarantee terms is also enclosed.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

You will probably agree that it is not a well-organized letter. Why do we say that? First, let us consider what it is that the writer wants to say in the letter. Obviously, he wants to tell the addressee that he is sending the catalogue, the price list, and information about the guarantee terms, and also wants to persuade him to buy the watches from him.

These points are all included in the letter, but are not properly organized. There are too many details which are unnecessary and rather distracting. For instance, if we look at the first paragraph of the letter, is there any need for a sentence such as 'We often receive such enquiries particularly...stocks for Diwali'? Also, is there any need for the entire paragraph beginning with 'You must be aware that we are India's largest manufacturers of watches...'? ?

Now, how can we make this letter more pointed and precise? Look at the letter given below:

Dear Mr. Kumar,

Thank you for your enquiry of 6 October.

As requested by you, we have enclosed our catalogue and price-list. All our products carry a two-year guarantee from the date of sale.

You will notice that we offer a wide selection of watches, but may we draw your attention to the models described on pp. 6-7 of the catalogue, which we think might best suit your market?

If there is any further information you require, please contact us. Meanwhile, we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

You will agree that this letter is clearer and more precise. Let us see how the writer of the letter proceeds. First, he thanks the reader for showing interest in his product. He then informs him that he is enclosing information about his products. i.e. catalogues, price list, and guarantee terms. After that, in paragraph 3, instead of giving a general description of the items in the catalogue, he pin-points specifically what would interest this particular customer, thus further motivating him to buy his products.

- Your letters should always present the facts *accurately*. Figures, dates and explanations that are incorrect or misleading may cost time, money and good-will. Therefore, check your facts before you state them. Remember that when you sign a letter, you are responsible for what it says, and sometimes it may even be legally binding on you. Therefore, allow yourself time to review a letter before mailing it, and make the changes you believe are necessary.

The tone of your letter should always be courteous and considerate. Even though you may not know your reader, you must take into account what he/she may feel on receiving the letter. Always ask yourself, 'How might I feel, if I were to receive such a letter'?

Suppose, for example, you are the manager of a store selling electrical appliances, and you receive a letter from a customer who wants free replacement of a defective part, but does not give the cash memo number. You could reply to him as follows :

'The cash memo number must be given in the letter of complaint; otherwise the replacement cannot be arranged.'

or

'Please let us know the cash memo number, so that we can process the replacement immediately.'

Which reply do you think is better?

Obviously, the second one. Notice that the second version uses the active voice while the first version is written in the passive voice. In general, the active voice has a friendlier, more courteous tone; the passive, on the other hand, tends to sound impersonal and unfriendly.

- Instead of writing in a stilted, official language, use a more personal, down-to-earth style.

to use words or phrases that we would never use in any other situation. These are generally legal phrases, or the jargon of a particular trade or profession. It is true that there are certain conventions that we have to follow in official/business correspondence. But, if these are carried too far, it makes our language stylized and pompous.

Also, many of us tend to write business letters in the phraseology used fifty years ago. The overuse of 'set phrases' is likely to produce wrong results, in that they may sound like polite formulas without any meaning.

Look at the following letter :

Dear Mr. Chopra,

Thank you for your gracious letter of the 7th instant. In response to your query, I wish to state that we no longer sell the equipment you enquired about. Be advised that Chand and Company could be of some help to you. You may address further correspondence to that firm for assistance in the matter.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

(Anil Saxena)
Store Manager

What are the words/phrases that you might omit? Perhaps we could replace or omit words/phrases like the following: 'gracious', 'of the 7th instant', 'query', 'I wish to state that....', 'Be advised that', 'You may address further correspondence to....', 'Thanking you'.

As you must have noticed the writing is full of out-of-date business jargon. Let's try and avoid this, and rewrite the letter :

Dear Mr. Chopra,

Thank you for your letter of 7th May.

We no longer sell the equipment you have asked for. However, we are aware that Chand and Company now deal with that line. You may like to write to them for assistance.

Sincerely yours,

(Anil Saxena)
Store Manager

Given below are words/phrases which are often used in official/business letters, but which you must avoid in your own writing.

