

PRACTICAL LETTER- WRITING

with exercises and
worked examples

IAN GORDON

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PART ONE

PERSONAL LETTERS

CHAPTER ONE

Types of Letter

Letters may be divided into three types: personal letters, formal letters and business or professional letters.

Personal letters are those written to a relation or a friend concerning some private or social matter—to give the latest news about yourself or to make arrangements for an outing or a visit somewhere, for example.

Formal letters are those written to someone you do not know particularly well as a friend, or to someone you do not know at all. A formal letter would be one applying for a job, or complaining to a manufacturer of radios about a faulty set, or to a hotel asking about the price of their rooms, or to your Headmaster asking for a testimonial.

Business or Professional letters are those written between one business and another. They concern technical and commercial matters: the ordering of goods, requests for estimates to do jobs, the acknowledgment of receipt of goods, and so on.

This book does not deal with the third type of letter (Business and Professional) because their subject matter is so specialized, and because the details of layout and even the phrases used vary from one type of business to another, and also between one firm and another. You will have to write such letters only when actually employed in a particular firm, and your employer will then tell you the sort of letter he wants you to write. This book is rather concerned with *personal* and *formal* letters of the type you may have to write as a student, or, when you leave school and college, as a private person.

DECIDING THE TYPE OF LETTER YOU WANT TO WRITE

Some letters can be considered as a mixture of personal and formal letters. For instance, if you were to write to the Principal of your former school asking him to act as a referee, this would be a formal letter, as suggested above. However, you might also give him some purely personal news about yourself and what you have been doing since leaving school, particularly if you happen to know your Principal well. Thus it

would also be a personal letter to some extent. Despite this, it is possible to put most letters fairly definitely into one category or another (thus the example just suggested of a letter to a Principal must be considered a formal letter, because it is *mainly concerned* with a matter of business). Indeed, before writing a letter, we must clearly decide which sort it is to be, because the layout and to some extent the language, as well as the content, of formal and friendly letters are quite different.

PRELIMINARY EXERCISE

Say whether each of the following letters is a personal letter or a formal letter. Would any be partly both? If so, say why.

1. To your brother, who is ill in hospital.
2. To an old school friend who has come to live in a town near you, inviting him to visit you.
3. To your cousin, congratulating her on winning a scholarship.
4. To the electricity company saying that the bill they have sent you is too high.
5. To a manufacturer of furniture asking him to send you a catalogue.
6. To your employer telling him that you have broken your leg and are unable to return from holiday.
7. To a person who has found your purse. He left it at the police-station, from where you collected it, and from where you obtained his name and address.
8. To an advertiser in the local paper who is selling a second-hand camera.
9. To a pen-friend in a foreign country.
10. To the editor of a newspaper giving your views on the local transport system.

CHAPTER TWO

The Layout of Personal Letters

On the next page you can see a short personal letter. The main parts have been numbered so that you can clearly recognize them.

PART I is your address. This tells the person who is going to receive your letter where you live so that he can send back a reply. Even if you are writing to a friend who knows your address, it is customary to write it down here.

PART II is the date on which you write your letter. You may not post the letter the day you wrote it, and it may take some time for the letter to reach your correspondent if he lives a long way from you. Thus it is very useful for him to know the day on which you wrote the letter.

PART III is the 'salutation'. This consists of an introductory word or words, and the name of the person you are writing to.

PART IV is the body of the letter. This contains the information you want to send.

PART V is the 'valediction', or 'leave-taking'. Here you must use a conventional phrase to close the letter.

PART VI is the signature. Here you write your name.

PART I—your address—will depend simply on where you live, or where you are writing from. **PART II**—the date—is equally simple. **PART IV**—the body of the letter—depends on what you want to say. The difficulty here quite often is finding the appropriate English phrase for the particular matter about which you are writing. You will find a lot of guidance on this in the course of this book. **PARTS III, V, and VI**, however, are rather more difficult. Various words and phrases may be used in the sections. You must find the most suitable for the particular letter you have to write. Each should be just right for the person you are writing to and the purpose for which you are writing, and the three must 'match' together. (See the diagram on p. 15.) The following notes will help you in the correct layout of personal letters.

I. YOUR ADDRESS

(a) No two addresses will be exactly the same, but the general rule is to write:

on the first line: the number of your house or flat, and the street it is in.

on the second line: the district of your town or city, if it is a large one with several districts.

15 Smith Street,
Levenshulme,
Manchester 19, ← I
England.

Tel. SWA 356798

17th June, 1967. ← II

III → Dear John,

Thank you for the photographs you sent me. They have just arrived. I think those of your house are particularly good. I shall send you some of our house with my next letter.

IV ↗ I am afraid that I cannot write a longer letter just now as I have a long essay to write for school by tomorrow morning. I shall write at the week-end.

Yours sincerely, ← V

Richard ← VI

on the third line: the name of your town or city. If the city is divided into postal districts, this number may follow the name of the city (as in the example: 'Manchester 19'). In this case, the name of the district ('Levenshulme', in the example) is not required, but it is still often included as well.

on the fourth line: the name of the sub-division of your country (county, province, etc.) in which your city lies. In the case of a large city, this may be omitted. For example, as Manchester is a large city in England, it was not necessary, in the example, to write the name of the county on the next line. With smaller towns, however, you should always remember to do this, because there are often several towns of the same name in one country.

on the fifth line: the name of your country if the letter is going abroad. Otherwise this is not necessary.

(b) If you have a *telephone*, you should write your number immediately after your address. It is usual to abbreviate 'Telephone' to 'Tel.' Note that a full stop is used to mark the abbreviation, and a colon is often used before the actual number.

(c) *Houses with names.* If your house has a name, the name is written on the first line. The name of the street is written on the next line, and then the name of the district, and so on. (It is usual to write the name of the house between inverted commas.)

(d) *Abbreviated forms.* 'Road', 'Street' and 'Avenue' are sometimes shortened to 'Rd.', 'St.' and 'Ave.' In this case, the full stop is often used to indicate the abbreviation, though some English authorities on punctuation say that this is not necessary. Remember particularly that if you do abbreviate and use a full stop to mark the abbreviation, then you still need the comma at the end of the line (see (e) below).

(e) *Punctuation.* A comma should be written at the end of every line in the address, except the last line. At the end of the last line you write a full stop.

(f) *The shape of the address.* In a personal letter it is usual to slope the address in the manner shown. Because the telephone number may be rather long, you may write it further to the left than the last line of the address above it. The first line of the address should begin about two thirds of the way across the paper. Great geometrical accuracy is not called for, but the result should look tidy. Make sure that you do not slope the line so much that you have no room left on the paper to write the last line of the address.

(g) **Warning** You must NEVER write your name above your address. This is a common mistake. Your own name appears only ONCE in your letter—at the END (see p. 15).

EXERCISE I: THE ADDRESS

(a) *Comprehension of Instructions*

(i) Copy out and complete the following sentences:

- (1) The name of the country in which you live must be written as part of the address when.....
.....
- (2) You may write your telephone number your address.
- (3) If your house has a name, the name is written between and on { the same line as
a separate line from } the name of the street.

- (4) 'Road' may be abbreviated to; 'Street' may be abbreviated to; 'Avenue' may be abbreviated to
- (5) A is written at the end of every line of the address except the line where a is written.
- (6) We NEVER write our above the address. This appears only once on a letter—at the.....
- (ii) If we decide to slope the address, then we must be careful not to start too far across the paper. Why?

(b) The following three addresses are unpunctuated and are not set out in lines. Set them out neatly, with correct punctuation. Slope the addresses as in the example.

- (i) 72 winter road portsmouth hants england
 (ii) po box 2631 kano nigeria
 (iii) flat 189b johnson court black road hong kong.

(c) Write out your own address. Practice this several times until you have the most satisfactory appearance.

II. THE DATE

(a) This is written directly under the address. Various ways of writing a date are possible in English, but the following is probably the most common, and can be safely used.

1st	January	,	1967
2nd	February	,	1968
3rd	March	,	1947

Note that there are four items to be written down: the number of the day, the name of the month, a *comma* and the year.

(b) A full stop is often written after the year, but this is not necessary. It is more frequently missed out.

(c) Remember that the number of the month must be an *ordinal* number: that is, you must write after it 'st', 'nd', 'rd', or 'th'.

Warning Be very careful of 11th, 12th, and 13th.

EXERCISE 2: THE DATE

In English, the date may be written as three figures: thus '5.5.68.' However, in a letter, it is more usual to write instead '5th May 1968', as was suggested above.

Write out the following dates, given here as numbers, in the fuller form.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| (a) 1.5.65 | (b) 22.2.62 | (c) 3.1.66 | (d) 12.12.65 |
| (e) 13.11.59 | (f) 14.9.67 | (g) 21.7.66 | (h) 31.3.65 |
| (i) 30.10.66 | (j) 11.8.66 | (k) 23.4.65 | (l) 6.6.66 |

III. THE SALUTATION

Here you usually write 'Dear' plus the name you would normally use when speaking to the person you are writing to. Remember that a personal letter is always written to a person you already know (see p. 3).

Thus (a) *for a friend of your own age*, whom you would normally address by his given name, such as 'Kofi', 'Mary', or 'Nai Pang', you would write 'Dear Kofi,' 'Dear Mary,' or 'Dear Nai Pang,'.

(b) *for a brother, sister, or cousin* you would also use his or her given (christian) name in exactly the same way as for a friend. We do NOT, in modern English, write 'Dear Brother,' 'Dear Sister,' or 'Dear Cousin,'. If your brother is called Michael, then write 'Dear Michael,' and so on.

(c) *for your mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, uncles, and aunts* you write the name of the relationship, because that is the name you use when talking to them—as explained above. Therefore we write 'Dear Mother,' 'Dear Grandfather,' 'Dear Aunt,' and so on.

(d) *for a friend or acquaintance who is much older than you*, for example a friend of your father's, or your school-teacher, you write 'Mr.', 'Mrs.' or 'Miss' plus their family name (surname). If the person is a doctor, a professor, or holds a military rank, then that title will replace the 'Mr.', 'Mrs.' or 'Miss'. Thus we might write 'Dear Mr. Smith,' 'Dear Professor Jones,' 'Dear Captain Wright,' 'Dear Doctor Jones,'.

(e) for a particularly close friend or relation you may write 'My dear' in place of 'Dear'.

Note (i) The full stop is not necessary after 'Mr' and 'Mrs', though it is often used. You *must*, however, *always* use a capital letter. NEVER write out *Mister* in full. There is no way of writing out 'Mrs.' in full—'Misses' (which has the same sound as 'Mrs') is the plural of Miss.

(ii) *Addressing more than one person.*

In writing to husband and wife we write: 'Dear Mr and Mrs Jones' if we do not know them well enough to use their given names. If the persons are not so related, then we must repeat the 'title' for each person:

'Dear Mr Brown and Mr White'.

Such occasions, however, rarely occur.

- (iii) After the salutation, you *must always* put a comma (see the example on p. 6 and all other specimen letters in this book).

EXERCISE 3: THE SALUTATION

(a) *Comprehension of Instructions*

- (i) Copy out and complete the following sentences:
- (1) The salutation is written after the and before the.....
 - (2) In a personal letter, the salutation usually consists of the word plus the name you would normally use when to the person you are writing to.
 - (3) In the case of the following relationships, we *cannot* use the name of that relationship when writing the salutation:
.....
 - (4) In the case of the following relationships, we *can* use the name of the relationship when writing the salutation:
.....
 - (5) To a friend or acquaintance who is much older than you, you would normally write
 - (6) If writing to a particularly close friend, or to a relation, instead of 'Dear', we may write in the salutation before his name or the name of his relationship.
- (ii) What punctuation mark must you always write after the salutation?

(b) A man is called John White. He is a school-teacher. Write the salutations that you would expect to see on letters written *to* him *by*:

- (i) his wife
- (ii) his son
- (iii) his cousin
- (iv) a pupil of his
- (v) his nephew
- (vi) his brother
- (vii) his wife's brother (that is, his brother-in-law)
- (viii) his daughter
- (ix) his headmaster (whom he does not know particularly well as a friend)
- (x) his uncle

(c) A woman is called Joan Green. She is a doctor. Write the salutations you would expect to see on letters *to* her *by*:

- (i) her husband
- (ii) her son
- (iii) another doctor who did not know her particularly well
- (iv) a close friend

- (v) her sister
- (vi) her grandfather
- (vii) another doctor who was also a close friend
- (viii) her aunt
- (ix) a nurse whom she employs in her surgery, and who is not a friend
- (x) her uncle

(d) Write out the following salutations properly punctuated. Remember to include the final comma after the salutation in each case.

- (i) dear mrs adegbola
- (ii) my dear alan
- (iii) dear mr and mrs welsh
- (iv) dear miss wong
- (v) dear mother
- (vi) dear uncle
- (vii) my dearest lin
- (viii) dear captain briggs
- (ix) dear major mohamed
- (x) dear samuel and mary

IV. THE BODY OF THE LETTER

Most of this book will be concerned with what you write in this section: that is, what the 'content' of the letter is, but the following general principles should be remembered, and may be stated here:

(a) Unless it is very short, the letter, like any other piece of continuous writing, should be divided into paragraphs.

(b) Start the first paragraph on the next line after the salutation, and about an inch in. Thus:

Dear Joseph,
 Thank you for your

Your next paragraph will be indented an equal amount.

You should NEVER start the first line further over to the right than the comma after the salutation. Nor should you leave a line blank. This is very poor layout:

Dear Joseph,
 Thank you for your . . .

(c) in a personal letter, the language may be more colloquial than in a formal essay. In particular, *contracted forms* (for example 'I'm', 'you're' etc.) are permitted. However, you must be grammatical, and be careful to show clearly the development of your ideas. Paragraphs and sentences should be carefully put together and 'linked' with appropriate conjunctions and sentence adverbs.

(d) Be very careful about the **LAST SENTENCE**. This should be a complete grammatical sentence. There is no *need* to have a special last sentence (see the examples on pp. 59–64), though frequently we do finish the letter with some wish, usually using the verb ‘to hope’.

Thus we might write: ‘I hope you have a nice holiday’ or ‘I hope you get better soon’. We can then write a suitable valediction, as suggested below.

On the other hand, we may use the verb ‘to remain’ by itself or in conjunction with ‘to hope’. In this case, we write a *comma* after ‘remain’, and then write the valediction. ‘Hope’ is then used as a participle, and ‘remain’ is now the finite verb.

Thus we may write **EITHER**:

I hope you get better soon.
Yours sincerely,

OR

Hoping you get better soon, I remain,
Yours sincerely,

What you must **NEVER** write is:

Hoping you get better soon,
Yours sincerely,

because, by omitting ‘*I remain*’ we have removed the finite verb from the last sentence.

Note carefully that the ‘I remain’ is written *on the same line* as the last sentence. It is **NEVER** separated as is the valediction.

Some useful endings for friendly letters

There is no need to end a letter in any special way, apart from keeping to the rules of grammar and layout just noted. However, the following typical endings to letters are given for study and adaptation as appropriate.

I’m afraid I shall have to close this letter now: it’s getting rather late, and I still have a lot of homework to do. Please write soon!

Well, that’s all the news for the moment, I think. Don’t forget to write soon.

I’m looking forward to hearing about your holidays in your next letter.

Often you have been forced to write a rather shorter letter than you would have liked. Then the following are very useful.

- I’m sorry this letter is so short. I’m rather pressed for time at the moment with examinations starting in the morning, as I’m sure

you'll understand, but I did want to write and thank you for the lovely book.

I'll write a fuller letter later, after the examinations: meanwhile, best wishes to you all. Please write when you can.

