

**CHAPTER ONE****LETTER WRITING**

<b>The Informal Letter</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Semi - Formal Letters</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>The Formal Letter</b>	..	..	..	..	..	..

**Letters are grouped into three types:**

- **The Informal Letter**
- **The Semi - Formal Letter**
- **The Formal Letter**

The classification depends on who is to read the letter, in other words, the audience. We shall examine each of the three, respectively.

**THE INFORMAL LETTER**

(a) They are addressed to:

- Close friends within age groups. For example: playmates, classmates, colleagues etc
- Close relations of similar age, such as cousins, siblings, nephews, etc.
- Adult or elderly relations like parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.

(b) The language should be flexible and informal.

**FORMAT OF THE INFORMAL LETTER**

Like any other letter, the informal letter should have the writer's address, date, salutation, body or message of the letter, subscription and finally, the writer's name. Let us consider these elements in detail.

**The Writer's Address**

You may either punctuate or decide not to punctuate your address.

Career Secondary School  
Post Office Box 3157  
Abuja.

OR

Career Secondary School,  
150, Mercy Street,  
Lagos.

Foreign letters should state the country from which they are being sent in the writer's address.

i.e

Career Secondary School,  
150, Mercy Street,  
Lagos,  
Nigeria.

**Do not put your name on top of the address.** In all, the writer's name appears as the last item.

**The Date**

This comes directly after the address and can be put in any of the following ways.

- (a) 12th November, 2013      (b) June 12, 2011  
i.e. Career Secondary School,  
150, Mercy Street,  
Lagos,  
Nigeria.  
12th November, 2013.

**The date is not part of the address and should not be indented.**

Example: Success Avenue,  
15, Park lane,  
Lekki,  
Lagos.  
3rd March, 2013.

**Salutation**

While the address is written close to the right hand margin, the salutation is positioned at the opposite side, close to the left hand margin. Examples of accepted forms are given below:

- i. To relations who are peers:  
Eg. Dear Femi, Dear Sister Jane, Dear Cousin,
- ii. To adult family relations, you may use: Dear Uncle Jude, Dear Father,  
Dear Aunty Mary, My dear Mom
- iii. To close friends: Dear Amina, My dear Ben, Hi Joe, Hello Victor

**Note that there is a mandatory comma after the salutation, the omission of which leads to loss of marks. Also, note that it is wrong to use Dear Friend, Brother or Sister. They should be addressed by their first names.**

**The Letter Structure**

**The structure of the letter should adopt the following format: Introduction, body and conclusion.**

**Introduction**

This could take the form of a reference to a previous letter from the recipient, a statement of the purpose of writing; in order to break a long silence, pass on information, etc..

**Body**

The body should encompass the specification of the question, making sure that all aspects are fully covered. Arrange the material in paragraphs each devoted to a single issue, step or fact. You can bring in extra information on issue(s) not stated in the question but this should not be given a long treatment.

**Conclusion**

In the conclusion, a vital point or points may be re-stated or re-emphasised. Greetings, best wishes that is pleasantries, and the need for a prompt reply are expressed here.

**Complimentary Close****(i) Subscription**

This comes right after the last word of the main letter. Some correct forms for informal letters are:

Your loving son, Yours sincerely or Sincerely yours, Your friend etc.

Note that in the subscription, it is only the first word that is capitalised. Again, the word 'yours' has no apostrophe in it.

**Wrong Forms**

Yours Affectionately,  
Sincerely Yours,  
Your's loving Sister,  
Your's ever,

**Correct forms**

Yours affectionately,  
Sincerely yours,  
Yours sincerely,

As is the case with the salutation, there is a mandatory comma after the subscription. What follows is the writer's name.

**(ii) Writer's First Name.** For instance: Chiboy, Ade.

Eg: Yours truly,  
Chiboy.

**Question 1**

Your brother is about to enter secondary school. Write a letter to him, stating at least three problems he is likely to face in school and suggesting ways of solving them..