Avoid	Instead, try to use
query	request, enquiry
I beg to state that....	I wish to say
After a dialogue with you...	After talking to you...
causative factors	causes
optimum advantage	greatest benefit/advantage
answer in the affirmative	yes

In (accordance/compliance)--
with your request...
I enclose herewith the papers...
Pursuant to our agreement...
Making an indepth survey...
in view of
in the event of
in the majority of instances
notwithstanding the fact that...

as you asked for/requested...

I enclose the papers...
as we agreed
studying
because of
if
usually
although, even though

Check Your Progress 1

1 Given below are extracts from letters. Rewrite them, making the tone more courteous.

i) 'We hope that you have taken care of your return air/train booking. As we have already informed you, we do not undertake to do this for you.'

.....
.....

ii) 'We' ve just received the goods we ordered four months ago. We are sending them back as we are unable to use them.'

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.....
.....

iii) 'Your request was unclear, so we cannot fulfil your requirements.'

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.....
.....

iv) Dear Mr. Venkataraghavan,
Your account with us is overdue. We must have your payment by the beginning of next week or we will be forced to initiate recovery proceedings.

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.....
.....

2 Given below are extracts from letters. Rewrite them, omitting or replacing all the words and phrases that you consider incorrect or inappropriate.

i) 'We are herewith sending you the final circular with information regarding accommodation, travel, etc.'

.....
.....

ii) '.....However, it may not be possible to supply free of cost, so, I may kindly be intimated the rate of Annual Subscription of 'Student's Bulletin' especially for year 1988.....'

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

iii) 'Dear Mr. Joseph,

We have received your gracious letter of the 13th instant in which you request information about the Personal Computer 'Future 300'.

Persuant to your inquiry we are pleased to be able to inform you that 'Future 300' is available with us.

Please be advised that we have every assurance that the newly designed 'Future 300' will best fulfil your needs.....'

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iv)Since the work is confidential and urgent, I have been directed to request you to kindly spare your valuable services on Saturday.....

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.....

v) Dear Parents,

As you are aware, our constant endeavour has been to make steady improvement in the academic standards and achievements of our students.

In order to accelerate the pace of progress, especially in the academic sphere, we have introduced a new system of exams, after considerable deliberations, in which I am happy to state some of the parents took active interest.

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2.5 MECHANICS OF WRITING A FORMAL LETTER

In this section we shall discuss the steps we have to take in the writing of a formal letter. We shall talk about the lay-out of the letter, as well as the equipment used.

2.5.1 Drafting the Letter

We follow the same steps in composing a formal letter, as we do for any other kind of letter or for other kinds of writing. We offer you some hints which you may find useful in composing your letter.

- i) It is always a good idea to prepare an outline. This may involve jotting down on a note-pad the points you wish to make, and the order in which you wish to say them.
- ii) Second, write a rough draft, based on the outline you have sketched. In this draft try to limit your writing to the focus you have chosen, weeding out unnecessary ideas, words and phrases. As a general rule, you can organize your letter in three parts :
 - a) say why you're writing,
 - b) highlight the important facts,
 - c) describe what you would want the reader to do for you.
- iii) Then, go over the rough draft carefully, checking for mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

2.5.2 Some Basic Equipment

The appearance of an official or business letter may have a lot of influence on the recipient who has never seen you. To make the appearance of your letter attractive, you may follow these suggestions :

- Try as far as possible to type your letters.
- Type on an unruled white paper of A4 size, and use envelopes of good quality.
- Be sure that the typewriter keys are clean and the ribbon is fresh.

2.5.3 The Format

A formal letter generally follows a set format.

Sometimes your Company/Office may have its own format or style. In that case, you have to follow it. Otherwise you may follow the guidelines given below.

Given below is an example of how people generally set out their letters to commercial companies and officials. Look at it carefully, and study the notes that go with it.