EXERCISE 4: THE BODY OF THE LETTER

(a) *Comprehension of Instructions*

(i) Copy out and complete the following sentences:

- (1) It is important to remember to divide a letter, unless it is very short, into
 - (2) The first line of the body of the letter starts on the line the salutation and about from the left hand side of the paper.
 - (3) The first line of the body of the letter should never start more to the than the comma after the salutation.
 - (4) Language in a letter may be more than in an essay.
 - (5) Why are conjunctions and sentence adverbs important in writing letters?
 - (6) The last sentence of a letter should be complete gly.
 - (7) We often finish a letter with a sentence using the verb or the verb or using both of these verbs.
- (ii) 'Contractions' may be used in a letter. Give two examples of contractions using the pronoun 'you'.
- (iii) 'Contractions' are not normally used in essays. Where else, besides letters, do we use them?
- (iv) Is it true that grammar is not important in writing a letter? Give a reason for your answer if you can.

(b) Below are the salutations and the opening sentences of three letters.

Set them out properly:

- (i) dear ahmed thank you for your letter
- (ii) my dear ann i received your letter this morning
- (iii) dear professor smith thank you for your kind invitation

V. THE VALEDICTION

When leaving someone, we usually say 'Good-bye!' or, less formally, 'Cheerio!'

We must NOT say this at the end of a letter. There are other phrases which we may use instead. Which one we choose depends on how well we know the person to whom we are writing.

(a) For a letter to a friend of your own age or an acquaintance who is older than yourself (see (a) and (d) of THE SALUTATION (p. 9)).

we usually write here 'Yours sincerely,'. To make the letter less formal, we sometimes write these words in reverse order: 'Sincerely yours,' (see the letter on p. 51).

(b) For a letter to a relation we usually write

EITHER 'Love,'

OR 'Your (ever) loving son/daughter/cousin,' etc. (see p. 61).

Note that all relationships *can* be used here—that is, though we do not write '*Dear sister*,' (see p. 9) we might write 'Your ever loving sister,'.

Note (i) *Punctuation*: A COMMA *must* be placed after the salutation.

(ii) *Capital letters*: A capital letter is required for the first word of the valediction.

(iii) *Spelling*: Be careful to spell 'Sincerely' correctly.

(iv) *Other valedictions*: Many other valedictions are possible in personal letters, especially when writing to members of one's family, or to very close friends. The ones noted above are the most common.

EXERCISE 5: THE VALEDICTION

(a) *Comprehension of Instructions*

(i) Copy out and complete the following sentences:

(1) When writing to a friend, we usually write as a valediction

.....

(2) When writing to a relation, we usually write as a valediction

.....

(3) A capital letter is required for the letter of the word in a valediction and for no other word.

(4) After the valediction we must always write a

(5) The word most commonly spelt wrongly in the valediction is

(b) Look again at Exercise 3, sections (b) and (c) on pages 10 and 11. Imagine that John White and Joan Green were to *answer* the letters sent to them by the various people mentioned. What valediction would they write in each case?

VI. THE SIGNATURE

(a) It is essential that the signature matches the salutation. If you are on very friendly terms with the person you are writing to, and he would address *you* by your given name, then you write just your given name here. However, if that person would address you by your family name, preceded by 'Mr' 'Mrs' or 'Miss'—for instance if you were a school-master replying to a student who had written to you—then you would

The following table sets out the main rules of layout of personal letters.

<i>For a letter written to:</i>	<i>Write at III</i>	<i>Write at V</i>	<i>Write at VI</i>	<i>Example on page</i>
Parents and grandparents	Dear Mother, etc. My dear Father, etc.	Love, Your (ever) loving grandson, etc.	John, etc.	60 and 61
Uncle and Aunt	Dear Uncle, etc. My dear Aunt, etc. Dear Uncle Lee, etc. My dear Aunt Yu, etc.	Love, Your (ever) loving nephew/niece,	Ah Ho, etc.	
Brother, sister, cousin	Dear Ada, etc. My dear Udo, etc.	Love, Your (ever) loving sister, etc.	Chika, etc.	
A close friend; an acquaintance of your own age	Dear Jane, etc. My dear Tony, etc.	Yours sincerely, Sincerely yours,	David, etc.	62
To a senior (for instance a teacher, a friend of your parents) whom you know well	Dear Mr Fayde Dear Mrs Lawal Dear Miss Obi Dear Professor Okigbo, etc.	Yours sincerely,	Christina Falope	64

write here both your given and your family names. You do NOT write down 'Mr' 'Mrs' or 'Miss'.

(b) You might possibly be writing to someone who could confuse you with other people of the same given name—for example, if writing to a schoolmaster several years after you had left school. He may have taught many people with your given name. In this case, it is better to write your family name as well as your given name.

(c) Always write your signature as *legibly* as possible. If your letter has been typewritten, you may type your name under the written signature if there could be any possible cause of confusion (as in (b) above), otherwise you should not do so. In any case a signature written in flowing longhand—your normal joined handwriting—must appear. NEVER write your name in block capitals.

EXERCISE 6: THE SIGNATURE

Comprehension of Instructions

- (i) Copy out and complete the following sentences:
- (1) When signing a personal letter, you should normally write down the name the person you are writing to uses when..... to you.
 - (2) You might write your full name if.....
- (ii) May you print your name in block letters under your signature?
- (iii) Where is the signature written in relation to the valediction: on the same line / on the next line / a few lines further down?

EXERCISE 7: THE BODY, THE VALEDICTION AND THE SIGNATURE

The following examples give the last sentence, the valediction, and the name to be signed on five personal letters. Set each out properly. Begin each sentence as though it were a new paragraph in the imaginary letter from which it has been taken.

- (a) i hope that you will be able to come to see us yours sincerely rajan
- (b) i remain your loving brother james
- (c) hoping that you enjoy your holidays and that youll send me some snaps i remain yours sincerely barbara
- (d) i cannot write any more now as i have some homework to prepare yours sincerely amin
- (e) i shall look forward to seeing you on thursday love kofi

i

The Cottage
Green Lane
Buckingham
Herts.

2 April 1941

Dear John

Just it's about time we left the
house as the yard to be finished. It is
a bit of a nuisance that means no more
so much to write for the holiday.
Richard

ii

The Cottage
Green Lane
Buckingham
Herts.

3 May 1941

Dear John

When are you going to write
my last letter. It's a long time I had
from you. Don't forget that I've long
wanted to go down to Cornwall for
the holiday. I had had to
for help.

The house to be very little
long to tell you, but what I had
found out is that your temporary
let's not end of the school, and
they mentioned to the P.M. The
and very glad to see of how well
celebrate and you made for school
to night. I had thought you would like
my opinion, especially you would like
some suggestions. Richard

The Cottage
Green Lane,
Buckingham
Herts.

15 September 1947

Dear John

Just it is for John to have got
all our family names down. I had
done it / pass to you. For some it does
we regard to every subject. I was
hopeful in Geography / know.

Old John was very very
successful when I had him some of my
answers. I don't think all a bit of it.
My real excitement is finding my own
last. I think I can see that all right.
Richard has bought me a book for
Lester and it's going to come at the

Remember John, your friend,
Richard

iii

The Cottage
Green Lane
Buckingham
Herts.

16 December 1947

Dear John

This is going to be a
very pretty little one letter. I've been
reading a book called 'Practical'
letter writing so just watch.

I haven't got a lot of news
but what there is is going to be
mostly arranged as well properly as
not counting to that book. I think
that if you have to see a second
page if you should have enough
more in the same page so that.

Your name is better than the page.
Like this in front. How is
your name with them. Please
give my love and say I hope to get
some more sitting together soon.
We're now now

Yours sincerely
Richard

iv

A NOTE ON THE GENERAL LAYOUT AND APPEARANCE OF LETTERS

The example given on page 6 was of a very short letter. The whole of the letter can fit easily onto one page. If you want to write a letter of this sort, plan the general layout of the letter before you begin so that the general appearance is pleasing to look at. If you are writing in longhand on unlined paper you should be particularly careful that the layout is well proportioned. A line or so can be missed between the end of the last paragraph and the valediction, and even more space between the valediction and the signature. Do not hesitate to space these last two sections out so that you have not got a large expanse of blank paper at the bottom of the sheet. On the other hand, do not cramp these last two sections by spreading yourself too much in the earlier parts of the letter. On the previous page (i) and (ii) illustrate this kind of poor layout.

Most letters will be much longer than this example, and you may find yourself having to write several pages. You must NEVER end the body of your letter at the bottom of one page and then write the valediction and signature at the top of another. You must so arrange your letter that at least a line or two of the body of the letter appears on the same page as the valediction and signature. (iii) and (iv) show a poorly laid out and a well laid out two-page letter.

EXERCISE 8: THE LAYOUT OF LETTERS

(a) The following is a complete letter. It is correctly punctuated, but not properly laid out. Set it out neatly. There are two paragraphs.

36 Ladder Road, Singapore. 6th January, 1967 Dear Irene, I enjoyed reading your letter, which arrived this morning. I was very interested to learn about your new house. When are you moving into it? We are having our house painted next month. I should like to move to a new house, but I don't think we can afford this for a long time. I wish I had won the lottery! You *are* lucky! How is your mother? She was ill when I last saw her. I hope she is better. Please remember me to her when you next see her. I hope to see you next month at Teresa's. Yours sincerely, Joanna.

(b) There is no punctuation at all in the following short letter. Set it out properly punctuated, and in the correct manner.

55 meadow terrace exeter england 2nd february 1966 dear geoffrey i am writing to thank you for the scarf which has just arrived it is just what i need in this cold weather thank you very much it was so kind of you to remember my birthday i cannot write a longer letter now but i promise to do so tomorrow sincerely yours louise

CHAPTER THREE

The Body of Personal Letters

Personal letters can be divided into two types: those written for a particular purpose to a person with whom you are not in regular correspondence, and those written as part of a regular correspondence. In both cases, it is very important to give your letter some **SHAPE**. As explained in the previous section (p. 11), the letter should be divided into paragraphs, and each paragraph should be carefully constructed. The letter should develop smoothly, and have a beginning, a middle and an end. The shaping of the letter will depend, however, on which of these two types it is.

A letter of the first type usually divides clearly into three parts. In the *first* part you refer to the reason for writing the letter. If you are writing in reply to a letter which has just been sent to you, this will take the form of thanks for the letter. Ways of doing this are given on page 21. If you are writing to inquire about something, or to extend an invitation, then you should do this at the beginning: ways of doing this will also be found in subsequent pages (24-5). In the *second* part of the letter, you can develop this subject at whatever length is necessary. In a short letter, the first and second parts may be placed in the same paragraph, but usually more than one paragraph will be called for. The *third* part of the letter is a polite conclusion. In the previous section (p. 12) reference was made to the conventional endings with 'hope' and 'remain'. Before this last sentence other forms of good wishes may be sent, or you may anticipate some hoped-for action on the part of the person you are writing to (for example 'I do hope that you will be able to come to the party.'). Such final good wishes often repeat similar sentiments made earlier in the letter—preferably in a different structural form. This last part of a letter is usually made into a distinct paragraph however short the letter is.

If the letter is of the second sort—one of a series—your object in writing will be to convey news about yourself. This is the sort of letter you might write home to your parents every week if you were away from them, or the sort of letter you might write to a pen-friend. Here you may have many things to write about—and you will have things you will want to refer to in the last letter your correspondent has sent you. This sort of letter is a conversation in writing. Such a letter easily loses shape.

You can give it shape, however, if you remember two things: (1) you should bring your correspondent into the letter by reference to *his* life: this will take the form of comments on his last letter and questions about what he is thinking and doing. You can also invite him to make comments on what you have been doing, and ask his advice on one or two matters. (2) You should decide *before you start writing the letter* what are the most important things you want to say, and then deal with these first and at greater length than those things to which it is sufficient to refer briefly. This is often a question of good manners. For example, if your friend's father has just died, you must mention this *at the beginning of the letter*. It would be most rude to tell him all about yourself, and then, almost casually, at the end mention his father's death. Again, if your friend has just been successful in some enterprise, you should, for the same reasons, congratulate him at the beginning of the letter.

Unless something of this sort has happened to your correspondent and is so obviously important that you must deal with it first, there is no need always to open your letter with some reference to him. It is a common error to believe that you must *always* open your letter in this way:

Dear John,

How are you? I hope you are very well.

If you have just done something very exciting, it is much better to open thus:

Dear John,

I had a wonderful day out in the country on Saturday! I must tell you about it.

You can refer to your correspondent's affairs later.

The SUBJECT MATTER of both types of personal letter may be about almost anything. However, certain common *feelings*—of thanks, good wishes and so on—occur most frequently in both types, and it is well to learn how best to express these commonly recurring feelings in English. The following pages will help you to do this. You will then find some examples of personal letters together with comments on them, comprehension questions, and specialized vocabularies which will help you to use these sentence patterns in letters of your own.

How to Express certain Common Feelings in Personal Letters

I. THANKS

(a) *For an object*

(i) *a letter*

Personal letters very frequently open with thanks for a letter just received. The following are the two most common ways of doing this. The first is used if you want to specify the day you received the letter, the second if you do not want to be so specific. Note that in the first case a *past tense* must be used, and in the second case a *present perfect* is used:

P₁ Thank you for your { welcome
delightful
interesting
informative
absorbing, etc. } letter,

which { arrived
I received } { yesterday this morning
two days ago last month
on Thursday on the 13th
last week in May, etc.

P₂ Thank you for your [adjective if re-
quired, as above] letter,
which { I have just received
has just arrived

Another form is:

P₃ I was very { glad
happy } to get
your letter, { which arrived
which I received } today, etc.

Note that past tenses must be used in this pattern. We often extend this pattern with 'and learn that . . . (noun clause)' in this way:

P₄ I was very happy to receive your letter yesterday and learn
that you have passed your examination.

(ii) *a gift*

P₁ or P₂ may be used here. The adjective must of course be a suitable one; instead of 'letter' write 'present' or 'gift' or

whatever the object was, and it is usually appropriate to insert an adverbial phrase after 'thank you'. Thus:

P₅ Thank you { so much
very much } for
the { book
birthday
present
Christmas
present
photographs } which { I received
arrived/came } this
morning,
etc.

Or we may put it this way:

P₆ Your { very generous
beautiful
lovely, etc. } gift arrived this morning. Thank you
very much.

It is customary to *add after* such sentences in thanks for a gift another sentence or two commenting on the gift, or on the donor's thoughtfulness and kindness. Thus:

P₇ (a) It was very thoughtful of you to remember my birthday.

(b) The { book
camera
shawl, etc. } is { very
really
extremely } beautiful,
lovely, etc.

(c) A { microscope
fishing rod
bottle of perfume } was just { what I wanted.
what I needed.
what I have always
wanted to have.

Any or all of these additional sentences may be used.

(b) *For a service*

Here a gerund is usually used:

P₈ Thank you for *helping* me to get my luggage to the station
last night.
lending me some cups for my party yesterday
evening.
giving such an interesting talk to our society
on Monday.

Sometimes you have already thanked the person at the time of the service with a few words, but you feel that you would like to repeat your thanks more fully and formally. Then you may add a sentence of explanation: this is in the form of an apology (see p. 28) thus:

P₉ I'm afraid that I didn't have enough time to thank you properly . . .

For a special service Sometimes the service has been rather special: that is, it will have caused the person doing it some real trouble, or it will have been of real importance. For example, you may be writing to a friend who has looked after you for a period when you were ill, or who has gone to some trouble to find you a job. In this case, though the letter is personal, a more formal wording may be chosen, beginning 'I should like to . . .' Thus:

P₁₀ I should like to thank you most sincerely for looking after my mother when she was ill.