**(WASSCE 2002)**

**Answer**

*Ekanem Memorial Hospital,  
35, Uyo Road.,  
Ikot Ekpene,  
Cross Rivers State.  
14th June, 2002.*

*Dear brother,*

*Thanks for your letter which I received yesterday. I was relieved to know that your long silence was due, not to any health or physical problem, but to the fact that you were busy with your common entrance examinations. I am happy that it is all over now and you are doing fine.*

*I congratulate you on your brilliant performance during the exams. It shows you are really prepared to move to the next level. How are you preparing to move to your new school? I hope all the necessary things have been put in place by mum and dad.*

*Kunle dear, I write to bring to your notice some of the problems you may likely encounter in your new school and how to solve them. You know, secondary school is quite different from primary school. There you will be expected to do things by yourself, without mum and dad.*

*In secondary school, peer victimization or bullying constitutes a major problem that makes students fearful in school. The perpetrators, who at times are senior students, wilfully and consciously desire to bully other students and put them under tension. And this tends to hinder their learning potentials and create unnecessary fear for their victims. But I'll advise you to be calm and humble in any situation you find yourself. But first and foremost, you need not to move with friends that will be of bad influence. Be determined to succeed. Face the future without fear or undue anxiety, always have confidence in yourself.*

*Remember that happy children make happy communities and happy communities make a happier world.*

*Again, you will meet students from different background, character and religion. I know it will be quite difficult for you to adjust to your new environment. The type of food you have been enjoying at home will hardly come your way now. In order to integrate, you have to learn to mix-up with others, be friendly and accommodating.*

*The next problem you may likely encounter in your new school is the academic work load. You will discover that the subjects you are to study have increased. It is mandatory you pass all of them to make a good grade. In order not to fail, read ahead of time, make friends that are more intelligent than you and above all, always visit the school library and search for the*

*right information that will help your academic pursuits.*

*Remember, your upbringing at home can never allow you join any bad group. Remember also the principles about life that dad has imbibed in us, and all other problems would be surmounted.*

*I've gone through this elaborate explanation to get you prepared for the life ahead of you. Just call me a week to the time of your departure to school. I will come home to see you off to school.*

*My regards to all at home.*

*Remain blessed.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Ronke.*

## **Question 2**

Your friend in another school has requested some information about your school to enable him to decide on moving over to your school. Write a letter to him discussing at least three areas in which your school excels. **(WASSCE 2003)**

### **Answer**

*Holy Saints Int'l Sec. Sch.,  
P. O. Box 142,  
Burutu,  
Bayelsa State.  
12th September, 2003.*

*Dear George,*

*I have just received your last letter; I am so happy to hear from you again. Thanks especially for confiding in me about your school. I understand from the content of your letter that, you are not too comfortable with the situation of things in your school. I will advise you to just keep calm till the end of this term.*

*I am happy that you have requested for some information about my own school. By the time you finish reading this letter. I believe you will make up your mind to join me next academic session.*

*Education is the best legacy for a progressive nation and we can't afford to toil with it. Bearing this in mind, my school is committed to academic excellence and diversity. It fosters and encourages all the qualities needed for an all rounded child. The curriculum is designed to broaden students' knowledge and outlook. It offers a comprehensive and all-embracing curriculum for academic excellence and total development of its students into responsible citizens.*

*My school has excellent purpose-built facilities spread over 22 hectar site in the country side. digital computer laboratory with internet facilities, conducive library with old and modern relevant books, well ventilated classrooms with modern whiteboards and floor covered with tiles, standard and well equipped science laboratories (Physics, Biology, Chemistry) and Food and Nutrition / Home economies laboratory, just to name a few.*

*In games and sporting activities especially in basket ball competitions, she has been ranking high, winning trophies at different levels. In fact, my school has dominated the games and sports scene.*

*In academics, we have been outstanding in both senior and junior external examinations. It is adequately staffed with qualified, experience and hardworking teachers. My school participates in local and national competitions, seminars and conferences. She won a trophy for producing the best overall results in May/June WASSCE from 2002 - 2006 and 2008.*

*Last but not the least, my school balances a disciplined work routine with an enjoyable social life outside the classroom. The following clubs exist in the school, JETS/Mathematics Club, Literary and Debating Society, Cultural and Dramatic Club, Young Farmers' Club etc. The clubs have their meetings with picnics and excursions to exciting places and tourist sites.*

*I look forward to meeting you next session. Say me hi to David and Daniel.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Victory.*

### **Question 3**

The government of your country has recently introduced a new means of communication that has many positive effects on the lives of the majority of the people. Write a letter to your brother who is away from the country, stating how it has affected the lives of your people.  
**(WASSCE 2004)**

