

Student Lesson Plan: How to Write a Formal Letter: Unit 1, Lesson 5

Learning Objective: To edit a formal letter correcting spellings, punctuation and grammar.

Today you are going to learn how to edit a formal letter. Editing means 'making it right'. Last lesson you worked on 'making it better' by redrafting. In this lesson you'll work on 'making it right' by correcting your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Success Criteria: By the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- Use a dictionary or digital spell tool to check your writing.
- Identify contractions and change them into formal language.
- Write complex sentences using commas correctly.
- Proofread and correct any other mistakes.

Learning Steps:

Task 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Do you know what contractions are?

Contractions are made by doing three things:

1. Joining two words together: **I am** → **Iam**
2. Removing one or more middle letters that are next to each other: **Iam** → **Im**
3. Adding an apostrophe to show where the missing letter or letters were: **Im** → **I'm**

When we speak or write to our friends and family we use casual, informal language including contractions like **don't**, **I've** and **I'm**. These are short ways of saying things. However, when we speak or write to people in positions of authority or those we don't know, we need to be polite and formal, so instead of saying **don't**, we say **do not**; instead of saying **I've** we say **I have** and instead of saying **I'm** we say **I am**. In formal writing it is not appropriate to use contractions - we use the long form instead. Your letter of complaint is a formal letter so you must use the long form.

Task 2. (15 minutes)

- Look at the **Contractions** worksheet. Some words are contractions and some are in the long form. Fill in the gaps to complete the pairs.
- Now change any contractions in your letter to the formal long form.

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Task 3. (25 minutes)

Good writing uses a variety of sentence types; simple, compound and complex sentences. This helps keep the reader's attention. Have a quick look back at the **Formal Letter of Complaint No.4**. and notice how most of the sentences are simple sentences. That makes it boring.

This part of the lesson is about complex sentences.

Complex sentences contain more than one idea. These ideas are expressed in clauses - distinct parts of a sentence. The main clause makes sense by itself - like a simple sentence. The subordinate clause does not make sense by itself alone - it just adds more detail. A subordinate clause needs the main clause to make sense.

Example: **The weather was chilly** (main clause), **even though it was July** (subordinate clause).

'The weather was chilly' could be a simple sentence because it makes sense all by itself but 'even though it was July', makes no sense on its own. Adding the two parts together, makes a complex sentence with more detail. A comma is used to separate the main clause from the subordinate clause: **The weather was chilly, even though it was July.**

The subordinate clause may come first: **Even though it was July, the weather was chilly.**

The main clause is still: **The weather was chilly** because it is the only part of the sentence that makes sense on its own.

Sometimes a sentence has a subordinate clause in the middle, like this one:

The woman, who was very tired, fell asleep on the train. Again, the main clause (in red) is the only part of the sentence that makes sense on its own. It is nonsense to say: 'who was very tired', without the rest of the sentence to help it make sense.

If the subordinate clause is in the middle of a sentence we need a comma either side to separate the subordinate clause from the rest of the sentence.

- Use **scribeasy** pictures to create two illustrated complex sentences, linked to your letter of complaint. Make sure the subordinate clause adds extra information to the main clause in each sentence. And remember to use commas between clauses!
- Now go back to editing your letter. Make sure you have included a variety of simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences to make the letter more interesting for the reader. You could add the two new complex sentences you have just created.

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Task 4. Review & Reflect (15 minutes)

If you are working one-to-one with an adult, read your letter aloud. Find all the spelling mistakes and underline or highlight them in colour. Now use a dictionary or a digital spell check tool to correct all the spelling mistakes in your letter.

If you are working with a group or class, swop letters with a partner. Read the whole letter and underline or highlight any spelling mistakes, then give your letters back to each other and use a dictionary or a digital spell check tool to correct all your mistakes.

To finish, think about and discuss the following questions:

Review & Reflect Questions

Have you corrected all the spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes?
Have you changed all contractions to the long form?
Have you used a variety of sentence types, including complex sentences?
What have you learnt in this unit of work?
What have you done well?
What could you do even better next time?

Well done! You have completed Unit 1.

You could publish your letter by writing or typing it up 'in best' for a display. Or you might want to publish it on a digital platform like the school website. Having a real audience read your writing helps you see yourself as a true author - which of course, you know you are!