It is customary to add one or two supplementary sentences after thanks for a service, as after thanks for an object (see P₇, above). Note the following:

P₁₁ I really do appreciate it.

It was (really) { very
extremely } { kind
considerate
thoughtful } of you.

Warning The word 'thanks' by itself is extremely informal. You can use it only in very *informal* letters, and for rather *unimportant* gifts and services. In general, it is better to write 'Thank you' rather than 'Thanks' in letters.

EXERCISE 9: THANKS

- (a) Write out the following sentences inserting the correct prepositions:
- (i) Thank you the entertaining letter which arrived Wednesday.
 - (ii) It was very kind you get me a model aeroplane my birthday.
 - (iii) The book photographs arrived breakfast-time. It was just what I wanted.
 - (iv) Thank you showing your interesting slides your holiday our society the meeting last week.
- (b) (i) You have just received through the post a book you accidentally left at a friend's house. Write one or two sentences of thanks to him or her.
- (ii) Now write to the same person on the same subject, but use a different structure or structures to express yourself.
 - (iii) A friend tells you that his father, who is a doctor, has agreed to give a lecture on first-aid to your scout or guide troop. Write a letter of several sentences, thanking him for the offer, and suggesting a date for the talk.

2. INQUIRIES

Letters are often used to make inquiries: if the personal letter is of the first type mentioned on page 19, this may be the whole purpose of the letter. Even if it is of the second type—a routine letter, one of a series—inquiries are still almost certain to be made about one or all of the following topics.

(a) *Health*

In nearly all letters of this second type, it is customary to ask about your correspondent's health. As you are in regular correspondence with him, you will know, presumably, that when you last heard from him he was well or not. If he was well, then you can write:

P₁₂ I (do) hope you are still keeping well.

If he was not well at the last time of writing, you should write:

P₁₃ I was sorry to learn from your last letter

that you { have been ill with measles, chickenpox, etc.
 { broke your leg while jumping.

(See pp. 53 and 54 for full details about common injuries and illnesses)

You may then add a supplementary sentence:

P₁₄ I (do) hope you { have now recovered.
 { are now better.

If you have not written for a long time, then you would use P₁₂, with the omission of 'still'.

(b) *General Well-being*

This is best conveyed by a very simple sentence:

P₁₅ How are you getting on?

Avoid any complicated constructions, or the use of words like 'progressing' or 'prospering'. If you want to specify the particular activity you have in mind, rather than general well-being then you would add a suitable phrase after P₁₅: 'at school' 'with your painting', etc.

If you know that your correspondent has been doing well at something, then you can put your inquiry this way:

P₁₆ Are you still doing well { at English?
 { at the University?
 { with your driving lessons?

If he has been doing badly, then say:

P₁₇ Are you doing any better at

Note that P₁₆ and P₁₇ must be used when you mention *specific activities*.

(c) *Your correspondent's life*

These may be about virtually anything, and are put as simple direct questions. The questions you will find on pp. 42-5 will give you some idea of the range of possible questions. Here are some common examples:

P₁₈ What did you do on your holiday? Where did you stay when you visited London? Was your birthday party interesting? What did you get for your birthday? Have you had your examination results yet?

 (d) *Matters concerning your correspondent's family and common friends*

It is polite to ask questions such as the above concerning your correspondent's family and common friends. Any of the above constructions can be used, suitably modified to the third person. Thus 'How is Rajat getting on?', 'Where did Joan go for her holidays?', etc.

EXERCISE 10: INQUIRIES

(a) Write out the following sentences inserting the correct tenses of the verbs:

- (i) I (be) sorry (learn) from your last letter that you (sprain) your wrist whilst (play) badminton.
 - (ii) In your last letter you (tell) me that you (make) good progress with your studies. (still/make) the same progress?
 - (iii) Where (stay) when you (go) on holiday with the scouts? (live) in tents?
 - (iv) How (get on/your brother) with his swimming?
- (b) (i) Write a sentence or two of inquiry about your correspondent's dog, who has just had puppies.
- (ii) The person you are writing to has been having to visit the dentist a lot. Write a sentence or two of inquiry concerning this.
- (iii) Your pen-friend has moved to a new school. Write a short letter to him, asking him a few questions about it, how it compares with his former school, and what progress he is making.

3. HAPPINESS

The most common pattern here was illustrated in the section on THANKS (P₁-P₄, p. 21). The following is a slight variation:

P₁₉ I was very { glad } to { learn } from your letter which
 { happy } to { hear } arrived this morning { that you are moving to a new house.
 { that you have had a book accepted.
 { that you have had another child.

Another way of expressing happiness is by means of a simple exclamatory sentence. This is very informal:

P₂₀ So you {
 have got through your examinations!
 are now a doctor!
 have won a scholarship!
 are coming to England! } I am so glad!

Note that 'happy' does *not usually* replace 'glad' in P₂₀.

Note that 'relieved' may replace 'glad' or 'happy' in P₁₉ and P₂₀ if you had been fearing bad news, and good has arrived:

I was so relieved to hear that your father is now better.

4. SORROW

You can use P₁₉ here, but using 'sorry' instead of 'happy' or 'glad'. If you are expressing sorrow for some considerable misfortune, you may write instead 'distressed'. 'Disappointed' is applicable to other cases. An exclamatory form, similar to P₂₀ is possible too, but do not use this form just as it is: you should use a phrase with 'pity'. Thus:

P₂₁ What a pity you failed your examination by just one mark!

You could then add a sentence modelled on P₁₉ as well, and some comforting remark: thus your complete set of sentences would run:

What a pity you failed your examination by just one mark! I was so sorry to hear about it. I do hope you have better luck next time.

EXERCISE I I: HAPPINESS AND SORROW

- (a) Write out the following sentences inserting the articles required:
- (i) What pity you did not win trophy! I do hope you get it next year.
 - (ii) I was so sorry to learn from letter which arrived yesterday that you did not get job you wanted.
 - (iii) So you have got bicycle! Now you can go into country. I'm so glad!
 - (iv) I am so relieved to hear that doctor's report on your sister is good one.
- (b) Write short letters to the persons indicated to express happiness at the following events. Try to avoid using the same construction for every sentence.
- (i) to your sister who has had a baby boy.
 - (ii) to your uncle who has just won a sports championship.
 - (iii) to your pen-friend who has been made captain of his school.

- (c) Write a few sentences to express your sorrow at some misfortune which has befallen a friend. Use your imagination to invent the misfortune—do not just copy a sentence from this book.

5. CONDOLENCES

If someone dies and we write to a relative to express our sympathy, we then 'offer our condolences.' Thus a letter of condolence is a special type of the letter discussed in the previous section, but you *cannot* use all the patterns mentioned there. Condolences are best expressed in sentences like these:

P₂₂ I was so sorry to hear about the death of your grandmother: please accept our condolences.

It would then be appropriate to add some kind comment about the person who has died:

P₂₃ We were very sorry to learn that Mr Jefferson has died. He was a very fine teacher, and I am sure he will be greatly missed by his colleagues. Please accept my condolences.

If the death has been sudden, or the person young, then we might say:

P₂₄ It was a great shock to learn of the death of your brother. Please accept my condolences.

6. REPLYING TO LETTERS OF SYMPATHY

- (a) If the misfortune is not a bereavement, then we might say:

P₂₅ Thank you for being
 It was (so/very/so very) kind of you to be } so concerned
 about { my failure in the examinations.
 my losing my bag.

- (b) In the case of death, simply write:

P₂₆ Thank you { so much
 very much } for your kind letter of sympathy.

EXERCISE 12: CONDOLENCES AND REPLIES TO THEM

- (a) Write out the following letter, inserting the necessary words where appropriate. Then reply to the letter.

It was a to learn of the death of your sister. As I think you know, she was a very

of mine. She will be greatly by all the girls at the school.
 accept my condolences.
 you for your letter. My sister's death was a
 to us all. Your sympathy is a great to us at this
 time.

- (b) Write notes of sympathy to a person who has
- (i) failed his driving test
 - (ii) been unable to play in an important match because of an injury
 - (iii) had his house burgled for the third time in a month
- (c) Write suitable short replies from the persons indicated in the previous question.

7. CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations are sent to mark your happiness at someone else's success. Thus you can use pattern P₁₉ or P₂₀. In addition you should write a phrase with 'congratulations' in it: sometimes the word itself will do. Here are some examples.

P₂₇ Please accept my { heartiest } congratulations!
 { warmest }

Heartiest congratulations!
 Warmest congratulations!
 Congratulations!

Thus, by writing examples of P₁₉, P₂₀ and P₂₇ you would get:

I was delighted to learn about your election as secretary.
 Heartiest congratulations!

OR So you have been elected secretary! Congratulations!

Alternatively, you may choose not to use either pattern P₁₉ or P₂₀, and write as follows:

P₂₈ Heartiest } congratulations on { your election as secretary.
 Warmest } { the birth of a son.

Note that you can congratulate a MAN on his forthcoming marriage, thus:

My warmest congratulations on your forthcoming marriage.

but you CANNOT congratulate a woman in this way. This would imply that she has 'captured' the man and is being congratulated on her success. Instead, you send her best wishes (see p. 29 below).

8. BEST WISHES

These are sent to a person about to do something in the future. It was mentioned in Section 7 (p. 28) that these must be offered to a WOMAN on her marriage: this is the form:

P₂₉ Please accept my best wishes on your forthcoming marriage.

The same form is used for other occasions:

Please accept my best wishes { for your future career.
for your stay in America.
on your new appointment.

More simply, the verb 'hope' may be used as in P₁₂:

I hope you have { a successful career.
a pleasant stay in America.
every success in your new appointment.

Note that, as the last example suggests, best wishes are sometimes sent on occasions when congratulations are also appropriate. The difference is simply that congratulations are generally considered to refer to something past, while best wishes look forward to the future. If the occasion is an appointment to a new position, then both are appropriate: congratulations for the success achieved, and best wishes for continued future success in that position. Thus (P₂₈ plus P₂₉):

Congratulations on your new appointment. Please accept my best wishes for your future success.

9. REPLIES TO CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

These can follow a simple pattern for thanks, with the addition of some suitable remarks:

P₃₀ Thank you for your good wishes.

It was very { kind
thoughtful } of you to send good wishes. I shall
keep in touch with you, and promise to write a longer letter
when I get settled in at college.

EXERCISE 13: CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

(a) Write a sentence or two of congratulations or best wishes to someone who has:

- (i) been very successful in the leading role in a play
- (ii) just announced his engagement to your sister

- (iii) just announced her engagement to your cousin
- (iv) been selected to appear on a radio show
- (v) reached the age of twenty-one

(b) Write suitable replies to the letters indicated in question (a).

10. APOLOGIES

These are formed with 'apologies', 'afraid' and 'sorry'. Note that 'sorry' can take after it either a noun clause or the preposition 'for', plus a gerund. 'Afraid', however, can only take the noun clause construction, and 'apologize' the prepositional one. Apologies may, of course, be for many things, but the most frequent cause is probably the failure to answer letters promptly enough!

- P₃₁ I'm sorry that { I've not written for so long.
I kept your book so long.
I made such a noise last night.
- for { not writing for so long.
keeping your book so long.
making such a noise last night.
- P₃₂ I'm afraid that { the sleeve of your record is slightly torn.
I've not yet finished with the book I promised
to lend you.
I shall not be able to come to the party tonight.
- P₃₃ I must apologize for { not letting you know about the party
sooner.
breaking your window accidentally last
night.
losing the tickets.

Apologies are usually followed by short sentences:

- (a) of explanation and excuse, and, if appropriate
- (b) offering compensation

Thus, for excuse might be written:

- P₃₄ (to add onto the apologies at P₃₁): I have been so busy lately.
I found it difficult reading.
I lost my key and had to
climb in.

And for offer of compensation:

- P₃₅ (to add onto the last two examples in P₃₃):
I shall of course pay for a new one.
I shall naturally replace them.

II. REPLIES TO APOLOGIES AND OFFERS OF COMPENSATION

Often no comment is called for, but sometimes we offer (a) reassurance and (b) some further comment designed to minimize whatever it is that is being apologized for. Thus:

- P₃₆ (Please) don't worry about { the stain on the book.
the damage to my car.
the noise last night.
losing the tickets.
- It doesn't matter (at all) { It was an old one.
I can soon get it mended.
I was out.
They were out-of-date anyhow.

A very general further comment that is useful in certain cases is:

- P₃₇ { I appreciate it was an accident.
Accidents easily happen.
It wasn't (really/entirely) your fault.

Offers of compensation can be *accepted* thus:

- P₃₈ It is kind of you to offer to pay for a new window. If you insist, I shall send you the bill when I get it from the glazier's. *or*
- P₃₉ There is no need to buy me a new ball, but if you insist on replacing the one you accidentally lost, you can get a cheap one at the sports shop near the station.

Offers of compensation can be *declined* thus:

- P₄₀ It is very thoughtful of you to offer to buy me a new copy of the book you lost, but please don't bother. I have already read the book, and I don't suppose I shall want to read it again.
- P₄₁ It is very considerate of you to offer to buy a new record, but this isn't at all necessary. The scratch is a very small one, and to buy a new record would be a waste of money.

EXERCISE 14: APOLOGIES AND REPLIES TO APOLOGIES

- (a) Write out the following sentences, inserting prepositions as required:
- (i) I must apologize making such a noise last night my saw.
 - (ii) I'm sorry playing so loudly the piano.
 - (iii) I should like to pay a new set of dominoes.
 - (iv) You must not worry the stain on the record.

- (v) It is kind you to offer to buy another copy the book you left the train.
- (b) Write a few sentences of apology for having:
- (i) burnt a hole in the carpet of a house where you were staying.
 - (ii) forgotten to go to a party.
 - (iii) lost the key to your friend's motor-scooter.
 - (iv) not invited to a party someone whom you should have invited.
 - (v) neglected to reply promptly to a letter suggesting your help to form a new club.
- (c) Write suitable short replies to the notes indicated in the previous question.

12. REQUESTS

These may be made in a simple and direct manner:

P₄₂ Could you lend me your copy of 'Wuthering Heights'?

or a little more elaborately by making the question indirect (and therefore not needing to use the question mark):

P₄₃ I wonder whether you could help me to take some luggage to the station next Wednesday.

However, it is usual to preface the request itself in some way, particularly if it may cause any real trouble to the person you are asking; apologies for making the request are sometimes added, and if you hope to borrow something, then you might add some assurance about being careful with it. Again, you might put in an expression to consider the convenience of your correspondent, even to the extent of anticipating some reason for which he might refuse your request (see P₅₂ below). These additional sentences are not always called for, but they often make a request so much more polite and acceptable.

Prefaces for requests

P₄₄ I wonder whether you could do something for me?

P₄₅ Could you do me a favour?

P₄₆ There is something I should like you to do for me, if you don't mind.

The request itself would then follow. Thus:

Could you do me a favour? Could you buy me some of that cloth we saw in the shop last week?

Apologies for making the request

P₄₇ I hope you don't mind my asking you.

P₄₈ I'm sorry to (have to) trouble you about this.

Assurances of care

P₄₉ I should { be very careful } of it.
 { take good care } not to damage it in any way of
 course.

Consideration of the convenience of your correspondent

P₅₀ If it is at all inconvenient for you please say so.

P₅₁ I hope this does not inconvenience you in any way. If it does, I hope you will say so.

P₅₂ If you are using the tape-recorder yourself that night, please do not hesitate to say so.

Note The degree of elaboration in your request will depend on its importance and the inconvenience it is likely to cause the other person. Avoid over-elaboration for minor requests, and especially avoid expressions involving 'humble', 'beg', 'beseech'. These are no longer common in modern English.