**Answer**

*St. Augustine's College  
P. O. Box 54,  
Yaba.  
Lagos,  
Nigeria.  
14th August, 2004*

*Dear Brother Abdul,*

*I just want to intimate you on the new developments back here in Nigeria. So many changes are taking place here. One of such is in the area of communication. The Federal Government has introduced a liberalization policy whereby, more G.S.M. Operators and internet service providers have been licensed and are now operating in the country.*

*Millions of Nigerians now have access to mobile phones. Looking back on what life used to be for all before the G.S.M evolution about six years ago.,*

*it gives one a clear understanding of the positive impact G.S.M has on Nigerians. The way we used to communicate and do business have changed tremendously.*

*Some of the blessings of Mobile Communication in Nigeria has been felt directly or indirectly on the populace. Job creation and employment is one of the good things that G.S.M has brought to us. The section has employed both skilled and unskilled manpower in recent times. A good number of young graduates have been given employment in G.S.M companies. Apart from this many people are self-reliant doing their own G.S.M business. One of such is making of calls and the sales of recharge cards to G.S.M users, usually called "business centers". This business is very easy to start because it requires little capital.*

*The impact is also felt in the banking industry. Banks do what is called Mobile banking where a customer has full knowledge of his account using G.S.M phones. Students can also access and check their results on their G.S.M phones.*

*Socially we have benefitted a lot from the service providers. Some have provided educational facilities, AIDS Campaign awareness, hospitals, and sponsored several events. Also, our social lives have also been impacted on relationships with friends, relatives and loved ones through phone calls. I have personally benefitted from the mid-night free calls being offered by MTN. I know you have also benefitted too.*

*Brother, I think I have pointed out some of the positive impacts of G.S.M. on the lives of Nigerians. It is pertinent to say that we expect quality service at a more reduce cost.*

*How are you doing? How is life treating you and others around you over there? I hope you are coping with your new environment especially the weather there. We are all doing very well health here in Nigeria.*

*Thanks for reading my letter. Mum and Dad are sending their greetings.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Hasson .*

**Question 4**

You have recently moved into a new neighborhood with your parents. Write a letter to your sister who is studying overseas giving at least three reasons for disliking the new place.

**(WASSCE 2005)**

**Answer**

*Grimes High School,  
15 Acme Crescent,  
Agidingbi,  
Lagos.  
22nd June, 2005*

*Dear Peculiar,*

*How are you and your studies over there? Our family has moved into a new neighbourhood. We moved immediately after your departure to the United States of America. The new place is located at Ibafo, Ogun State. The house is very big and beautiful. When Daddy initially told me that we were moving to a new house, I was excited, but the excitement soon turned to anger, when I found out that the house and the neighbourhood was not as wonderful as I had imagined. I disliked the place for so many reasons.*

*First, the new place is located in the suburbs of the state. This makes it quite difficult for me to get to school on time. The worst part of it is that, the roads are very rough and untarred. During the rainy seasons, the roads are not accessible by vehicles.*

*Secondly, the area lacks the vital social amenities a community is supposed to have. There is no pipe - borne water, no good hospitals and electricity. The only thing one enjoys especially at night is the God - given fresh air, which is also hampered by the presence of mosquitoes. In fact the area is mosquito infested. This makes the place so uncomfortable to live. The absence of electricity makes life so unbearable. I read my books with battery - powered searchlight. Life in the new place is like living in a jungle.*

*Lastly, my dear sister, I dislike the new place because of its high rate of crime. Criminals use most of the uncompleted buildings there as their hideouts. Can you believe that, when the clock strikes six, no human soul would be found outside his or her premises? If you dare, you would be signing your death warrant!! Yes it is as bad as that. There are so many incidents of armed robbery attack. I promise to give you full gist in my next letter.*

*I understand you are not experiencing winter over there now, do take care of yourself and extend my greetings to all your friends.*

*Mummy, Daddy and Joy do send their greetings.*

*Bye.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Rose.*



**Question 5**

You are about to leave secondary school and a friend of yours who is attending school in another town has written to enquire about what you wish to do after leaving school. Write a reply to him, explaining your plans. **(WASSCE 2006)**