	Modern School R-58, DCM School Marg, (1) New Rohtak Road, New Delhi-110 005.
	(2) 6th May, 1988
(3) Your Ref. No. RLJ/246	
(4) The Manager, (5) Rajasthan Tourism, Mahal Road, New Delhi-110 024.	
(6) Dear Sir,	
(7) Thank you for your letter of 2 May sending us information about your special vacation tours to Rajasthan.	
(8) (Body of the letter)	
	(9) Yours sincerely,
	Ronald. L. John

Notes

- 1) Your personal address should go in the top right-hand corner. Do *not* put your name above your address. Take care *not* to put your address at the bottom of the letter.
- 2) The date should go under your address. It can be written in a number of acceptable ways : 6th May, 1988; 6/5/88; 6.5.88; May 6, 1988.
- 3) If the company or the official you are addressing your letter to has written to you before, there may be a reference number on their previous letter. It is better to quote this back to the writer, on the left-hand side as shown.
- 4) Write down the name or the designation of the person you are writing to. It is better to write both if you know them. In case you write both, you need to remove 'The' from before the designation.

For example :

Mr. J. Rahim,
Manager,
Rajasthan Tourism,
Mahal Road,
New Delhi 110 024.

- 5) Write down the name of the office or institution that you are writing to, and then the official address.
- 6) Place the salutation or greeting two spaces below the recipient's address, in line with the left margin. In most official/commercial correspondence the normal ways of addressing the person you are writing to are as follows :

- a) if you know the name of the person Dear Mr/Ms/Dr. Surname

~~Note~~: women who do not have a professional title, use *Ms.* (for both married and unmarried women). If the woman has expressed a preference for *Miss* or *Mrs.*, honour her preference.

Titles like Professor and Captain are not usually abbreviated.

Example:

Dear Professor Hassan,

- b) if you don't know the name of the person Dear Sir/Madam/Sirs

- c) In some cases you may use a word describing the position held by the addressee. The choice will depend on the subject of the letter.

Dear Parent/Guardian, (in a letter from the school)

Dear Principal, (in a letter from the University)

- d) These days writers who do not know the name or the designation of the recipient often address the letter to the appropriate department. Alternatively, the name of the department may either appear in an 'attention' line, or it may be indicated in the 'subject' line.

Example 1

National Electronics
64, Palika Bazar,
New Delhi-110 084.

Attention ; Public Relations Department

Dear Sirs,

I am returning the three transistor radios we purchased from you, as their sound quality is very poor.....

Example 2

Subject : Repair of Defective Parts

Dear Sirs,

I am returning the three transistor radios we purchased from you, as their sound quality is very poor.....

- 7) The first line of the letter may begin immediately below the salutation as shown in the specimen letter. It is perfectly acceptable to indent it, i.e. start below the end of the salutation.

Example:

Dear Sir,

Could you please send me some information....

- 8) For the body of the letter, use single space between lines and double-space between paragraphs. Again, it is perfectly acceptable to indent or not to indent the first line of each paragraph.
- 9) Start the complimentary close two spaces below the body of the letter, either towards the right (as shown in the specimen letter) or towards the left. You can use a standard expression like 'Sincerely'; or 'Sincerely yours', or 'Yours sincerely'. (If the recipient is a friend as well as a business associate, you can close your letter in a less formal way : 'Best wishes', 'Warm regards', etc.). All these expressions are always followed by a comma. Four spaces below the complimentary close of the letter, and aligned on the left with the close, type your full name. On the next line you may type your business title. Then sign your name in the space between the complimentary close and your typed name.

Additional information : Commercial/Official letters sometimes require additional information—an enclosure notation, or an indication that a copy of the letter is being sent to more than one person. Place any such information on the left, two spaces below the last line of the complimentary close in a letter.

Example :

Sincerely,

(Shruti Kamra)
Regional Director

Enclosure : Report of Projections for the year 1988
cc: Mr. R.M. Parikh
Mr. S.M. Singh

Check Your Progress 2

We have given below the lay-out of a letter. As you will notice, the format is not absolutely correct. On a separate piece of paper re-do this format correctly. You may then look at the specimen format given by us.