13. ANSWERS TO REQUESTS

(a) If you can fulfil the request:

P₅₃ I should be delighted to { get you the book you asked for.
 help you in any way I can.
 do as you ask.

or, more forcefully obliging,

P₅₄ Of course I can { lend you my projector on Saturday next.
 give you a hand to mend your motor-bicycle.
 type out a letter for you.

(b) If you are unable to help, you can use the patterns for apologies noted on p. 30 (P₃₁, and P₃₂); P₃₃ is not usually used in this context.

I'm sorry that } { I cannot do as you ask.
 I'm afraid that } { I cannot lend you the tent.

It is then usual to add a reason (cf. P₃₄ on p. 30)

EXERCISE 15: REQUESTS AND ANSWERS TO REQUESTS

(a) Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct tenses of the verb:

(i) If it (be) convenient to you, I (like) (borrow) the club tent next Thursday.

(ii) I (hope) you (not/mind) my asking you (lend) me your football on Saturday morning.

- (iii) I (take) great care of it, if you (able) (lend) it me.
- (iv) If you (be) too busy (help), please (say) so.
- (v) I (be) extremely happy (give) a talk to your club.
- (b) Write polite requests for the following:
- (i) help with a children's party.
 - (ii) help from a friend, who is a good mechanic, with your broken bicycle.
 - (iii) the loan of a rather expensive cookery book or atlas.
 - (iv) the use—in the owner's home—of a sewing machine or some expensive wood-working machinery.
 - (v) your friend to print some photographs of your brother's wedding.
- (c) Write suitable answers (a) in the affirmative and (b) in the negative to the above requests.

14. INVITATIONS

On page 120 you will find out how to lay out a formal invitation, and how to reply to one. Invitations are often embodied in the normal letter form, and then they follow closely the patterns for requests noted on page 32. Thus either P₄₂ or P₄₃ could be used to make an invitation:

P₄₂ Could you come and have dinner with us on Thursday?

P₄₃ I wonder whether you would like to come round and have dinner with us on Thursday.

The following, however, is more likely to be used for an invitation, rather than a request:

P₅₅ Would you like to come to the theatre with us next month?

Here is another very useful and friendly way of putting an invitation:

P₅₆ We are having a party next month to celebrate my birthday. I should be delighted if you could come.

Just as a request (see pp. 32–3) is usually followed by subsidiary statements, so is an invitation. These urge acceptance. Here are some useful formulas:

P₅₇ Please try to come.

P₅₈ I do hope you can come.

P₅₉ We are very much looking forward to seeing you.

In addition, all sorts of statements may be made to induce acceptance: such statements may not always be necessary, but it is good manners to

anticipate difficulties here, just as it is to anticipate them when making requests (see p. 33). Here are the kinds of statements that may be called for:

There are four or five other people coming, and I know at least some of them speak Urdu.

We expect the party to finish early, so you won't miss the ferry.

Of course, we can take you back home in the car afterwards, so don't worry about not catching a bus.

15. ANSWERS TO INVITATIONS

These follow the patterns for answers to requests (see p. 33). Thus P₅₃ and P₅₄ could be used: however, remember always to preface the acceptance or declining with thanks (see pp. 21-2 for patterns). In addition, if you can accept, say how much you are looking forward to the event; if you cannot accept, it is polite to give a reason. Here are some examples made up in this way. Note the three parts to each example:

(a) *Accepting*

P₆₀ Thank you for your kind invitation to lunch on the 14th June. We shall be delighted to come—we are very much looking forward to meeting your cousin.

P₆₁ Thank you very much for your invitation to tea next Friday. We should love to come. I have been wanting to see your flowers for a long time.

(b) *Declining*

P₆₂ Thank you very much for your kind invitation to dinner, but I'm sorry that we are unable to accept

{	because of a previous engagement. as my wife is in bed with influenza. as we shall be away from home on that date.
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EXERCISE 16: INVITATIONS AND REPLIES TO THEM

(a) You are leaving the country to study abroad, but before you go you are inviting a few people—members of your family and friends—to a dinner, either in your own home, or in a restaurant. Write invitations to the following people, whom you want to come along:

(i) a friend you have known for a long time, but who now lives rather a long way off.

(ii) your uncle, who is often busy in his shop in the evenings.

- (iii) your English teacher who has helped you a lot to get you the scholarship to go abroad.
- (b) Write letters in reply to these three invitations, both accepting and declining the invitations.

16. CONVEYING GOOD WISHES TO OTHER PEOPLE

Sometimes you want to send your good wishes to a relation or friend of your correspondent, or perhaps you have met someone who knows your correspondent, and he wants you to send, in your letter, *his* good wishes. We often use the verb 'remember' in a special sense in this context. Thus:

- P₆₃ I met Mr Johnson last week. He said he met you last year in Nairobi, and wishes to be remembered to you.
- P₆₄ Will you please remember me to your mother and sister?
- P₆₅ My brother wishes to be remembered to your cousin.

Revision Exercises

EXERCISE 17

(Based on Sections 1-7)

Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct prepositions:

1. Thank you your letter which I received Friday evening.
2. I was relieved learn your letter that you were not ill anything serious.
3. How are you getting mathematics now?
4. I was very glad learn that you are top the class English.
5. I was sorry learn the death your uncle. I am sure he will be missed every one of you.
6. Congratulations being selected go a scholarship England.
7. I am writing congratulate you the birth your daughter.
8. It was very kind you to write congratulating me my success the competition.
9. I should like thank you being so kind my mother when she was hospital.
10. I'm afraid I didn't have enough time thank you properly the station being so helpful my luggage.

11. Please accept my best wishes your forthcoming marriage.
12. What a pity you failed your examinations such a narrow margin.

EXERCISE 18

(Based on Sections 1-7)

Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct form of the verb:

1. Your interesting letter (just/arrive)
2. I am so sorry (learn) that your mother (be)..... ill for so long.
3. Your letter (ask)..... about my plans for the holiday (come) yesterday afternoon.
4. Thank you for (lend)..... me the records. I (enjoy)..... them very much.
5. It (be)..... very considerate of you (send).....me such nice flowers when I (be)..... ill last week. Thank you so much.
6. I (like)..... (say)..... how grateful I (be)..... to you for (help)..... me (get)..... such a good job.
7. I (hope)..... you (be)..... now better after the attack of influenza which you (mention)..... in your last letter.
8. It (be)..... almost a year since I last (write)..... to you.
9. I (be)..... sorry you (be)..... still ill in bed with measles. I (do) (hope) that you (get) better soon.
10. How (you/get) on? I (not/receive) a letter from you for over a month.

EXERCISE 19

(Based on sections 1-7)

1. Write a sentence or two of thanks to go into a letter in the following circumstances:
 - (a) for a letter received two days previously
 - (b) for a letter received half an hour previously giving news of a friend's winning a lottery
 - (c) for a birthday present of a model aeroplane which arrived on 8th May (you are writing on 15th May)
 - (d) to someone who has built the scenery for a play you have produced
 - (e) to a person who has agreed to lend your troop of scouts a boat in the summer
2. Write a few sentences to a cousin you have not written to for six months. When last you heard from him he had broken his leg. He

- broke his leg while playing football for his school team, of which he was the captain. You know that now he has just come back from a holiday by the sea-side.
3. 'I was so sorry to hear that you didn't get that job you wanted.' This has been written to you: you know your friend has just got a very good job. Write a sentence or two in reply.
 4. A former teacher of yours has just died: write a suitable sentence or two to his widow.
 5. Your pen-friend has just won a scholarship to the university. Write a short sentence to congratulate him.

EXERCISE 20

(Based on Sections 8-15)

Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct prepositions:

1. I must apologize giving you the wrong information my last letter.
2. I am sorry trouble you some information: can you tell me anything typewriters? I want buy one.
3. Please remember me your sister.
4. I can't think of anything else write about the moment.
5. I'm looking forward reading your trip your next letter.
6. I'm rather pressed time the moment as my brother is ill bed.
7. Please do not worry the puncture my tyre. You are not blame.
8. I don't really want you pay for a new knife, but if you insist doing so, you can get knives identical the one you lost the Scout Shop.
9. Please don't bother any more the dishes you broke Monday. I was going replace them new ones any case.
10. It is very kind you offer replace the pump my bicycle, but please don't bother—I have a spare one.
11. If you can lend me the records, I should be very careful them, course.
12. Can you do something me?
13. We are looking forward seeing you Saturday.
14. Please come about 8 o'clock.
15. I'm sorry I can't get the book you asked: it's out of stock.

EXERCISE 2 I

(Based on Sections 8-15)

Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct form of the verb:

1. I (be) busy this term, so I (be) afraid I (not/write) to you for a long time. I (be) so sorry.
2. I (pay) for the fountain pen which I (lose) last week.
3. Accidents easily (happen) The box which you (break) (be) made of plastic, and such boxes easily (break)
4. I (wonder) whether you (be able) (make) a tape-recording for me of that record I (lend) you last week.
5. I (be) very grateful if you (be able) sign the form for me.
6. I (like) (come) and (show) to your club the slides I (take) in Australia, but unfortunately I (promise) (give) a talk to another society on that night. Please (write) to me about it later, if you still (like) me (come) along.
7. (you/like) (come) and (have) supper with us next week? Please (try) (come) if you (be able) We (look) forward to (see) you again. It (be) a long time since we last (see) one another, (not/be) it?
8. We (think) the party (not/end) until the early hours, but John (be able) take you home in his car.
9. My mother (wish) (remember) to your mother.
10. Please (not/forget) (remember) me to your parents.
11. I (write) a longer letter later when I (have) more time.
12. I (want) (write) (thank) you for your kind note before I (go) to Europe. I (write) a longer letter to you as soon as I (arrive) there.
13. This letter (be) rather short, I (be) afraid, as I (be) at the moment busy (rehearse) for the school play.
14. I (train) for the school sports nearly every night now, but I (have) more time soon (write) you a fuller letter.
15. (Remember) (write) soon, (be/not) you?

EXERCISE 22

(Based on sections 8–15)

1. Write a sentence or two of apology in the following cases:
 - (a) You promised to meet a friend at a concert. You were ill (say what with), and so you couldn't. Give a reason why you could not contact him to tell him you were ill.
 - (b) You borrowed a tent which became torn while you were using it. Explain just how this happened: offer to pay for a repair.
 - (c) You borrowed your uncle's saw: your younger brother used it in your absence, in this way blunting it.
2. Write a sentence or two of suitable reply to a friend who has apologized and offered to pay for damage to:
 - (a) a canoe; (b) a tripod; (c) a beach umbrella; (d) an alarm-clock; (e) an inflatable rubber boat.
3. Ask politely for the following services:
 - (a) someone to take your place doing some duty
 - (b) your father to send you some extra money (you are away on holiday or at college)
 - (c) your sister to buy you a dress (you are working in another town)
 - (d) your friend's brother to lend you some slides of his visit to America
 - (e) your cousin to find out the price of some article (you say what) in Malaya; you are travelling through India, and you wonder whether it would be better to buy it in India or wait until you get to Malaya
4. (i) Agree and (ii) politely refuse the following requests made to you:
 - (a) for you to lend your under-water swimming equipment to a friend
 - (b) for you to escort your friend's cousin, who is visiting your town, on a visit round the surrounding countryside
 - (c) for you to sell lottery tickets in aid of a charity in which your cousin is interested
 - (d) for you to help organize a photographic exhibition at a youth or other sort of club
 - (e) for you to write an article for a magazine (perhaps the school magazine) on a trip you have made, or about your interesting job
5. Write a sentence or two of invitation for:
 - (a) your cousin to spend a week-end with you camping
 - (b) your teacher to attend a dinner in his honour given by the students of his class
 - (c) your pen-friend, who is visiting your country with his parents who are travelling on business, to spend a week at your home
 - (d) a friend to come to a party you are giving in honour of your sister, who has just come back from study abroad

6. Write a sentence or two (i) accepting and (ii) politely declining the invitations in (5) above.
7. Convey best wishes (in the manner shown in section 14) to:
 - (a) your correspondent's father from you
 - (b) your correspondent from his brother
 - (c) your correspondent's grandmother from your grandmother.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Subject Matter of Personal Letters

The previous chapter showed you how to express a wide range of feelings. Sometimes the whole purpose of a letter is to convey one or perhaps several of these feelings. That is to say, you may be writing a letter thanking someone for a present or accepting an invitation, and nothing more. On the other hand, you may want to convey information about yourself, make plans for some future event or discuss interesting topics. In this book, we cannot deal with all possible types of subject matter, but in this chapter you will find some examples of short letters on various subjects, together with a large number of questions to ask yourself when writing letters. The answers to these questions will provide plenty of subject matter and help solve the problem of 'What should I write next?'. You will also find in this chapter specialized vocabularies on various topics and sentence patterns to help you in composing your letters.

I. A FIRST LETTER TO A PEN-FRIEND

Hints on the general approach

Your object is to give a lively picture of yourself: you will have to give only a sketch, covering the main points about yourself and your life very

briefly. In later letters you can go into greater detail about your home, school, family, and so on.

Although you will be giving varied information, try to group it in some way. Thus in the example below, paragraph one deals mainly with *academic* matters (school, proficiency in language, hopes of going to university); paragraph two deals with the *family* (how many people are in it, where they live, father's job and so on); while paragraph three deals with the use of spare time, hobbies and recreation.

Note how questions are asked (see pp. 42-5) to show an interest in the life of the person you are writing to, and to stimulate and help him in his reply.

Note that this letter is not a MODEL answer in the sense that it is perfect, or just the sort of letter you *should* write—it is simply a letter you *might* write. Letters should reflect *your* personality: no two people will write the same type of letter. As long as it is correctly written, arranged in an orderly manner, and interesting and varied in content, it will be a good letter.

The answers to the following personal questions should provide the material for many interesting letters to pen-friends—remember that after your first letter, you can devote a whole letter to dealing with one aspect of yourself more thoroughly, describing your flat, or the street in which you live, or your classmates, or your hobby and why you like it.

Never forget that your pen-friend will probably find interesting things which do not interest you so much, because you know about them so well. For instance, if you live in Hong Kong, the great population, or the problems of housing, water, and hawkers will no doubt interest your pen-friend. If you live in India, your pen-friend in England will be interested to hear about buffaloes pulling carts: he has never seen this. If you live in Malaya, the jungle and its animals will capture the attention of a boy or girl in New York—just as *you* will want to know about skyscrapers and whether life in America is just as it seems on the films. If you live in Nigeria, you may not find snakes very extraordinary—but a New Zealander will want to know all about them.

Personal Questions to provide material for letters

(a) *General*: How old are you? What is your nationality? What do you look like? (Mention your height, build, complexion, colour of hair, etc.)

(b) *Family*: Are your parents still living? Are your grandparents still living? Have you many aunts, uncles, and cousins? Do they live near you or far away? How often do you go to visit them? How many brothers and sisters have you? What are their names? Who is the eldest? Who is the youngest? Who are at school, and who are working? What are they working at? Which schools do they go to? What do they look like? How

Flat 89,
117 Western Street,
Hong Kong.
17th October, 1966.

Dear John,

My teacher has just given me your address: he says you want to write to a pen-friend in Hong Kong. I am a Chinese boy, 15 years old. I go to a large government Anglo-Chinese secondary school. "Anglo-Chinese" means that though we are Chinese and study Chinese language and literature, we study all other subjects in English. This is very difficult for us, of course, and especially for me, because my English is not very good. Perhaps I can improve it by writing to you. I want to improve my English very much, because I want to go to the university to study to become a doctor.

I have two brothers, who are both younger than I am, and an elder sister. My grandmother also lives with us, so there are seven in our family. We live in a small flat of only two rooms. As you may know, Hong Kong is very crowded. Perhaps we are lucky to have even such a small flat. It has one advantage for me - it is very close to the school. I can walk there in a few minutes. Unfortunately my father has to take a bus to work - he is a clerk in a large firm several miles away.