*11, Lawole Street,  
Alafia Layout,  
Osogbo.  
14th April, 2006.*

*Hello Bimpe,*

*Thanks for your letter which I received yesterday, enquiring about what I wish to do after leaving school. I was relieved to know that your long silence was due, not to any health or physical problems, but with your final examinations. I am happy that it's all over now and that you are doing fine.*

*As you know I am about to leave secondary school to face the real world. Several plans are in my head, as to what I will do after school. I do hope these plans will materialize and make me the lady I want to be in future. As soon as I leave school, I will travel by train to stay with my uncle in Jos. This is because I have never traveled by train before. I do hope it will be an exciting journey. When I get to Jos, I would first of all visit all the places of interest and catch some fun. I will then enrol for computer training, as you know computer literacy is the order of the day.*

*After I am done with my computer training, I would also want to get a vacation job. I have already prepared my resume. The job will enable me save some money for my university studies. Perhaps the most important plan I have on ground is to pursue my university education. I do not want to be a half-baked student. I am still contemplating on the University of my choice. In fact my mum promised to get a counselor to help me. In that aspect, one needed to get started earlier because of the extensive and the numerous deadlines for admission. One of the greatest challenge student are facing in this country is gaining admission into both Federal and State Universities. I just pray JAMB will not 'jam' me and cause some obstructions on my way.*

*My dream career is to study Medicine and become a medical doctor. That's why I am putting more effort in all the science related subjects. My parents are looking forward to the day I will graduate as a medical doctor.*

*Finally, Bimpe, I am also praying to God seriously for "Mr. Right" when I am ripe for that. While I pursue my career, I would also want to be a responsible wife and mother. What about you? Please reply.*

*Thanks.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Nuella.*

**Question 6**

Your sister wants to marry a man from another ethnic group against your mother's wishes. "Write a letter to your mother giving at least three reasons why she should accept your sister's decision. (WASSCE 2007)

**Answer**

Maryhill Secondary School,  
P.M.B 31324,  
Victoria Island,  
Lagos.  
20th April, 2007.

Dear Mother,

*I hope this letter will meet you in good health. I am writing this letter with a mixed feeling of sadness and joy. I am happy because I came first in quiz competition organized by our school and sad because of your refusal to allow my sister Oge to marry Adamu who hails from the Northern part of the country.*

*Mum I am against this your prejudice and unwise stereotypes. I would like you to reconsider your decisions and allow them marry.*

*Inter-ethnic marriage is not a new thing in Nigeria. This is because it enforces harmony in a country, after all, the likes of IBB from Niger state, had long and successful marriage, even though his wife was from far distant Delta State.*

*Secondly, I have met this guy and he is very calm and reserved, he is a young medical doctor, who has spent most of his time in the Eastern part of the country. He speaks the Ibo Language fluently and is conversant with our culture.*

*Thirdly, my understanding of a "woman" is when a lady is above 24 years, Oge is 25 years old and knows what is good for her. You are only being tribalistic which is not helping matters at all. Don't be taken by surprise if Oge elopes with this guy. It will be disastrous and all fingers will be pointing at you.*

*Mum, I know it is outrightly wrong for Oge to disregard your wishes and take the risk of inter ethnic marriage. Believe me, there would be no regrets. Your prejudice would soon be cleared and the couple would stand up to impress you. Let us pray for them and in so doing, praying for one Nigeria.*

*Send my regards to the whole family and also to my friends.*

Your loving son,  
Nonso

**Question 7**

You disagreed with your brother over a lost item which you later found among your belongings. Write a letter to him setting the record straight and apologizing to him.

**(NECO 2010)**

*St. Augustines College,  
P. O. Box 24,  
Yaba,  
Lagos.  
15th December, 2010*

*Dear Brother Ben,*

*The reason for this letter is to let you know that, the lost item (i.e. The cell phone) which caused some arguments between both of us, has been found. Can you guess where it was found? Inside my laundry basket!! In fact I was shocked beyond words when I saw the cell phone. I felt like disappearing out of the confines of the planet earth. I was very surprised, confused and at the same time sad because of all my uncouth language to you on that day. Please brother do find a place in your heart to forgive me.*

*I wish to explain to you that I did not have the least idea, that the cell phone was in my laundry basket. I kept wondering who must have dropped it there. Mum rightly explained that, it could be our baby sister, Valerie who did that.*