	6.4.88 Happy Home, Lane No. 64 Central Road. New Delhi-46.
Mr. P. Pandit, The Manager, Government Tourist Office, New Delhi.	
Dear Sir,	
We are spending a week's holiday in Madras.....	
	Thanking You, Your's Obedient,
	(Mr. R.N. Narula)

2.6 LETTERS OF REQUEST

Now that we have discussed the important features of formal letters, let's discuss some of the different types of formal letters. We shall take up two of them in this unit : letters of request and letters of complaint. Let's first discuss letters of request.

Writing to commercial organizations and to official bodies for things you want to be done is probably the most common form of formal letter. There are two kinds of requests you may make :

- i) requests for goods and services.
- ii) requests for information of various sorts.

Look at the specimen letter below. (It is a letter from a teacher to the Manager of Kashmir Tourism. This teacher would like to take her students on a trip to Kashmir, and is therefore making preliminary enquiries. Notice, especially, the language used in the letter.)

Hill Grange School,
16 Sardar Patel Road,
New Delhi- 110 044.

6 August, 1987

The Manager,
Kashmir Tourism,
Tansen Marg,
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

Could you please send me some information about your tours to the Kashmir Valley? We are particularly interested in visiting Gulmarg.

I would like to know the days when your buses run, their timings, and whether they are air-conditioned. Could you also tell us the fare for thirty students?

I would be grateful if you could also enclose a list of all the hotels in Gulmarg with their tariffs.

Yours sincerely,

(Rita D' Souza)

You must have noticed that there are three ways in which the teacher has requested the manager of Kashmir Tourism for information. What are these three ways? They are as follows :

Could you please send me some.....

I would like to know the days.....

I would be grateful if you could also enclose.....

There are other options that you have in making a request :

Would it be possible for you to send.....

Could you (possibly) send me.....

I would like to inquire about.....

I am writing to inquire about.....

When you make a second request or require more information you could use the word 'also', as in the letter above.

I would be grateful if you could *also* enclose.....

I would *also* like some help on.....

or

Another point I am not certain about is.....

Another matter I need information on is.....

Check Your Progress 3

- 1 You would like to take a certificate course in Food and Nutrition. Complete the letter given below asking for information about the course.

Dear Sir,

..... (i) like to have some information about your certificate course in Food and Nutrition beginning this September.

..... (ii) the prospectus for the course indicating its duration and the fees to be paid.

..... (iii) like to know if you have any plans for developing this into a degree course.

- 2 Write a letter to the Manager of a hotel in Manali. In your letter, specify how many rooms you require, for how many people, for how long, your arrival and departure time, and finally, the meals you will require. Besides the content, be careful about the lay-out of the letter.

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2.7 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

There are often things in our daily life which bother us, or cause us some inconvenience, or which need to be changed. It then becomes necessary to write a letter of complaint to the appropriate person, organization or department. If we want a larger audience to read it, we can get it published in a newspaper.

Here are some suggestion about letters of complaint :

- Take care that your facts are accurate. To complain without reason will annoy the recipient of the letter.
- Avoid sounding rude or nasty in the letter. Remember that the person who receives the

letter may not be directly responsible for the situation you are complaining about. Getting angry with someone who was not at fault is neither fair nor useful.

- If you have a complaint to make, do not delay. Delay not only weakens your case, but can complicate matters for you, as the people you're dealing with may forget the details.
- There is no need to apologize if you are complaining. You need not begin in any of the following ways :

I am very sorry to bring this up.....

We regret to inform you.....

This merely weakens your case.

It is better to come directly to the point.

Example :

'I bought a 'Teleking 44' colour T.V. from your shop last week (copy of the cash memo enclosed), and it was installed by your man at my house. There seems to be something wrong with the sound system. ...'

'I am writing to you to complain about the shipment of costume jewellery we received yesterday against our Order No. 6428.'

- While it is useful to be direct and come straight to the point while complaining, the language should not be rude or intemperate. Words like 'shocked', 'disgusted', 'enraged' have no place in a business letter.

Example :

.....unless you can give us better service, we shall be forced to consider other suppliers in the future.

.....we are far from satisfied with the service you offer.

.....please make sure that problems like these do not arise again.

Now look at the specimen letter given below. Notice that the tone is polite but firm.