What are your hobbies? I am very interested in collecting stamps and in photography, though I have no camera at the moment. My father lets me use his sometimes. I also play basketball at school. Do you play games?

I am looking forward to receiving a letter from you. Please write soon.

Yours sincerely,

Kit

do you get on with them? What does your father do for a living? Does he have far to go to work? Would you like his job? (Why? Why not?) Does your mother work? Do you have to help in the house?

(c) *Home*: Do you live in a town or a village, or in the country? How large is your house/flat? Have you a garden? Has it a good view? Have you always lived there? If not, where did you live before? Which house do you then prefer, this or the last one? Would you like to live somewhere else? Where? Why? Is living in the town or the country better? Have

you electricity, running water, and gas in your flat? What fuel do you use for cooking? How do you light your house? Do you have trouble from insects in your home? Who does the cooking/the housework in your home? What sort of home would you have if you were rich? Is your house conveniently placed?

(d) *Your street and neighbours:* Do you live in a large busy street or a small quiet one? Do children play in your street? Are there any shops in your street? If so, what shops? If not, where must you go to shop? Do any buses come down your street? If not, where do you get the bus? Where do you go on the bus? Do you ever travel by taxi? Are your neighbours friendly? What sort of jobs do they do? Are there many people living in your street? Are there many people of your own age in your neighbourhood?

(e) *Your city, town, or village:* How many people live in it? What are the main industries or occupations of the people? Is it a beautiful place? Why/Why not? Are the buildings new or old? What material are they made of? What is the climate like? Do you like it? Do you prefer any other town you have visited? How do you think your town will be different from the town where your pen-friend lives?

(f) *Hobbies, games, etc.:* What is your favourite hobby? How long have you been doing it? Why do you like it so much? Is it very expensive? How much do you spend on it a week? Do any of your friends have this hobby? Is it a common hobby or an unusual one? Have you any other hobbies? Are games compulsory at your school? Are you good at games? What is your favourite sport? Why? Is your favourite game expensive? Do you play the same game all the year round? When did you begin playing this game? What else do you do in your spare time, besides these hobbies and games? Do you go to the cinema? What was the last film you saw? Can you understand films in English? Are films made especially for the people in your country? How are they different from English and American films? Which do you prefer? What sort of films do you like best? Have you a favourite actor and actress? Is going to the cinema expensive in your country? Is it very popular? Are there any other entertainments you can go to—theatres or open-air displays for example? Do you have a lot of spare time? If not, why not?

(g) *School:* How large is your school? Is it co-educational? What subjects are you taught there? Are you taught in your mother-tongue, or in English? Who teaches you English? Is your teacher European? Have you ever been taught by a European? What is the name of your Headmaster, form master, the teacher you like most, the one you like least? Can you describe them in a few words? Are the teachers, on the whole, strict at your school? Do you think teachers should be strict? Give a reason. What extra-curricular activities do you have at your school? Do you take part in many? Which ones? Is your school an old one or a new one? Do

you have long holidays? Have you ever been to a different school? How was it different? Which do you prefer? Do you have to wear uniform at your school? What is it like? Is it different in the summer and winter? Do you like wearing uniform? Give a reason. Do you like school? Will you be sorry to leave it? Is there an Old Boys/Girls Association at your school? Do you intend to join it? Do you have much homework to do? Which is your favourite subject? Which subject do you like least? Do you think you have too much school work to do? Do you have an annual speech day/open day/sports day? What happens on these occasions? Do you have prefects at school? Are you one? Are you an official of any kind in any society? Do you have Houses at your school? Which one are you in? What are Houses for?

(h) *Work (if applicable)*: What is your job? How long have you been working there? Is it your first job? If not, what was your last job? Which do you prefer? Why? How many hours a week do you have to work? How do you get to work? Do you like this job very much? Are you paid well? What is your employer like? Are there many people of your own age in your office or factory? Are you continuing your studies? If so, what are you studying and where? Do you prefer work to school? Give a reason. How much holiday do you get a year? Is this enough? Would you like to have another sort of job? If so, what? Would you like to go abroad to study? If not, why not? If so, where would you like to go?

(i) *Future plans*: What do you intend to do when you leave school? How will you become an engineer/nurse, etc? If for some reason you cannot take up this career, what career would you take up? Is there any job you are determined *not* to take up? Do you intend to go abroad to study or work when you are qualified? Why do you want to take up your chosen career? Has anyone else in your family taken up that career?

EXERCISE 23: LETTERS TO PEN-FRIENDS

- (a) Write a first letter to a pen-friend. It should be about 250 words long. The pen-friend's address has been given to you by a class-mate. Choose details as you wish from your answers to the above questions a-i, though you need not be bound by them. *Do not copy slavishly the sample given on page 43.*
- (b) Write a paragraph of about 150 words describing your:
- (i) house or flat.
 - (ii) favourite sport.
 - (iii) street and neighbours.
- (c) You have just started a new hobby and given up an old one. Say what the hobbies are, compare their attractions, explaining why you prefer the new one. Write about 80-100 words.
- (d) For the last year you have been a member of a school club. Say why you chose this club and give some details about your activities.

- (e) You are working as a clerk in an office. You have been there one year since leaving school, but you are studying at night to become qualified as an accountant. Explain this in a paragraph of about 120 words. Say what you are studying and where, and why you want to become an accountant. Do you find it difficult working and studying at the same time? Do you like the work in the office? Does your employer encourage you to study?
- (f) You are interested in mathematics and physics, but not very good at them. You want to become an engineer (say what sort). You would like to go abroad to study engineering. Your parents could afford this. If your science subjects are not good enough, you would like to go into business (say what sort). You don't want to be a teacher. Explain this in about 150 words.
- (g) You have just moved from a house in the country to a flat in a city. In about 120 words show the contrast between the two. Which do you prefer?
- (h) Your form-master has just gone to another school, and therefore you have a new teacher. What is the subject that he teaches? Say how he is different from your former teacher in (i) appearance and (ii) teaching methods. Which teacher do you prefer, and why?

2. A VISIT OR OUTING

Visits very frequently form the subject matter of personal letters. They will vary enormously in content, but try and re-create the atmosphere and interest of the visit if you can. Give *personal* opinions, likes and dislikes, so that the letter is not just a series of disjointed events introduced by an unending series of 'thens'. If you can, vary sentence length and construction.

In the example which follows, notice how events are not always given in perfectly chronological order, and there is no attempt to write about everything which happened, for this is impossible. There is some humour and liveliness, questions to involve the person who is receiving the letter and references to other letters. Note that nine people managed to squeeze into the car and go on the picnic—the writer could not possibly describe them all. The reader would be confused. So he confines himself to those the reader will already know, or those who played some part in the 'story' and so deserve attention.

Some Questions to ask Yourself when Writing about Visits and Outings

(a) *The place you visited*: What sort of a place is it? Why did you go? Was it the first time you had gone? Was there some special feature of this particular trip? Do many people go there? Why?/Why not? Do they go

all round the year, or at a particular time? What sort of people usually go? Is it easy to get to? Do you have to pay to go there? Is it expensive? How long was your visit?

(b) *Getting there*: Did you walk, go by public transport, or go by car? How long did it take? How much did it cost? Did anything interesting happen on the way or on the way back? Did you have to start out early?

(c) *Your companions*: Did you go alone or with friends? Was there any reason for this? If with friends, can you describe them? Who was the most interesting? Why is he/she interesting? How long have you known these companions? Was there any one new whom you would like to

39 Jalan Raja Ali,

Ipoh,

Malaya.

9th January, 1964.

Dear Joyce,

Last Thursday, we had a barbecue on the beach. The beach we went to is called Elok Bay, which means in English "beautiful bay." It is about fifty miles away, and as there is no convenient bus service I had never been before. I went with my good friend Ali, of whom I have often written. His brother has a car. Six other people also came - as Ali's car is only a four-seater, you may imagine we were pretty stiff when we arrived. However, the car is old and very unreliable, and Ali said eight people would be a useful number to push if necessary (as a matter of fact, it was necessary, on the way back, but the car spluttered into life after a few hundred yards. This was perhaps a pity, as the car is so small that pushing was probably more comfortable than riding!)

Before we had a swim, we lit a fire on the beach. Fortunately, we had a scout called Mustaph with us who had it going in no time - I can never get a fire to light in the open-air, can you? Then we had a swim. It was really wonderful. Elok Bay is very beautiful, especially when viewed from the cool water. I had not had a swim for ages - I have been so busy with work and studying at night. One of Ali's friends had brought some under-water swimming apparatus with him, which he lent us. Have you ever tried under-water swimming? It's great fun! With the goggles on I could see lots of fish and coral, and with the flippers I could swim quite fast. As you know, I'm not at all a good swimmer normally. We also had a harpoon, and I tried to spear some fish, but I had no luck.

By the time we had finished our swim, the fire had died down, and we could grill the pieces of chicken we had brought with us over the glowing embers. Ali had brought an iron grill which fitted over the fire, and Mohammed (I think I mentioned him to you once before - he's the boy who won the gold medal in the inter-school sports and who has been teaching me how to high jump) had brought some long forks from home, so we didn't get our hands burnt. As a matter of fact, we nearly had a nasty accident with the fire, when a friend of Ali's brother from the university fell over and stepped right in the fire! Fortunately it was not burning up at the time and he had his shoes on, so he wasn't burnt - but he was the only person wearing shoes, as we had all been swimming. He broke his arm recently, so he couldn't swim. This was in fact lucky for him, wasn't it? As it was, he only spoilt an old pair of shoes.

The food tasted delicious: we had brought soft drinks which we had packed in ice and so they were still cold. It was a wonderful meal. Do you have barbecues, or is it too cold in Canada for this? I wish you could have been with us.

Yours sincerely,

Munah

meet again? Why would you like to meet him/her again? Was there anyone very amusing? Was there anyone you didn't like? Why?

(d) *What happened:* What was the *most important or most amusing* thing that happened? Why was it important or amusing? Did everyone think it so? If not, why not? What were two or three other important and interesting events? Did anything dangerous occur? Did anything happen which might have been dangerous? Did you find the visit on the whole enjoyable? Was there anything not enjoyable? Do you intend to go to that place again? Do you think your correspondent would have liked to have been with you? Why?/Why not? Is he/she likely to have visited such a place himself, or to have had similar experiences?

Vocabulary for Outings

The following will help in describing places and also the people you meet there, or who go with you:

PLACES

Types of places: the country, the country-side, outdoors, the sea-side, a beauty spot, a tourist spot, a tourist's paradise, (similarly, a fisherman's, photographer's, etc. paradise), the beach, a historic monument, a world-

famous sight, the site of a battle (WARNING: don't confuse 'sight', meaning a 'view', and 'Site' meaning a 'place'), a national monument, a ruined palace, etc.

Adjectives for places: remote, imposing, superb, easily accessible, inaccessible, peaceful, interesting, memorable, awe-inspiring, world-famous, out of the way, little/much visited, tourist-ridden, beautiful, picturesque, isolated, breath-taking, pretty, well laid-out (of a park, for instance), bustling, sleepy, lively, sparsely populated, densely populated, overcrowded, photogenic, congested, off the beaten track.

PEOPLE

Note the following adjectives: interesting, shy, diffident, pushing, overbearing, talented, lonely, sociable, likeable, a pest, intelligent, introvert, extrovert, proud, approachable, unapproachable, businesslike, humble, timid, practical, impractical, a good mixer, a good conversationalist, anti-social, retiring, a sport,* a good sportsman,* a snob, a bore, a know-all, difficult, arrogant, shrewd, energetic, conceited, modest, self-effacing, brash, self-confident, lazy, ambitious, easy-going, strict, affable, cunning.

Note also these useful expressions with 'full':

he is full of himself

he is full of self-pity, confidence, conceit, and so on.

These adjectives are of course not exhaustive, but will help to vary your letters a little. You should try and make your own lists from books of suitable adjectives for various items. **DO NOT LEARN AN ADJECTIVE BY ITSELF—ALWAYS LEARN THE SORT OF THING IT CAN BE APPLIED TO.**

EXERCISE 24: VISITS AND OUTINGS

- (a) Write three or four sentences about your best friend and why you like to go on outings with him/her.
- (b) What is the means of transport you use mostly? Why do you use it? How much do you use it? Is it expensive? What other means do you sometimes use? (Write four or five sentences.)
- (c) What is the most interesting place to go to near your home—the sort of place you would take a visitor? Why is it interesting? Do you go there a lot? Is it very famous? (Write two or three sentences.)
- (d) What is the place furthest from your home that you have ever been? Was it interesting? Why?/Why not? Do you intend to go there again? When did you go last? Why did you go there? (Write about four or five sentences.)
- (e) Do you prefer visiting places by yourself or with friends? Give a reason. (Write about two sentences.)

* A 'sport' in idiomatic English means a good-natured person; a 'sportsman' (f. 'sportswoman') means a person who likes playing games.

- (f) Imagine you have been somewhere with a group of people, one of whom you don't like, and he/she spoils the day for you. Describe him/her in two or three sentences, and say how he/she spoilt your day.
- (g) Imagine something amusing which might happen on the following outings, and also something unpleasant or dangerous. Then write two sentences about the amusing and two sentences about the unpleasant happening, showing clearly why the incidents were amusing or unpleasant.
- | | |
|---|---|
| (i) a visit to a zoo | (ii) a climb up a mountain |
| (iii) a school trip to a gas works or a factory | (iv) a visit to an open-air athletics meeting |
| (v) a trip on a boat down a river | |
- (h) Give an account, in about 200–300 words, of the following outings.
- (i) With the rest of your class and your teacher to some famous caves *or* a famous temple *or* some ancient ruins about 30 miles from your school.
- (ii) By yourself to visit an uncle in a town about 50 miles away. You are a stranger there and you get lost, but find your uncle's house in the end.
- (iii) With your parents to another village or town, not far away, to look at a flat or house they are thinking of moving to.
- (iv) With your little brother to see some sort of entertainment for young children.
- (v) With a group of people of your own age, but all strangers to you, who, like you, have won a free trip in a newspaper competition to the capital city of your country *or* to the chief city of your province *or*, if you live at either of these places already, to another famous city in your own country *or* to a famous city in another nearby country.
- (vi) With an aunt and uncle in a new car they have bought to visit some friends of theirs you have not previously met.
- (vii) By bicycle with your best friend to visit your cousin in the country. You have a new bicycle: it is the first time your friend, who has a very old bicycle, has ever ridden so far. He has just learnt to ride.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITS AND OUTINGS

Letters are often written to make plans for the future. This is a sort of invitation (see p. 34) but, as the outing is a joint affair, it may be that your friend will want to make alterations in the plan to suit his/her convenience. As the events have not yet happened, you cannot go into the detail of a trip already accomplished, as in the preceding section, but you should give as many details as you can. Be careful to use 'can', 'could', 'should' and 'would' rather than 'shall' and 'will' when appro-

prate—otherwise you will give the impression that you are giving orders, not making pleasant suggestions. Invite your friend's views. Two examples are shown below.

Some questions to ask yourself about suggestions for outings

These are similar to those for outings given on page 34 about your destination, companions, etc., but note the following as well: When are you planning to go? (You must be very precise about this, of course.) Where are you going to meet? When are you returning? Why do you think the trip will particularly interest your friend? Can you think of any reason why he should not want to come? Give him some reasons why these objections are not important. What arrangements do you intend for transport and eating? Who else is coming with you? Does your friend know about them? If not, should you tell him something about them? Should you ask your friend to invite a friend of his? What features of the trip do you think will be most attractive to him? Must he bring with him any special clothing or equipment?