*It was on Saturday when I emptied the clothes in the basket for washing that I found the cell phone. I winked my eyes severally, to make sure that what I saw was the cell phone. I quickly raced to Mum's room and showed it to her and believe me, everybody breathed a sign of relief. I nearly beat the life out of Valerie, but for the timely intervention of Mum.*

*Please brother sorry for what this might have caused you, especially the fact that, you have stayed for days without a cell phone. I can imagine the trauma you might have gone through. However we should consider it to be a child-like attitude of baby Valerie, after all, we did similar things when we were her age.*

*The cell phone would be sent to you latest next week, so that you can be connected with your friends. I hope you have forgiven me? Thanks for that.*

*Brother, I would be very happy if you could offer me some financial assistance to enable me buy some provisions for my school. Dad says he is not too buoyant this week. Remember, you have always been there for me despite all odds.*

*How are you doing? How is life treating you and others around you? How are you coping with your new job? I do hope you are fine and in good health. We are all in top form. Mum and Dad are doing fine. In fact, Dad is planning to travel to the United States of America come next month.*

*Greetings from all, especially baby Valerie. Have a wonderful experience from your new job.*

*Your younger sister,  
Maryann.*

**Question 8**

Your school fees have been increased astronomically and your father has threatened to transfer you to another school. Write a letter to him giving at least three reasons why you would like to remain in your present school.  
**(WASSCE 2013)**

*Government Girls' College,  
Bellavilla,  
P.M.B. 2025,  
Apapa,  
Lagos.  
29th May, 2015.*

*Dear Father,*

*I write to express my concern over your decision to take me out of Government Girls' College my current school to another school because of the sudden increase in school fees. Daddy, I honestly understand your reaction to this situation and wish there was a better alternative because, this decision is going to hurt me so much.*

*A change of school at this time for me will be counter productive. Daddy, you know I am in Senior Secondary School year two now and I have just one session to complete senior secondary school. If I change now, I would be greatly distracted in my studies. It will take time for me to adjust to the new environment of the new school, make new friends with whom I would study and a host of other challenges.*

*As a matter of fact, leaving all my friends and colleagues behind may affect adversely my rate of concentration.*

*I frankly do not know just how good this new school would be. Are the teachers as dedicated and good as my present school? Do they teach well. I don't even know the rate of success of the new school that is, their performance in external examination. My current school has a track record of good results.*

*All the reasons I enumerated above are serious issues weighing on my mind since you mentioned a possible change in school for me.*

*Daddy, please, I would want you to stay action and let me manage and finish my senior school in my current school. There are other alternatives as to how to pay the new school fees. I know the economic tone in the country is not too good but I know it will pick up soon. Please daddy, I would be taking a great risk should I leave at this stage, certainty for uncertainty. Dear daddy, thank-you for considering my option. Love to Mummy and Betola. I love you all.*

*Yours daughter,  
Mimi.*

**Question 9**

A friend of yours who has been living in Europe for some years has written to invite you to join him. Write a reply to his letter giving, at least, three reasons why you would rather remain in your country. (WASSCE 2014)

2, Olokodana Street,  
Odo Oba,  
Lagos,  
Nigeria.  
23rd May, 2014

Dear Timpe,

*It's a pleasure as usual to read from you. Your long stay in Europe I am glad has not reduced the intensity of our friendship. I look forward to visiting you in the near future.*

*Talking about visit to you in Europe brings me to the matter at hand that is, your invitation that I should join you in Europe. I'm afraid this unfortunately will not be visible at least, not in any foreseeable future.*

*Remember I am just about rounding off in Higher school and would be studying Environmental Studies with special emphasis on Town Planning in the Polytechnic line in Nigeria. I carefully made a choice of town planning because I am not so impressed with the layout of towns in Nigeria. It's my dream to place this country Nigeria, my Nigeria on its feet; you know this cannot be possible if I have to come down to Europe to study. I will be studying other people's town's layout and will be needing to transfer the idea to Nigeria in future.*

*Besides, even if I want to opt for the alternative in the paragraph above that is, study in Europe, I still have one hurdle to overcome. My grand aunty, aunty Mimi, you know I'm needed around to take care of her daily needs. I mean, run little little errands for her and generally help in maintaining her health. She is old now and needs young ones around her. Even my mum cannot play role as she herself is not growing any younger.*

*My dear friend, I'll love more than anything to be with you in Europe but these are my constraints.*

*I look forward to seeing you during the holidays when you come home for your usual annual trip. My love and regards to Uncle Dafi and Aunty Toki.*

Yours sincerely,  
Libran.

