

When you choose a letter task in C1, read the question carefully to see if it is formal or informal. Decide who is the target reader, and what is the purpose of the letter - to thank, complain, persuade, or apply - and use appropriate functional language to do this.

INGREDIENTS

OPENING PARAGRAPH

I am writing in response to + noun

With reference to your letter/advertisement...

I wish to + apply / complain / apologise...

GET A HIGH MARK BY EXPLAINING YOUR IDEAS

For this reason...

As a result

Therefore

This is due to...

Arguably,...

I must stress that...

COMPARE and CONTRAST your ideas

Whereas

While

On the one hand

On the other hand

Conversely

Similarly

Likewise

Alternatively

EXPLAIN EXPERIENCES or SITUATIONS

Present / Past perfect continuous

ASK THE READER TO DO SOMETHING

Please + infinitive

S + have/has been informed that...

Please note / be advised that...

S + will have no alternative but to + verb phrase

Your help will be greatly appreciated

REFERENCE PRONOUNS avoid repetition of important nouns and concepts

Use *the former* and *the latter* to refer to two different nouns at once.

Use *the aforementioned* + nouns to refer to all the things you spoke about before

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

In conclusion is not appropriate in this task!

I hope that I have been able to convince you of + topic of writing. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

USE AMBITIOUS GRAMMAR TO SHOW YOUR C1 LEVEL AND EXPRESS MORE COMPLEX IDEAS:

CLEFT SENTENCES

What affects the environment the most is how we behave.

What + verb phrase + be + clause

It is our behaviour which most affects the environment.

It + be + noun phrase + clause

NEGATIVE INVERSIONS

Rarely has the issue of the environment concerned so many people.

Negative adverb + auxiliary + subject + clause

Not only are we concerned about the environment, but also the cost of being environmentally friendly
Not only + auxiliary verb + subject + clause, but also + clause

MODAL VERBS

These are often called *attitude verbs*, and so they are an excellent way of expressing what you think about something in a more formal way, without saying "I think"

PRESENT/FUTURE: MODAL + BE
PAST: MODAL + PRESENT PERFECT

POSSIBILITY

Can't/could/may/might/must

CRITICISM

Should/could/ought to

OBLIGATION

Need to = it is/was necessary
Need not = it isn't/wasn't necessary.



Recipe for a great C1 Formal Letter

SALUTATION

*Dear + Name OR
Dear Sir / Madam*

OPENING

In the first short paragraph, explain your reason for writing. Try to paraphrase the exam question in this part.

MAIN BODY

Here you are answering the exam question, and including all relevant examples and explanations.

MAIN BODY

You need to remember to use formal English, so avoid colloquial expressions, phrasal verbs, and excessive use of the first person.

MAIN BODY

You should try to organise your ideas by theme or topic into two or three paragraphs. The exam question will help you find these.

CLOSING

Here you should politely invite the reader to respond to your letter.

SALUTATION

Sign off appropriately: *Yours Sincerely* (if you wrote the name at the start), or *Yours Faithfully* (for Sir / Madam).

METHOD

1. Read the exam question carefully. Identify the topic, the question, and the style (formal).
2. Plan the general topic of the letter and why you're writing. Remember: there's no mark for having the correct idea!
3. Think of examples for each idea, or how to paraphrase the opinions you've been given in the question.
4. Decide which idea you have the most to say about. This will be your penultimate paragraph.
5. Select some ambitious language from the ingredients to include in your writing, and think about how you can adapt the opening and closing paragraphs.
6. Slowly and carefully write your letter. Think about how you finished the previous paragraph, and how you can connect your ideas together.
7. Read the exam question again. Have you included all the necessary information?
8. Check your work carefully for your typical mistakes. This will take about 5 minutes.