P.O. Box 93,
ENTEBBE,
Uganda.
2nd March, 1966.

Dear Ben,

Semei and I are planning to have an interesting outing a week on Saturday. Do you know David? He is a very good friend of mine, a very nice person indeed. I am sure you will like him. His father has a small boat, and he said we can borrow it for an afternoon. Isn't that exciting! We plan to take all our food with us, and make for one of the islands in the lake. Do you remember how, when you came to visit me last year, you wished we could go out to one of them? Now we can! We are thinking of setting out about noon - there is a bus which gets in here from Kampala at about eleven - but if you prefer it you can come on Saturday night and sleep overnight. You could sleep here on Sunday night too, if you like - mother says it's all right. Please ask your parents; it would be wonderful to have you stay here - and we could all have much more fun. Please write back at once and say you are coming!

Sincerely yours,

Mom

Flat 6,

112, Princess Margaret Road,

Kowloon,

Hong Kong.

20th March, 1966.

Dear Ruth,

We're both on holiday the week after next, aren't we? Don't you think it would be a good idea if we went out somewhere for a picnic? We could go by bicycle (it's easy enough to get across the ferry) - or take the bus to begin with, then on foot, if you prefer it. I was thinking that somewhere near Repulse Bay would be a good spot. I don't think you have ever climbed behind the hotel. I went last year with Ann: the views are marvellous. We could take our food with us: we can buy a drink there. If we left about nine o'clock, we could be there before eleven and have quite a long time before coming home - I know you like to be back for the evening to help your mother with the evening meal and getting the children to bed. Please say you will come. I'm looking forward to it very much.

Yours sincerely,

Glavia

EXERCISE 25: OUTINGS

- (a) Think of some place—a famous building, park, beauty spot, etc.—which your friend has not visited. Describe it to him in about four sentences, showing how it will interest him particularly.
- (b) You are going with some friends on a river trip; you want your cousin to join you. Your cousin is frightened of water. Write three sentences or so, trying to persuade her to come.
- (c) You and your elder brother are going to see a circus at a near-by town. You will not get back until late, and you may miss the last bus. This would mean walking six miles home, but the circus is a very good one, and you think it is worth it. Write about five sentences to a friend trying to persuade him to come with you.

- (d) Your friend does not like walking: he is rather lazy. But he likes taking photographs. Your school is going on a trip into the country. You can invite friends. Ask your friend to come with you. Write about three sentences.
- (e) You have just been given a canoe for your birthday. It is collapsible, and you can take it on a train to a lake. Write to ask your friend to come with you. Neither you nor your friend has ever paddled a canoe before. Write about four sentences.
- (f) You live fifty miles from the sea. Neither you nor your friend has much chance of going there, but your uncle, who is a lorry driver, has offered to take you there when he delivers some goods. You could stay there a few hours while he is unloading. Your friend cannot swim. Write about five sentences persuading him to come along.
- (g) There is a museum in a town near to you: your friend is not usually very interested in museums, but you think he may be interested in this one. Try and persuade him to come with you. After you have visited the museum, you intend to do something else, before coming home. Say what. Write about five sentences.
- (h) You are thinking of going camping for two or three nights. You have a tent, cooking utensils, stove, and all that you yourself will need. Your friend has never been camping before. You think he may not want to come, and that he won't know what to bring. Write about five or six sentences persuading him to come, explaining how much fun camping can be, and telling him what to bring.

4. SOME MINOR TOPICS, VERY FREQUENTLY FOUND IN LETTERS

In this section some sentences and phrases are given which may be useful when writing about certain topics which, while not usually comprising the *whole* of a friendly letter, are very frequently mentioned in them.

(a) *Health*

It was noted on page 24 that a letter often contains (usually near the opening) some inquiry about your correspondent's health—particularly if you know he has been ill. Here are some more vocabulary and sentence patterns concerning health and illness:

- (i) *some common illnesses and injuries*: a cold; influenza; stomach-ache; chickenpox; measles; diphtheria; cholera; whooping-cough; fever; scarlet-fever; malaria; 'a temperature' ('he has a temperature' means in idiomatic English 'He has a *high* temperature'—from whatever cause, but usually 'fever'); migraine; head-ache; ear-ache; eye-strain; sore throat; hoarseness; a broken leg, arm, foot, wrist, finger, etc.; a sprained ankle, wrist, muscle; a bruised bone.

(ii) *Sentence patterns:*

I	have	} been ill (in bed) with	} malaria influenza measles etc.
My brother, mother, etc.	has		
I am sorry to hear you	have		
I am sorry your father, etc.	has		

Then you can say (if you are telling about the illness):

I	} {	fell ill on Tuesday.
My sister, etc.		have/has been ill for a week.

or if you are inquiring about the illness

When did you fall ill?

How long have you been ill?

Then you can comment (or ask about) the seriousness of the illness, what treatment you are getting, and whether you have to go to hospital:

It's not very serious. The doctor said that if I stay in bed for a week, I shall be all right.

My father has had to go into hospital, but he is not gravely ill. Anyway, the doctor says he will get expert attention there.

I am afraid my brother is very ill indeed. He was taken to hospital on Thursday, and we go to visit him every day.

Is your mother still in hospital? Is she any better?

Have you had injections? I hope they were not painful.

Is it a serious operation? How long will you be in hospital?

(b) *Films and books*

Note the following useful vocabulary:

- (i) *Types of film:* documentary, feature, travelogue, cartoon, comedy, musical, thriller, newsreel, trailer, war film, historical film, Western (not one made in a western country, but one about the 'West' of America: a film about cowboys).
- (ii) *Adjectives to describe films:* entertaining, absorbing, interesting, thrilling, gripping, tense, tedious, ordinary, extraordinary, compelling, amusing, spine-chilling, run-of-the-mill, out-of-the-rut, boring, horrifying, dramatic, memorable, unforgettable, tragic, terrifying, enchanting, pleasant, far-fetched, incredible, realistic, convincing, unconvincing, superb.
- (iii) *Some useful phrases:* If a film has been made from a story originally used in a book, we say it is 'based on the novel "David Copperfield"', or it is 'adapted from the novel "Jane Eyre"' or it is 'a film version of the famous American novel "The Red Badge of Courage".'

- (iv) *Plays*: The same adjectives used for films can be used for stage plays. A play based on a book is called 'a stage version'. Note the following types of play: comedy, tragedy, serious play, farce, burlesque, musical comedy, musical, opera, operetta.
- (v) *Books*: Adjectives in (ii) can be used for books. 'The book of the film' means a book based on a film. Note the following types of books: fiction, non-fiction, biography, autobiography, travel book, detective story, thriller, science fiction, anthology, a classic, a paper-back, an abridged version, a simplified version, a collection of essays.

Note that when writing about films and books, you can tell the story in either the past or present tense, but stick to one way throughout. Remember also to write inverted commas round the title of a book or film. When writing about them in a letter, do not attempt to give a long detailed summary—just mention the main features which interested you, and which will make your friend want to read the book too, or see the film. Try to share your pleasure with him—or, if you think it was a bad film or book, try to warn him against wasting his time on it!

Note the following useful sentence patterns:

<p><i>I have been reading</i> a very interesting book <i>recently</i>. OR</p> <p><i>I read</i> a very interesting book <i>last</i> <i>week</i>. THEN</p> <p>It was called 'A Tale of Two Cities'. THEN</p> <p>It is/was about a man who</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">a boy who</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">the sinking of a ship.</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">the last war.</p>	<p>} Note different verb tenses (see pp. 110-15)</p>
--	--

After describing the contents of the book, you can end up:

I enjoyed it very much because

Grammatical note 'enjoy', remember, must always have some sort of object)

Finally:

I think you would enjoy it. OR

I think it's just the sort of book you would enjoy. AND PERHAPS:

If you can't get a copy, let me know, and I'll send/lend you mine.

For films, similar patterns can be used, but using 'see' for 'read', except that the PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE cannot be used, e.g.

I saw a very interesting film last Thursday. It was about
I enjoyed it very much because I think you would
enjoy it.

For Television, use the same pattern as for films, but use
'television programme' instead of 'film'. Similarly for radio,
use 'radio programme' coupled with the verb 'hear'.

(c) *The weather*

This is a very common topic amongst English people in letters and conversation because the weather in England is so variable: even in the middle of summer, it may become cold, or rain, or even snow! Unpleasantly cold or rainy weather, besides ruining crops, can also wash out a sports match, or take all the enjoyment out of an annual holiday or a day out. Thus the English are very conscious of the weather.

Even if the weather in your country is more predictable, your correspondent will be interested in it. Note the following simple patterns:

It	{	was (very/extremely) sunny	}	{	on Friday.
		" " " cloudy			last Wednesday.
		" " " fine weather			last week.
		" " " humid (95%)			
		" " " hot (98°)			
		" " " cold			
		" " " chilly			
		" " " showery			
		rained (heavily/lightly)			
		drizzled			

Grammatical note Remember that if an adverb such as 'recently' is used, then the PRESENT PERFECT replaces the PAST SIMPLE in the above expressions (see pp. 112 and 113).

(d) *Possessions*

People love to own things: news of new acquisitions can fill much of a personal letter. Though what you have just bought or been given can naturally vary greatly, the following adjectives will be useful to avoid constant repetition of 'good' and 'bad'.

For machinery, such as cameras, watches, radios, etc.: well-made, badly made, shoddily made, compact, reliable, self-winding, waterproof, fool-proof, semi-automatic, old-fashioned, accurate, robust, handy, flimsy, good-looking, popular, automatic, made in, well finished, attractive to look at, covered with leather (plastic, etc.), neat in appearance.

For clothes: stylish, well-fitting, comfortable, elegant, made-to-measure, ready-made, well-cut, nicely finished, lined with

For furniture: handsome, polished, elegant, new in style, well upholstered, comfortable, fashionable, unusual.

And here are some useful phrases:

For machinery: It produces good results.

It has good reproduction.

It sounds good.

It will stand up to hard wear.

It's easy to use.

You can get many stations on it (for a radio).

For clothes: The suit (dress, trousers, etc.) fits me very well.

I feel very comfortable in my new suit, etc.

My mother says I look very nice in my new dress.

For furniture: The new table goes very well with our other furniture.

The sideboard matches the table in colour.

(e) *Some useful sentences for miscellaneous topics*

The following list may stimulate you to think of 'things to say' in your letter, and also provides sentences, easily adapted to your own needs, to express these topics.

LOSS	On Sunday I lost my fountain-pen. It didn't cost a great deal of money, but it had great sentimental value, as my father gave it to me when I started school.
DISCOVERY	I found a necklace yesterday on my way home from school. I took it to the police-station, of course, and if nobody claims it, the inspector said I could keep it.
LEARNING	I learnt to play tennis last week, or rather, I started to learn to play. Tennis is very difficult to play properly.
MEETING	I met an interesting person at a party last night. He is an Indian boy whose father has come to do business in our town. He is very clever: he can speak six languages. His English is very good.
PLAYING	I played football yesterday afternoon: I am in the school team, as I think you know.
EATING	We had a meal at a restaurant on Monday evening. We had English food. It was the first time I had had English food, and I didn't like it very much.
NEWSPAPERS	I read <i>in</i> the newspaper this morning that you have been having very bad weather in your country. (Grammatical note ' <i>on</i> a piece of paper', but ' <i>in</i> a newspaper'—as ' <i>in</i> a book'.)
SHOPPING	My mother and I went on a shopping spree yesterday: there were many sales on at the shops in town. We found several bargains, but got tired tramping round the large departmental stores, although they are air-conditioned. (Note the useful phrases here; apart

from such phrases, 'shopping' can be dealt with as an 'outing' (see pp. 49-51). Also see 'possessions' (p. 56.)

EXERCISE 26: MINOR TOPICS FOR LETTERS

- (a) Your younger brother has been ill for three days, but not seriously ill. The doctor has seen him. Write about three sentences. Say just what is the matter with him, and what advice the doctor has given.
- (b) You are in hospital: you have had an accident while playing football. Write about four sentences to a pen-friend about this, being as detailed as you can be.
- (c) Now imagine you are the pen-friend in (2) above. Write two sentences in reply.
- (d) Your father has gone into hospital for an operation. It is not very serious. Write about three sentences to your uncle telling him about this.
- (e) Write four or five sentences to your pen-friend about the book you are now reading in class, or about one you are reading at home for pleasure. Try and persuade him to read the book as well.
- (f) You have just seen a film you did NOT enjoy. Write warning your friend not to see it. Write about four or five sentences.
- (g) Describe the changes in weather in your country throughout the year. Four reasonably sized sentences, one for each season, will do.
- (h) Write one sentence describing the weather to-day.
- (i) Find three suitable adjectives, other than 'good' and 'bad' to describe:
 - (i) your wrist-watch (or the clock in your house).
 - (ii) the radio set at home.
 - (iii) a new camera you would like to have.
 - (iv) your best dress or pair of trousers.
 - (v) a refrigerator/washing machine/floor polisher or other piece of domestic equipment you either have at home, or you have seen in a shop or a magazine.
- (j) The following is an entry in your diary. You have written it hurriedly, and so it is not written in full grammatical sentences, nor have you given very full details. Write five or six sentences as though recounting these events in a letter, and giving fuller details, which you will have to imagine, of course:

19th May Lost library book in the morning—perhaps left at games field—lunch with Ahmed—met his cousin from the United States—told him about the report in the paper about New York—he said it was nonsense—Ahmed gave me curry—very hot—bought new tennis racquet in a sale in the afternoon—had first lesson with Ahmed's cousin in the evening—returning home, found a wallet with a hundred dollars inside.

CHAPTER FIVE

Some Examples of Personal Letters

On the following pages you will find three examples of typical personal letters. They are rather more varied in content than the examples given in the preceding section. In each you will find both narrative of events—the writer is saying what has happened to him—as well as the expression of feelings, for which patterns are used similar to those in Chapter 3.

If you are a student, you may have to write a personal letter as part of an examination. To help you, each of the following letters may be imagined as an answer to an examination question, and the questions to which they could be answers are set before each letter. You will also find a 'commentary'. This is placed after the 'question' and before the 'answer'. It tries to suggest the way you would settle in your own mind, before writing the letter, how to go about it. It also indicates the features of the letter which you should most take note of. As has been stated before, no two letters will be the same, but an intelligent study of these examples and their commentaries should help to develop a suitable approach to similar letters if you have to write them.

EXAMPLE I

QUESTION: You have just arrived in England, where you are going to study. Write a letter to your parents telling them something about your journey and the place you are now living.

COMMENTARY: Your parents will naturally be worried about you. They will be anxious to know not only that you have arrived safely, but that you are comfortably settled, and amongst friends. Your letter should seek to reassure them as much as possible. You can also add some details about your journey that will be of interest to them—but it is *you* that they are primarily interested in.

Note that certain details have been 'invented': the friend already in England, the gift of the fountain pen, the going to bed too late to send off an air-mail.

These were not required in the question, but make the answer more convincing as a 'real' letter. In an examination you should invent this sort of material to show your imaginative powers. In a real-life letter you would of course also put in this sort of information, but then you would not need to invent it—only remember to put it in, to give a fuller account of your life.

LETTER

25. Ringwood Avenue,
Withington,
Manchester,
England.

15th September, 1967.

Dear Mother and Father,

I arrived here safely yesterday. The trip was very tiring but not eventful and after the first hour or two not very exciting. We flew so high that we could see little of other places— and anyhow we only stayed about an hour at each place, and because of the difference in local times we had a seemingly endless night. I made the connection with the plane to Manchester from London all right. Shu Ran was at the airport to meet me. He hasn't changed very much, still as cheerful and friendly as ever. He had got lodgings for me as promised and took me there right away. A large meal was waiting for me though as it was English food of a kind I had not had before I am afraid I didn't eat very much. After the meal I was so tired I went to bed and when I woke up it was too late to get an air-mail off to you.