**THE FORMAL LETTER**

This is a letter usually addressed to business establishments, institutions, editors and generally, office. Formal letters are normally addressed to positions or job titles, not individuals. Even though an individual may receive such a letter and act on it, he does so by virtue of his official position. Examples are headmasters and principals of schools and colleges respectively, managing directors, editors, personnel managers, marketing managers, secretaries, etc.

**The Format of the Formal Letter**

The formal letter has a conventional layout which is strictly followed. It is as follows:

- Writer's address and date of writing.
- Recipient's designation / address.
- Salutation
- Heading
- Content (introduction, body and conclusion)
- Complimentary Close (Subscription, signature and full names)

**Address and Date**

Like the informal letter, formal letters begin with the writer's address followed by the date of writing. It is written at the top of the right hand corner and it is either punctuated or left unpunctuated.

**Recipient's Designation / Address**

The recipient's designation address is placed to the left side of the page, right below the writer's address but not directly under it. The writer and the recipient's address may be presented thus:

Vivian Fowler Girls' Secondary Schools,  
6, Oregun Road,  
Ikeja,  
Lagos.  
13th September, 2006.

The Editor,  
Daily Graphics,  
Graphic Communications Group Limited,  
P.O. Box 742,  
Garki,  
Abuja.

**Note the following**

- i. The recipient's address is not indented or slanted.
- ii. The letter is addressed to an official position and is, thus, depersonalised.
- iii. Avoid the use of slangs, abbreviations, colloquial expressions.

**Salutation**

It is positioned close to the left-hand margin that is, directly below the recipient's address and the accepted forms for formal letters are: Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Sir/Madam, and Dear Editor/ Sir for letters to newspaper editors, Your Excellency, His Royal Majesty, etc.

**Heading**

This is simply a short title given to sum up the contents of the letter. It enables the recipient to know at a glance what the letter is all about. It also facilitates filing in the offices. The heading or title comes right after the salutation and should preferably be capitalized. Note that when the title is capitalized, it should not be underlined but if the title case is used, it should be underlined.

**The Content**

The formal letter is formal both in its layout and content. The language is serious and depersonalised. The focal point is the business or the material at hand and has no room for non-essentials. The language should be devoid of word contractions, slangs, shortened or no subject sentences, etc. ( may refer to *Formal Language*).

Be respectful in tone but do not sound obsequious. An opening like :“I do hereby most respectfully and humbly beg to apply for ...”and a closing like: “I am your most obedient servant” are not only out of date but also irrelevant.

**Openings for Formal Letters**

Given below are some appropriate ways to open or begin your formal letters.

**(a) For Rejoinders**

For example Many readers have used your “Medium Readers’ Column” to express their views on consolidating our fledgling democracy and I wish to react to the issues/points raised by the last contributor.

**(b) In Response to Advertisements**

- i. With reference to your advertisement for a Marketing Officer in the “Sunday Times” of the June 15, 2013, I hereby apply for The Post of...
- ii. I would like to be considered for the post of a Library Assistant in your institution as advertised in “*The Statesman*”...

**(c) In Reply to a Letter**

With reference to your letter bearing Reference number ... and dated 17th May, 2001 asking us to supply your restaurant with soft drinks, I regretfully write to explain our inability to take the offer.

**(d) Applying for Jobs not Advertised**

I hereby apply for the post of an Administrative Officer in your company.



**(e) Letters not being Written for Reply or as a Response**

These letters should start with a statement of the purpose of writing. After the introduction, discuss the issue(s) at stake in detail. Remember to keep to what is necessary or relevant and that will require a clear knowledge of the purpose of writing and writing to satisfy the objective. If it is a narration or a description (for example, a letter to a committee probing students riot at a recently held sports competition), be vivid, factual and clear. A discussion of an issue may require stating the causes, effects, remedies or solutions and recommendations.

**(f) The Complimentary Close****(i) The Subscription**

The subscription comes just after the last word of the letter. For formal letters, it could be: Yours faithfully, or Yours obediently. You are reminded that only the first word in a subscription is capitalized.