ELEKTRA TELEVISIONS PRIVATE LIMITED
14, Mayfair Road, Chandigarh-160 024.

May 14, 1988

Pearl Industrial Enterprises,
P/27A Okhla Industrial Area,
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

On 14th April, 1988 we placed an order for 50 pieces of 20" colour TV Picture Tubes.

On 27th April we received a consignment of 50 pieces of 16" colour Picture Tubes in place of our order for 20" colour Picture Tubes. We immediately returned these 16" picture tubes with a note indicating the mistake that had been made. However, not only have we failed to receive the picture tubes we ordered, but we have also been billed repeatedly.

Would you please send the picture tubes we ordered? If you are unable to do so, please inform us immediately, so that we can make other arrangements.

I enclose a copy of the original order letter and the most recent bill.

Sincerely,

(P.K. Mukherjee)
Sales Manager

Enclosures : 1) Original Order
2) Recent bill

Check Your Progress 4

The first paragraph of the following letter of complaint is missing. Fill in the gap with the most appropriate of the three options given below the letter :

	R-47, Civil Lines, Hyderabad-500 091
	6 April' 88
Fair Price Clothes 16, Sadar Bazar, Hyderabad	
Dear Sir,	
.....	
.....	
.....	
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.....	
I am sure that this particular T-shirt is not representative of your products, and that you will immediately replace it.	
As a regular customer of Fair Price Clothes, I'm generally pleased with your garments and hope to continue shopping at your store.	
Sincerely,	
(Raka Sinha)	

Choices for the first paragraph.

- 1) I must bring it to your attention that the T-shirt I bought from your shop just last week has faded and lost its shape after the very first wash. This has shocked me very much indeed.
- 2) With great reluctance I bring it to your notice that the T-shirt I bought from your shop last week has lost its colour and shape after the very first wash.
- 3) I bought a T-shirt from your shop last week. The cash memo No. is 6234. I find that after the very first wash, the colour has faded and it is all out of shape.

2.8 REPLYING TO LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

You may sometimes be in a position where you have to answer a letter of complaint. The technical term for a letter of this kind is an adjustment letter. To prepare an adjustment letter you must first investigate what happened, and what you can do to satisfy the person who has made the complaint. After you have obtained the facts, you can organize your letter in the following way :

- Acknowledge that you received the complaint, thank the person for writing to you, and apologize immediately.

Example :

Thank for your letter about your order for 50 pieces of 20" colour TV Picture Tubes. Please accept our apologies for not sending the proper size of picture tubes, and for incorrectly billing you

- Sometimes it is not possible to deal with the complaint immediately. It is better not to keep the customer waiting, but tell him at once what you are doing to help him.

Example :

we are looking into the matter, and will write to you again shortly'.

- If the complaint is justified, explain clearly why the error occurred.

Example :

'It was a mistake on the part of our dispatch department....'

'We have rechecked your account, and find that we have indeed been sending you the wrong statement due to a confusion in names and addresses. The computer has been reprogrammed and there will be no more difficulties....'

- You must state specifically what you intend to do or have done to solve the problem.

Example :

'We have already sent the correct size of Picture Tubes by road transport. You should receive them shortly after you receive this letter....'

'We have returned the T-shirt to the manufacturer, Meanwhile we request you to visit our store, and choose another one....'

- Sometimes you may have to deal with a complaint which is unjustified. Even then you must be firm but polite in your answer.

Example :

'Our technical department has examined the two-in-one, and found that there were cracks on the body, as well as in the circuit. This could have happened only if a heavy object had fallen on the two-in-one, or if it had been dropped from a height. We can repair the machine for you, but I am afraid we shall have to ask you to pay for the repairs, as this kind of damage is not included in our guarantee. As a gesture of good-will, we shall only charge you for the parts, and not include labour charges.'

Check Your Progress 5

You are a manager of a Company dealing in Air Coolers. Given below is a letter of complaint from a customer. Write an answer to the letter. Be careful about the lay-out of the letter as well. After you have completed the letter, you may compare it with the specimen letter given at the end of the unit.

