3. An Informal Letter

1. What is the most common way of communication among people?

Do people still write letters, what is special about it?

What do you think of the following text?

*The modernist writer Virginia Woolf called letter writing "the humane art, which owes its origins in the love of friends". In our frenetic world of electronic communication, we must remember to write with thought and consideration…*

For the complete text see: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazines-16871715](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazines-16871715); “Mourning the loss of the written word“ by Lisa Jardine.

2. Find these in a letter (HO1):

Signature

Receiver of the letter

Polite expression to finish the letter

Opening phrase

Body of the letter

Date

Closing phrase

Closing phrase

3. Which of these phrases are used in the letter (HO1)? Think of texts in which you can find the rest of the phrases:

*Dear Michael; Hi John; Dear Sir or Madam; Yours faithfully; Best wishes; Love; Yours sincerely; Yours; Dear all; All the best*

4. Tick the statements relevant to an informal letter.

There are no paragraphs in the text.

Contracted forms are often used.

Language is formal.

Addresses of the writer and the receiver are always listed.

Polite phrases are used to end up a letter.

You should always sign your letter and use your first name.

Emoticons or funny abbreviations at the end of the letter are common.

**Useful introductory and closing up phrases:**

**Replays**: *It was great to hear from you.*

*Thanks for your letter.*

**Other**: *I´m sorry I haven’t written for ages/for such a long time.*

*It was so nice to hear from you again/to receive your letter.*

**Friendly end:** *Keep in touch; Write soon; Give my regards to…*

**INFORMAL Letter SUMMARY:**

**Who to:** Friends, family members

**To address:** *Dear Michael*

**To end:** *Love, Love from, Lots of love* (family members); *Best wishes, All the best, Take care* (friends and acquaintances)

**Useful tips:** No addresses (you may include your address in the top right-hand corner); include the date; use contracted forms; informal language and left out words acceptable

**Paragraphs:** *Yes* (especially in longer letters, usually one idea = one paragraph)

Do not forget to sign your name (first name is the most common).

5. Describe the picture (HO2) and answer the questions:

**What** is happening in the picture?

**Where** is it?

**Who** are **the people**; can you describe them?

What is the **atmosphere** like?

Anything else you want to mention?

6. Before writing a letter to an English speaking friend about your summer holiday answer these questions to brainstorm some ideas:

Who will you write to?

Did you stay at home or did you go anywhere, why?

What were the 3 activities you enjoyed the most in the summer (give details)?

Was there anything you disliked?

Did something special happen?

What tenses will be the most suitable for this type of text? What language will you use?

7. Write **a letter** to your English speaking friend. Yesterday you came back from a lovely holiday.

Write your friend about it. Write **120-150 words.**

You should:

* **write where you went and who with**
* **mention 3 activities you did**
* **recommend the place to your friend**

*Write your letter in an appropriate style and form.*

**Answer key:**

Informal letter

1. Students´ own answers

2. Find the parts of the letter:

Date – *usually under the writer’s address or above the greeting*

Receiver of the letter – *Michael*

Opening phrase – *How are you? I hope you’re fine.*

Body of the letter – *I am in Greece... to ... tomorrow.*

Polite expression to finish the letter – *I hope...*

Closing phrase – *All the best*

Writer – *Marie*

3. *Dear Michael, All the best* are used in an informal letter; *Hi John* – an informal email; *Dear Sir or Madam* and *Yours faithfully* – A formal email/formal letter to a person/people whose names we do not know; *Dear all* and *Best wishes* are used in both informal letters and emails; *Love* and *Yours* – family or people who we are really familiar with

4. You should always sign your letter, first name is usually enough. Emoticons or funny abbreviations at the end of the letter are common. Paragraphs are useful especially in longer letters. Contracted forms are often used.

5. Students own answers, speculating, speaking

6. Students own answers, brainstorming of ideas for their future writing

7. The letter should be analysed based on criteria used for assessing Writing for Maturita exam (school leaving exam).

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A photo (HO2) - my own sources

HO1

Rafina, 25 June 2012

Dear Michael

How are you? I hope you’re fine. The end of the school year was really hectic and that´s why I haven’t written for so long. I am really glad it is holiday now and I can catch up with you and other friends.

I am in Rafina in Greece with my parents at the moment and I’m having a fantastic time. When we arrived we hired a car and did lots of sightseeing and saw a few ancient temples. We also spent a couple of days in Athens and visited the Pantheon. It was simply breathtaking! In the evenings we went for dinner to small Greek restaurants in Plaka. The food was great and I loved the atmosphere.

Yesterday, we went on a boat trip around Andros which is an island not too far away from the coast. We even saw some dolphins from the boat. It was so exciting! The beaches were marvellous. There was a small storm on the way back and we were really happy when we saw the port again.

Unfortunately, there are only two more days left. There are so many things I wanted to do like diving; I haven’t tried it yet. I hope that the weather stays nice and I will be able to go divining tomorrow.

I hope you are having fun wherever you are and wish you a great summer. Write soon!

All the best

Marie

HO2