**(ii) Signature and Name**

The writer's signature follows the subscription. Then comes the writer's full names. The surname, which is usually written first, is marked off by a comma before others follow in full or initials.

**LETTERS OF APPLICATION**

Let us have a detailed look at one example of the formal letter - The application letter. This important letter has particular features common to other business or formal letters.

When it comes to applying for a job, there are specific details about the applicant that the prospective employer will like to know. These will include your marital status, educational background, qualifications, present and past or course of training, previous work experience (if any) and the applicant's special interest or hobbies which are relevant to the post being applied for.

Additionally, the employer would like to be given names, status and addresses of two or three people from who he can seek information about you. These are called referees. The reason for this being that a prospective employer can refer to them if he wishes to have a more authentic information about the applicant's character, education, capabilities or previous experience. It is appropriate for applicants who are working to ask their current employers to be one of the referees. Applicants just out of school should pick one of the referees from the last attended school.

Note that letters of application are formal letters. Therefore, all that has been said about the features of formal letters also apply here.

**Structure and Style**

The introductory or opening paragraph should state the post you are applying for and if appropriate, where you saw the advertisement i.e. The name of the newspaper and date on



which the advertisement appeared. (NB. Put the name of the newspaper in quotation marks).

The second paragraph begins the main body of the application letter. In this paragraph and the subsequent one or two paragraphs, provide details of age, marital status, educational background, qualification, present post or training, previous experience and relevant special interests. If you chose to write two paragraphs for the body, a natural division would be to include your age, marital status, educational qualifications in one paragraph, while information about your current circumstances, previous experience and interests can follow in the next.

In a nutshell as far as paragraphing goes, proceed as follows.

The first paragraph should necessarily state the purpose of writing eg. Job being applied for. Then in about three subsequent paragraphs, provide details needed to enhance or justify your being selected or given what you are after. Be reminded that there is no place for pleasantries in this letter.

The conclusion of an application letter normally gives the names and addresses of referees and a polite request for the application to be considered. It is inappropriate to ask the recipient, here, the prospective employer, to reply “as soon as possible/practicable” or “without delay”. This reflects bad manners. The applicant should neither be obsequious nor superficial.

An application letter should not contain promises, expressions of concern for the health of the prospective employer and his family, self-praise or pleading. Simply give the facts and information required.

Below is an application letter written to seek employment as a Confidential secretary.

*8, Kudirat Abiola way,  
Off Cappa Bus stop,  
Oregun-Ikeja,  
Lagos.  
8th May, 2014.*

*The Chancellor,  
University of Lagos,  
Akoka-Yaba,  
Lagos.*

*Dear Sir,*

***APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY***

*I am writing in response to your advertisement in the Punch Newspaper of 12th of June 2006, for the above post.*

*Your advert stated that the candidate should be well versed in shorthand (minimum of 100 words/min) and should be proficient in the use of the English language and computer.*

*My shorthand skill and computer proficiency meet your basic requirements.*

*I am prepared to work in a trial bases for no remuneration to demonstrate my abilities.*

*Find attached my resume for your perusal.*

*I am available for interview at anytime and look forward to hearing from you..*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Christy Oluwatobi*

### **SEMI - FORMAL LETTER**

This letter falls midway between formal and informal letters. They can be categorized as letters to adult acquaintances, adult or elderly family friends and may include others who are of the same age but are not friends.

In semi-formal letters the recipient is known, yet one cannot chat with him. Therefore, you cannot use the informal language. This is not to say that the formal style is appropriate here. Semi formal letters admit neither the formal not the informal style.

Usually, in this type of letter the writer would like the recipient to solve a problem for him. It could also be written to express gratitude for something done or given.

#### **Also remember these:**

Write straight to the point

The salutation is Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Miss. / Rev. plus the surname. The farewell is usually Yours sincerely.

In writing semi-formal letters you must sound courteous and polite. As much as possible avoid being too informal, the reason being that the degree of familiarity or closeness between the writer and the recipient is minimal.