Shanti Building 2/15,
19 Pedder Road,
Jaipur-302023

30th November, 1987

The Manager,
Quick Electrical Goods,
14, Bapu Bazar,
Jaipur-302011

Dear Sir,

I bought a 'Cool Home' air cooler from your shop on October 14 this year. The cash memo number is 457. The machine is, therefore, still under guarantee.

This morning the water pump did not work. We would be grateful if you could send an engineer and get the fault rectified. Since both my wife and I work, please ask the engineer to come after 6 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

(J.P. Kalia)

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2.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have made you aware of some of the important points you need to remember when writing a formal letter. These include brevity, clarity, accuracy and courtesy. We have also told you to avoid an overuse of set phrases and official jargon.

We have discussed the mechanics of writing a formal letter and given you sufficient practice in it.

Finally, we have discussed in great detail letters of request and letters of complaint.

After completing this unit, you should be able to write formal letters with greater confidence.

2.10 KEY WORDS

'courteous: polite and kind

draft : outline, usually in the form of rough notes

formal : in accordance with rules, customs and conventions

in'dent (verb) : start (a line) farther from the margin than the others

in'formal : not formal; without ceremony or formality

'jargon : language full of technical or special words

re'cipient : one who receives something

salu'tation : the introduction phrase in a letter, e.g. 'Dear Sir', 'Dear Rita'

'stilted : stiff and unnatural

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1 i) As we have already informed you, we shall not be able to arrange it for you.

ii) We've just received the goods we ordered on March 8, 1987. Unfortunately, it is now too late for us to be able to use them and have therefore to return them to you.

- iii) We are not quite clear what we can do to help you. If you give us more details, we may be able to meet your requirements.
- iv) Dear Mr. Venkataraghavan,
We wish to point out that your account with us has been long overdue. As we shall not be able to wait for more than a week for the settlement of your account, kindly arrange to send your cheque latest by April 7. This will save us a lot of embarrassment.
- 2 i) We are sending you the final circular giving information about
- ii) I would like to subscribe to the 'Students' Bulletin' for the year 1988. Kindly let me know the rate of annual subscription.
- iii) Dear Mr. Joseph,
We have received your letter, in which you have asked for information about the Personal Computer : 'Future 300'.

We are happy to inform you that 'Future 300' is available with us. We are sure that this newly designed personal computer will be the most suitable for your needs.
- iv) Since the work is confidential and must be completed urgently, the Director would like you to assist us on Saturday
- v) Dear Parent,
As you know, we are constantly trying to improve the academic standards of our pupils. Therefore, in consultation with our staff and the parents, we have introduced a new system of examinations.

Check Your Progress 2

Happy Home,
Lane No. 64,
Central Road,
New Delhi-110 046.

6 April, 1988

Mr. P. Pandit
Manager
Government Tourist Office
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Pandit,

We are spending a week's holiday in Madras.

Yours sincerely,

(R.N. Narula)

Check Your Progress 3

- i) i) I would
ii) Could you send me
iii) I would also

R-23, Defence Colony,
Chandigarh-160 017.

9 March, 1988

The Manager
Hill-top Hotel
Manali

Dear Sir,

I shall be visiting Manali with my family from 1st May to 10th May. Since we are six of us, we would like you to book three double rooms for that period of time.

We shall be having breakfast and dinner at the hotel, but we would be grateful if you could arrange to give us packed lunch every day. This is mainly because we plan to go trekking on the mountains, and are not sure if meals will be available on the way.

We have heard a lot about the good service at your hotel, and look forward to our visit to Manali.

Yours sincerely,

(S.K. Chopra)

Check Your Progress 4

3

Check Your Progress 5

Quick Electrical Goods,
14, Bapu Bazar,
Udaipur-302011.

6/12/87

Mr. J.P. Kalia
Shanti Building 2/15,
19, Pedder Road,
Jaipur 302023

Dear Mr. Kalia,

Thank you for your letter of 30 November informing us of the problem with the water pump of your air cooler.

We are extremely sorry for the inconvenience caused to you.

Our engineer will call on you on 9th December at 6.30 p.m. and try to sort out your problem.

Yours sincerely,

(J.P. Singh)
Manager