I have a very comfortable room and Mrs Jones my landlady seems a charming person. There is another Chinese student here and he says she is wonderful. He has been here for three years, so I am very lucky to have got such good lodgings, aren't I? Shu Ran lives only a few minutes walk away, so I shall not be lonely.

The weather here is much colder than in Hong Kong. I am glad I brought some warm clothing with me. However the people here think it is warm at the moment. I wonder what they would think of summer at home and I wonder what I

shall think of winter here. I'm looking forward to seeing snow

Thank you again for the wonderful fountain-pen you gave me. I really didn't have enough time to thank you properly at the airport. I had to sign some documents at London Airport, and I felt very proud of it. I am writing this letter with it of course. It writes beautifully, though I'm afraid the handwriting itself isn't very beautiful. My excuse is that I am just off to see what lectures I have to attend at the University.

Please write soon and give my love to everyone.

Your ever loving Son,

Tat Hing

EXAMPLE 2

QUESTION: Write a letter to your pen-friend in England thanking him for a gift he has sent you, and telling him about a recent school function.

COMMENTARY: Here you should imagine yourself what the gift is, and think of something which a pen-friend is likely to send you. Note that in the example which follows, mention is made of the correspondent's holiday the previous year to show interest in his activities—there are also full details of the writer's activities: the conversation with the Headmaster, and the trampoline. Direct questions—such as the request for his opinion about the film you intend to see—help to make contact as well.

LETTER

29 Barrington Crescent,
Ikoyi,
Lagos,
Nigeria.

11th April, 1965.

Dear James,

Thank you so much for the book of photographs of England. They are most interesting: England certainly looks a very beautiful country. I was particularly impressed by the pictures of Cornwall and Devon - that is where you went for your holidays last year, isn't it? It looks very different from Nigeria! I am sending you some postcards of Lagos - I hope you find them interesting.

Last week we had an open-day at our school. Do you have open-days at your school? We have one every year. On that day, parents can come to school and see what we do. There are special exhibitions of work. The science exhibition is always very popular of course, as there are so many interesting things to see. There is also a display of handicraft. You know I like making model aeroplanes: well, one of mine was on display. I wanted to fly it, but the Headmaster was frightened of an accident happening. It flies round at the end of a line, and he was afraid the line might snap. I told him it was quite safe, but he wouldn't permit it. I was rather disappointed, but I suppose he must be very careful. I said it had never happened before (an accident I mean), but he said with a smile that was what the man said when his donkey dropped down dead. Our Headmaster is quite witty, and really a very nice man.

I have been very busy making the model aeroplane for open-day (that is my excuse for not having written back to you more promptly!), and since open-day I have been very busy with school work. I haven't been to the cinema for weeks. There is a film coming soon which I very much want to see. It's called "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire". Have you seen it? I believe it is very good.

Please write soon.

Yours sincerely,

Obi

EXAMPLE 3

QUESTION: You have just spent an enjoyable holiday with your friend and her parents. Write a letter thanking them for your stay: say something about your return journey. You have promised to see whether you can buy for your friend's parents some article which you had with you and they liked, and which is only available in your own town. Say what you have done about trying to get this article for them.

COMMENTARY: In this sort of question, you have to use your imagination: to begin with, what is the article? It must be something available only in your own town. Here we imagine that a girl is writing the letter, so dress material seems a likely article. Had it been a boy writing, what might it have been? You must also imagine some details of the journey. Note how when thanking a person in this way, some detail about what *in particular* you enjoyed (here the temple) makes your thanks seem more sincere. The recipient of your letter feels that when he or she decided to take you to a particular place, he made a good decision, and that his thoughtfulness was appreciated. Notice how a small gift is imagined to have been sent, and how the thanks are politely repeated at the end of the letter. Although this is not a very long letter, it contains a lot of convincing detail.

LETTER

29 Bhavan Mansions,
Kanpur,
India.

23rd March, 1967.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Singh,

I am writing to thank you for the lovely week-end which I spent with you and Krishnal. I had a wonderful time, and I'm much looking forward to June, when she will be coming to see me. I particularly enjoyed the trip to Jaipur to see the temples. I had never seen such a beautiful place before. If any of the photographs come out, I shall certainly send you them.

The journey back here was quite interesting as I met some nice people in the train (I have written about this in my letter to Krishnal). At Agra a Mrs. Durrani got in. She began to talk to me, and when I told her I had been staying with you, she said she was at school with you, and that she wished to be remembered to you.

I promised to find out whether I could get any of that cloth for you that you like so much - the one my best dress is made of. Mother says she bought it from a shop here, but that they have now sold out. However, a new stock is coming in next month. The shop-keeper says that he is the only shop in town that sells this type of cloth, so if you would like some of it, please let me know, and I should be delighted to send you some. Incidentally, you can get it with a yellow or a blue pattern. Which would you prefer?

I hope you like the chocolates - just a small token of gratitude for the really splendid holiday. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely,

Q.ita

A NOTE ON THE LENGTH OF LETTERS

The length of a personal letter written *outside* the class-room or examination hall may be as short or as long as you choose. In an examination, the length required will usually be stated, or, if not, dictated by the amount of time available. The three examples given on the preceding pages are rather longer than one would have to write in an examination; they have been rather long on purpose, to illustrate a variety of phrases and sentence patterns. In an examination do not write more than you have to as rushing will lead to grammatical errors. At the same time, do invent some 'background' to your letters, and do not rest content merely to put down just the bare information stated in the question.

EXERCISE 27: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS ON
THE EXAMPLE LETTERS 1-3

- (a) LETTER 1
- (i) How did Tat Hing travel from Hong Kong to London?
 - (ii) Why was he proud when he signed some documents at London Airport?
 - (iii) Why will his parents feel assured that Tat Hing will be happy and comfortable in his new lodgings? (Give as many reasons as you can from the information in the letter.)
 - (iv) Why is Tat Hing surprised that the English people think the weather is warm?
 - (v) What is Tat Hing looking forward to in England in winter?
 - (vi) Why did Tat Hing not eat a big meal when he arrived at Ringwood Avenue?
 - (vii) What sort of a person is Shu Kan?
 - (viii) Why did Tat Hing not see much of the places between Hong Kong and London?
 - (ix) Why did Tat Hing not write to his parents on the day he arrived?
 - (x) Do you think Mrs Jones will find it difficult having a student from Hong Kong staying with her? Give a reason.
- (b) LETTER 2
- (i) Why was Obi particularly interested in the pictures of Cornwall and Devon?
 - (ii) What is Obi going to send to James in return?
 - (iii) If you sent some photographs of your town to an English boy, what do you think he would find strange on them? Mention three or four things.
 - (iv) Explain why Obi thinks his Headmaster is a nice man.
 - (v) Explain in your own words what the Headmaster meant about the man and the donkey.

- (vi) Do you think the trampoline was dangerous? Give reasons.
 - (vii) What else might there be at a handicraft display besides model aeroplanes?
 - (viii) Why could Obi not try the trampoline?
 - (ix) Give two reasons why Obi has not been to the cinema for a long time.
 - (x) What is the last film you have seen? Describe it in three sentences.
- (c) LETTER 3
- (i) Why did Anita particularly like the old temple?
 - (ii) What sort of places do you particularly like going to see?
 - (iii) Was Mrs Durrani at school with Mrs Singh?
 - (iv) What was the article that Mrs Singh wanted to buy?
 - (v) Why has Anita not sent her any yet?
 - (vi) Why did Anita send the chocolates?
 - (vii) What other gift is often given to a lady in similar circumstances in your country?
 - (viii) Why cannot Mrs Singh buy the article she wants in her own town?
 - (ix) What is Anita particularly looking forward to?
 - (x) Anita and Krishnal are obviously friends, but they are living apart in different towns. Use your imagination to say how they became friends, and how it is they are living in different towns. Two or three sentences will do.

EXERCISE 28: SOME COMPLETE PERSONAL LETTERS

- (a) You have gone by boat to England to study and are now staying in a students' hostel. You have been in England about a month. In that time, you have been helped by your cousin, who is studying at another university, but has come to your town to help you settle down. Write a letter to your cousin's father (who is a neighbour of yours at home) telling him about your voyage out and your new life, giving some news about your cousin.
- (b) Your pen-friend has written to you saying that his father has won a lottery, and as a present, his father is allowing him to have a holiday abroad. Invite him to stay at your home, and tell him what sort of clothing he must bring.
- (c) Write suitable replies to the three Example Letters given above.
- (d) You borrowed a sewing-machine *or* some tool from your aunt or uncle. While it was in your care, a younger brother played with it,

- and broke it. Write to your aunt or uncle apologizing and offering to pay for a repair.
- (e) You have promised to go with a friend to see a play, and your friend has bought tickets for you both. Unfortunately, you find you cannot go. Write a letter to your friend explaining why you cannot go, and suggesting someone else who might like the ticket.
 - (f) Your school is holding a jumble sale to raise money for charity. Write to your uncle, who owns a shop, asking whether he has any goods of small value he cannot sell which he would like to give to the sale.
 - (g) You have just heard that your friend has won a table-tennis championship. Write a letter of congratulation and ask him whether he will come and give a talk on table-tennis to your school or club table-tennis society. Suggest that he might like to give an exhibition match.
 - (h) Your cousin is going to Canada to study. Write a letter giving him your best wishes and also giving the latest news of your father, who has been ill in hospital for a few weeks.
 - (i) You have been off school for several weeks and are therefore rather behind with your school work. You can easily catch up in most subjects, but you have missed some new work in mathematics, which you cannot understand. Your cousin is a few years older than you, and good at mathematics. He lives about ten miles away. Write asking whether he can help you to catch up with your class-mates in mathematics.

PART TWO

FORMAL LETTERS

CHAPTER SIX

The Layout of Formal Letters

On page 73 you can see a short formal letter. It has been divided into parts, and the parts have been numbered as with the personal letter on page 6. You will notice that the formal letter contains the same six parts as a personal letter, and in addition has another section which has been lettered in the diagram 'F' to remind you that it occurs only in formal letters. This is the NAME AND ADDRESS of the person you are writing to. *You write here exactly what you write on the envelope.* On the opposite page, this address has been written on the left-hand side of the page, immediately below the level of the date, and immediately above the level of the salutation. It may, however, occur—also on the left-hand side—right at the end of the letter, after the signature. You should then leave several lines blank between the signature and the address 'F'. The example on page 108 illustrates this kind of layout. Both are acceptable in English letter-writing.

Although the formal letter contains sections to be found in a personal letter, the content of some of these sections is different. Again, as with a personal letter, it is important to use the correct form for any particular kind of letter addressed to a particular person. It is especially important, as before, to MATCH sections III, V, and VI. (See diagram on page 74.) The following notes should help.

I. YOUR ADDRESS

This is just the same as with a personal letter, except that the 'block' style of layout is often adopted—as in the example on page 73, rather than the sloping style of the personal letter (see section (f) p. 7). There is, however, no rule about this.

II. THE DATE

This is written exactly as in a personal letter. Remember, however, that it is *especially important* in formal letters to write the date, as this is a convenient way of referring to your letter later if you need to.

SECTION A: THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON YOU ARE WRITING TO

If you have laid your own address out in block style, then you should do the same for the address of the person you are writing to. If you have sloped it, then you should also slope the address here.

Warning A common mistake is to write down, after the address, the telephone number of the person you are writing to. You will not do this if you remember the simple rule given above: *Write at section A just what you write on the envelope* (see page 119).

III. THE SALUTATION

If you know the person you are writing to by name write here that name after 'Dear'. This follows exactly the rule given previously (see p. 9) for personal letters.

If you do not know the person by name, then you write 'Dear Sir', if writing to a man, and 'Dear Madam', if writing to a woman. Note that you write 'Dear Madam' whether the lady is married or not. In the cases of some occupations, we can use the name of that occupation in the salutation: 'Dear Doctor', 'Dear Professor', 'Dear Colonel', 'Dear Headmaster'. This would always be to someone whom you did *not* know personally. However, this cannot be done with all professions, and unless you are experienced in English usage, it is safest to stick to 'Dear Sir' and 'Dear Madam'. Occasionally you will come across the form 'Dear Sir or Madam' in letters of which many copies have been printed for distribution to many people. In similar circular letters you will also find forms such as 'Dear Fellow-students', 'Dear Member' and so on.

Punctuation Remember (a) to use a capital for the 'D' in 'Dear' and to use capitals for 'Sir' and 'Madam', (b) to put a COMMA after the salutation, as in a personal letter.

Warning You must NEVER use the 'Esq.' form in the salutation. The 'Esq.' form can only be used on the ENVELOPE (see p. 119)—and, therefore, at Section A also.

IV. THE BODY OF THE LETTER

Look again carefully at the notes given earlier on this section on pages 11 and 12. These comments hold good for formal letters—except for section (c). Contracted forms are not usually used in formal letters, nor is colloquial language used.

V. THE VALEDICTION

(a) If you know the person by name, then write 'Yours sincerely'.

(b) If you do NOT know the person by name (that is, if you have written at the salutation 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam') then you should write 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours truly'. 'Yours faithfully' is the most common form, and is the one used in the examples in this book.

- Note**
- (i) A capital letter is required for the first letter of the valediction: that is the 'Y' in 'Yours'. A capital is NOT used for any other word in the valediction.
 - (ii) Do not forget the comma after the valediction.

"The Cottage,"
Green Lane,
I —→ Bedlington,
Yorkshire.

II —→ 7th January, 1967.

A
↓

The Manager,
Rapid Dry Cleaners Ltd,
16 High Street,
Brighton,
Sussex.

III — Dear Sir,

Last November I left a pair of trousers at your shop to be cleaned. Unfortunately when I moved from Brighton to my present address in December I forgot about them.

IV ↗ I have just found the receipt you gave me when I left the trousers, and I am sending it with this letter. If you could tell me how much I owe you for the cleaning, and what the postage would be to send the trousers to me here, I shall send you a cheque for the necessary amount.

Yours faithfully, ← V

J. W. Pritchard ← VI

VI. THE SIGNATURE

(a) In a formal letter you write either your name in full, or the initials of your given name followed by your family name, or, if you have more than one given name, one or more of these may be in full, and the others represented by initials. Thus the same man might sign himself:

Charles David Hudson
or C. D. Hudson
or Charles D. Hudson.

This is the convention for English people, though naturally some other convention may hold in the part of the world in which you live.

The following table sets out the main rules of layout of formal letters.

<i>For a letter written to:</i>	<i>Write at III</i>	<i>Write at V</i>	<i>Write at VI</i>	<i>Example on page</i>
Someone you know by name	Dear Mr Robinson, etc. Dear Dr Smith, etc.	Yours sincerely,	Geoffrey Bird	107
Someone you do not know by name	Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Professor, Dear Captain, etc.	Yours faithfully, Yours truly,	A. J. Cox Allan J. Cox Allan John Cox	108, 109

SECTION 'A': remember that the name and address of the person you are writing to appears on formal letters (see diagram on p. 73):

(b) Formal letters are often typewritten. In this case it is usual to type the name of the writer underneath the signature, often enclosed by brackets. If, however, the letter is handwritten, then it is NOT usual to write the signature in block letters underneath the signature.

(c) If you are writing a letter in an official capacity, you may write that capacity underneath your signature. It should be enclosed in brackets either by itself, or together with your typed name under your signature, if the letter has been typewritten. This is to indicate your authority to be dealing with the matter in the letter. Again, when writing letters to newspapers, people often indicate their profession in this way to indicate their qualifications for speaking on the subject in hand.