**Question 1**

The poor state of the facilities in your school is causing the students great concern. as the senior prefect, write a letter to the chairman of the Board of Governors highlighting the problems and requesting him to come to the aid of the school **(WASSCE 2002)**

**Answer**

*Government Secondary School,  
P. O. Box 142,  
Adiyan,  
Lagos State.  
18th March, 2002.*

*The Chairman,  
Board of Governors,  
Government Secondary School,  
Adiyan.*

*Dear Sir,*

***POOR STATE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES***

*For some time now, the physical and academic condition of our school is giving us concern. The poor state of our school facilities is a major cause of worry here. Many eye brows have been raised towards that.*

*The classroom are poorly ventilated and overcrowding in each classroom is making matter worse. They are not up to standard. This will obviously affect the process of teaching and learning. The modern white board used in most of the schools are lacking in our school. We are still using wooden blackboard, which makes our classroom dusty and dirty.*

*Outside the classroom there are broken toilets, sagging roofs and dilapidated building. Such conditions have raised serious questions about students and teacher's safety. The state of infrastructural decay in our school is horrible and this should be changed.*

*The lack of instructional facilities is a major problem here. The teachers do not have the necessary instructional materials to impart knowledge. They do not have textbooks, white board and markers. The condition of the library is poor and some buildings are half completed.*

*Sir, it is necessary for the school facilities to be increased and they should be in good condition so as to boost the morale of teachers. The lack of it could contribute to poor academic attainment.*

*It is on this background that I am appealing to the Board of Governors to come to our aid and act fast before something disastrous happens.*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Biodun Babatope.*

**Question 2:**

There has been a continuous discussion on the evils of unemployment. Write a letter to the commissioner for labour highlighting at least three of these evils and ways of addressing them. (WASSCE 2003)

**Answer**

*Holy Saints Int'l Sch.  
P. O. Box 142,  
Buruntu,  
Delta State..  
22nd July, 2003.*

*The Commissioner,  
Ministry of Labour,  
P. O. Box 39160,  
Alausa,  
Lagos State.*

*Dear Sir,*

**EVILS OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

*Unemployment in Nigeria has become rampant and has caused social and economic upheaval in the society. It is no longer news that this evil monster has succeeded in devouring this country with its evil effects.*

*When I look on the streets and see the frustration on the faces of highly qualified but jobless people, my heart bleeds. There is a lot of anger in the land. It is becoming a norm to find the whole families where virtually every member is jobless or unemployed. They are neither employed or assisted by anyone. Perhaps, if the cause of this malady can be identified then it can be arrested. An idle mind is the devil's workshop.*

*One of the reasons for insecurity in Nigeria is because of the rise in unemployment. Unemployment can jeopardize the entire essence of democracy which every government claims to protect. Other factor shall be treated in the following paragraphs.*

*To start with, unemployment has the tendency to aggravate rather than alleviate the level of poverty in our society. It increases criminal activities, such as robbery, suicide bombing, terrorism, fraud , assassination and so on. The effect of the above is that it increases insecurity.*

*Furthermore, unemployment establishes and widens the gap between the haves and have nots. This will go a long way to create anger, frustration and envy amongst the citizens.*

*I personally feel that it is in everyone's interest that the employment situation improves. The following steps can be taken. Provision of soft loans and financial incentives to all duly registered unemployed to help them start something worthwhile. The government should at the same time guarantee security, enforce laws and, provide a conducive environment e.g. tax breaks, adequate security, good roads etc.*

*Efforts should also be intensified at making sure that all government officials who have reached the age of retirement do so as at when due, so as to give room for promotion and new intakes.*

*In conclusion, government should set up cottage industries so as to create more job opportunities for the unemployed members of the society.*

*Thanks for your patience.*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Faith Ajibola.*

### **Question 3**

Write a letter to the chairman of PTA in your school suggesting three ways in which parents can work together to create a better learning environment in the school.

**(WASSCE 2004)**

### **Answer**

*St. Augustine's College,  
P. O. Box 14,  
Yaba.  
13th August, 2004.*

*The Chairman,  
Parent Teacher Association,  
St. Augustine's College,  
Yaba.*

*Dear Sir,*

### **HOW PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN WORK TOGETHER**

*The involvement of parents in their children's education is of vital importance. It determines the future of their children. Parents need to work hand in hand with the teachers to create a better learning environment in the school. They can involve themselves in different activities including, good parenting, helping with home work, talking to the teachers, attending school functions and taking part in school governance. If these occur, children will succeed not just in school, but through out life.*