EXERCISE 29: THE LAYOUT OF FORMAL LETTERS

(a) *Comprehension of Instructions*

- (i) Section 'A' in a formal letter contains the and the of the person It does NOT contain his
- (ii) Section 'A' can be written in two places. State which they are.
- (iii) If you know the person you are writing to, you write down at the salutation the name you would use when to them.
- (iv) If you do not know the person you are writing to, you write down at the salutation if it is a man, and if it is a woman.
- (v) Is a capital letter required for more than the first letter of the first word of the salutation?
- (vi) Can the 'Esq.' form be used at the salutation of a formal letter?
- (vii) Can the 'Esq.' form be used anywhere else in a formal letter?

(b) The following are the addresses of two firms. Set them out properly, in the block style, as they would be written at Section 'A'.

- (i) the manager orient trading company ltd 178 glenville house hong kong
- (ii) the service manager the snow-white washing machine company 48 Adele road ibadan

(c) The following are the last sentences, valedictions, and names to be signed at the bottom of three formal letters. Set them out properly. Assume that in each case the last sentence begins a new paragraph.

- (i) trusting i am not causing you too much bother i remain yours faithfully Oladele Banjo
- (ii) i am available for interview at any time yours faithfully r s shaw
- (iii) i remain yours faithfully cho seng seah

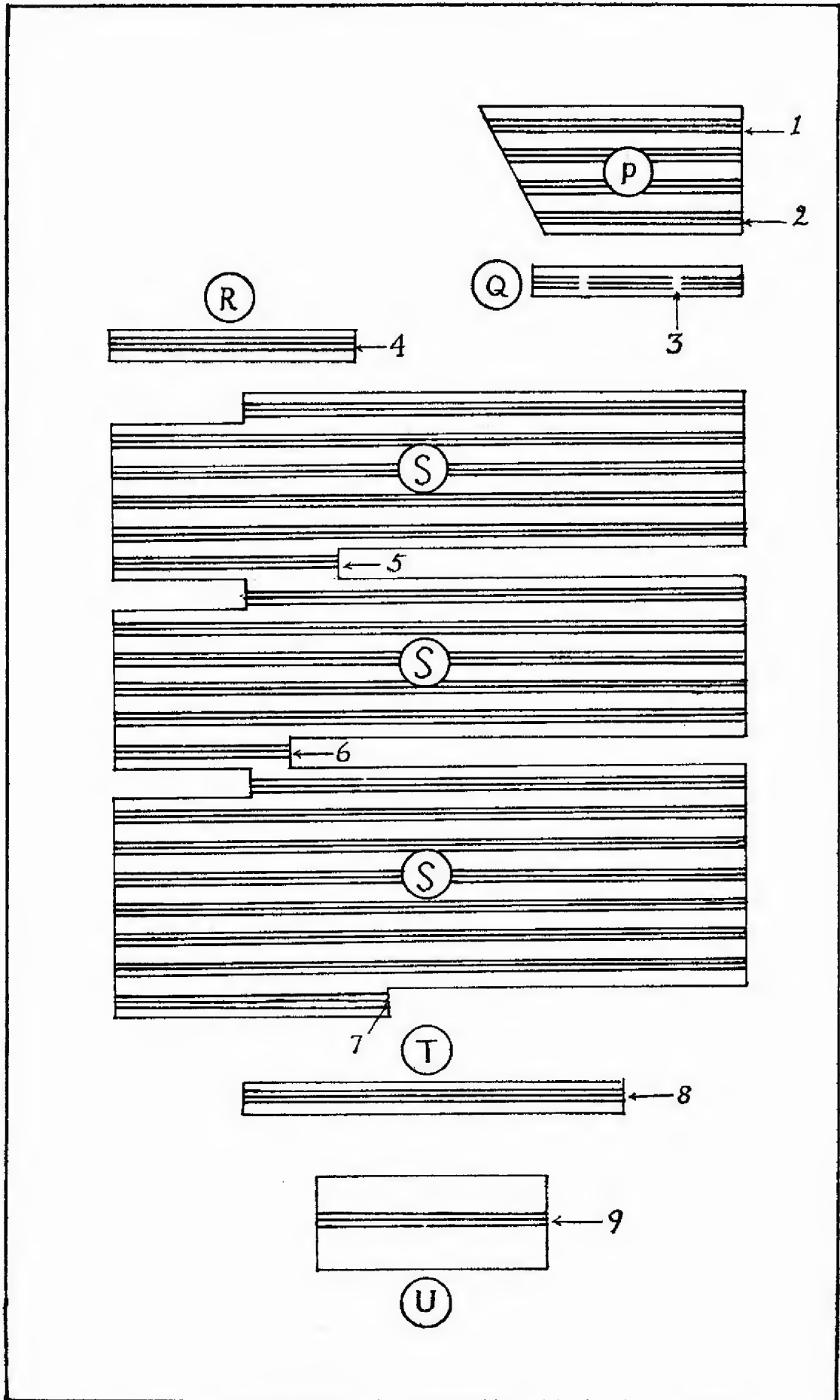
EXERCISE 30: REVISION EXERCISES ON THE LAYOUT OF PERSONAL AND FORMAL LETTERS

(a) The diagram on the next page represents a letter. No words have been written in, but shading has been used to represent lines. From this diagram you should be able to answer the following questions *without referring back to the diagrams given previously*.

- (i) Is this a personal or a formal letter?
- (ii) How do you know this?
- (iii) Say which parts of the letter are represented by letters P to U.
- (iv) How many paragraphs are there in the letter?
- (v) On what does the number of paragraphs used in a letter depend?
- (vi) What punctuation marks are needed at the points represented by the numbers 1 to 9? If more than one punctuation mark is possible, say so, and if no punctuation mark should be used, say so.
- (vii) If I wrote 'Dear Mrs Jones' at 'R', what should I write at 'T'?
- (viii) Can I write 'P' anywhere else?
- (ix) If so, where can I write it?
- (x) Can I write any other part of the letter anywhere else?
- (xi) If so, where can I write it?

(b) Divide your page into four columns. Write at the top of the first 'Salutation', at the top of the second 'Valediction', at the top of the third 'Signature', and at the top of the fourth 'Section "A" needed or not'. Down the left-hand side of your page write letters (a)–(t). Then write in the appropriate columns what forms you would choose in the following cases:

- (i) A letter to your Head teacher asking for a testimonial.
- (ii) A letter to the Head teacher of another school asking for a place there.
- (iii) A letter to the manager of a watch company who has mended your watch badly.
- (iv) A letter to your friend's father.
- (v) A letter to your Grandmother.
- (vi) A letter to the manager of a hotel where you want to book a room.
- (vii) A letter to the superintendent at a local police station concerning a camera which you have lost.
- (viii) A letter to a school friend who has gone to the United States.
- (ix) A letter to a pen-friend.
- (x) A letter to a teacher at your last school.
- (xi) A letter to the circulation manager of a magazine requesting him to send you the magazine through the post.
- (xii) A letter to the manageress of a hairdresser's in another town, where you think you have left your handbag.



- (xiii) A letter to your employer telling him you intend to leave your job.
 - (xiv) A letter to the editor of the local newspaper, complaining about the noise in your neighbourhood.
 - (xv) A letter to the Sales Manager of a refrigerator manufacturing company asking for a catalogue.
 - (xvi) A letter to the manager of a bus company suggesting they should have a later service to your neighbourhood.
 - (xvii) A letter to your sister.
 - (xviii) A letter to your neighbour apologizing for accidental damage to his window.
 - (xix) A letter to a person who has given a talk to a school society, thanking him.
 - (xx) A letter to the local library asking them to reserve a book for you.
- (c) (i) How many times and where do you write *your name* in:
- (1) a personal letter?
 - (2) a formal letter?
- (ii) How many times and where do you write the name of the *person you are writing to* in:
- (1) a personal letter?
 - (2) a formal letter?
- (d) Choose three cases in question (b) above where you have decided that Section 'A' should be inserted. Imagine and write down three suitable addresses. Set them out in the 'block' manner, as you might in writing a letter.
- (e) (i) If I have written as a Salutation 'Dear Sir' what may I write as a Valediction?
- (ii) If I have written 'Yours faithfully' as a Valediction, what may I write as a Salutation?
- (f) I can write 'Dear Uncle'—name three relations I cannot address in a similar way by using the name of their relationship to me.
- (g) If I have written 'Dear Mr Mills' at the Salutation, what may I write at the Valediction?
- (h) Look at the examples given in (e) (i) and (ii) and (g) above. Say whether they refer to formal or personal letters. Could any of these refer to either a formal or personal letter, and if so, which could?
- (i) Which of the following statements is true?
- (i) In a formal letter, you should not write any telephone numbers.
 - (ii) In a personal letter you should not use colloquial language.
 - (iii) A full stop is used after the signature only in a formal letter.
 - (iv) You may write the telephone number of the person you are writing to in a formal letter, but it is not necessary.

- (v) You never write the telephone number of the person you are writing to in a personal letter.
- (vi) 'Yours sincerely' is used only in personal letters.
- (vii) The address of the person you are writing to in a formal letter may be placed in either of two places.
- (viii) The address of the person you are writing to in a formal letter may be placed in two places in the same letter.
- (ix) You may write down the name of the person you are writing to in a personal letter.
- (x) Grammar is not important in a personal letter.
- (xi) The date may be omitted in a personal letter.
- (xii) It is only necessary to write down the name of your country when writing your address if the letter is to go abroad.
- (xiii) You may write down your own name above your address.
- (xiv) Your letter should contain as many paragraphs as possible.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Formal Invitations and Inquiries

Many of the patterns illustrated in Chapter 3 can be used in formal letters too: thanks, apologies, invitations, inquiries, and so on—but they are used usually in rather different circumstances, so one or two more illustrations may be useful.

I. INVITATIONS

In a formal letter, these will be invitations to speak at society meetings (this is really a request, but requests and invitations often overlap—as can be seen in the wording of the 'formal invitation' on p. 120); or they could be invitations to visit a school exhibition and so on. Thus:

I am writing on behalf of our Geography Society to ask whether you would kindly consent to give a talk to our society on the 6th May. Our Society was only founded last year, but we have a large membership, and we should be most grateful if you could find time to talk to us about some aspects of your work as a news correspondent in South America. We have read many of your articles with great interest. If another date would be more convenient, perhaps you would like to suggest one.

We are holding an exhibition of the history of our school in the school hall on Saturday the 3rd July. We wonder whether, as Secretary of the Old Boys' Association, you would care to come along, and whether you would be good enough to let other Old Boys know of this exhibition at your Annual General Meeting next Friday. I am sure it will be of interest to many of them, and they are all most cordially invited to come along.

We have recently started a Debating Society in this school, but so far we have had no debates with other schools. I believe there is a flourishing Debating Society at your school, and we should be delighted if you could come and have a debate with us. Though we are a new society, we are an enthusiastic one, and I think we can promise you a good debate. Any Thursday next term would suit us. If you would like us to suggest a date, then perhaps the 5th of February would be best; later dates are rather close to the examination. If you are agreeable to the debate, perhaps we can meet to arrange a subject and to make final arrangements later.

Notes The above examples are rather long: this is usual in invitations of this sort, especially if you are writing to a stranger. It is polite to give as full details as possible about the function to which you are asking a person to come and to offer alternative dates, if this is possible. A *little* gentle flattery does no harm (e.g. above the suggestions that the newspaper correspondent is a very busy man and that his articles have been read with great interest; the 'flourishing' applied to 'your debating society'), but it is *quite wrong* to do this in excess, or to belittle yourself too much. DO NOT talk about 'your honoured self', 'your works of genius', 'our humble and unimportant society' and so on. We do not write in this way in English.

Replies to Invitations

These can be much shorter, unless some special arrangements have to be made:

Thank you for your kind invitation to address your society: I should be delighted to do so, and the date you suggest is quite convenient. I have a number of colour slides of South America with which I could illustrate my talk. Can you provide a projector? If not, I can bring one of my own, but it is not very powerful.

Thank you for your invitation to come to the Exhibition at your school. It seems a very interesting one indeed, but I am afraid that I have a previous engagement on that day, and so I shall not be able to come. However, I shall pass on your invitation to the other Old Boys at our meeting, and I am sure many of them will want to come along. With best wishes for the success of your exhibition, I remain, . . .'

We should be very pleased to come to your school for a debate. I'm afraid that the date you suggest is not possible, as we have our Speech Day then, but the Thursday before or after would be all right. Could you and perhaps some committee members come to our school one afternoon next week after school to discuss a topic? Any evening would suit us.

If you have to decline an invitation, then it is polite to give a reason (as noted on p. 35); if you accept, then express your pleasure.

2. INQUIRIES

In a formal letter these will be about something you want to buy, about hotel accommodation, about facilities for study, and so on. The following examples provide useful sentence patterns and vocabulary. Usually the best plan is to state in general why you are writing, and then ask for specific information. The point of the more general background to your specific request is that your correspondent may then be able to give you help on some point you have not especially asked about, but which he thinks you will find useful.

I have noticed in this morning's newspaper an advertisement for a new type of automatic washing machine for which you are the sole agent in Manila. Could you please send me some leaflets about it?

I shall be visiting Kampala at Easter, and your hotel has been recommended to me. Could you please quote me your charges for a single room with breakfast? I expect to be staying one week.

After finishing school here next year, when I take my G.C.E., I should like to go to the United States for further study. My brother studied at your college for several years, and I should like to do likewise. I should prefer to study Mathematics. Could you please send me details about the courses offered by the college, and entry requirements?

I intend to visit the United Kingdom next year for a long holiday. I shall be travelling as extensively as I can, but in particular I want to stay a long time in London and to visit Scotland. Could you please send me any tourist information and leaflets you have in stock?

I shall be travelling to Europe next summer, and I believe that it is necessary to book a passage by ship well in advance. Could you tell me whether your line has any sailings scheduled for July, and could you also quote me the current single tourist-class fare? I have heard

that discounts are sometimes available to students on certain sailings. I should be grateful for any information you could give on this point. I wonder whether you can supply some information about outboard motors: I believe you are the Jamaican agent for several makes. I am looking for a small motor to power a twelve-foot sailing dinghy. Naturally, I do not want to spend more than necessary, but, on the other hand, I am willing to pay extra for a good quality and absolutely reliable engine. I should be pleased to know of your recommendations.

Replies to inquiries

You will not normally have to write these until you are working in a business: thus a reply is really a business or professional letter, which (as explained on p. 3) is not dealt with in this book. However, should you have to write a reply for an examination, simply thank the person for the inquiry, and give the information in a straightforward way. Note the suitable polite ending. One example should be enough:

Thank you for your inquiry about automatic washing machines. Enclosed you will find some leaflets on the latest models. The model TC 18a is the most popular and large enough for the average sized family. If your family is larger the TC 18b is more suitable. You might like to know that we have in stock a few of last year's models which are almost the same. We are selling these at 20% discount to clear old stocks. They are of course brand new and in perfect condition, and full servicing is available on them, the mechanism being identical with the new model. All models can be demonstrated at our showroom. If we can supply any further information, please write to us.

3. THANKS

These are as for personal letters, though the occasions will be different.

I am writing to thank you (on behalf of our school/club/society, etc.) for:

- { the very interesting talk you gave us last week.
- { agreeing to come and distribute prizes at our annual speech day.
- { all the work you have put in over the last year in helping to make our club such a success.
- { all you have done for me while at the school.
- { your support in collecting money for charity last week.

EXERCISE 31: INVITATIONS, INQUIRIES AND THANKS

(a) Write out the following invitation, inserting the correct verbs and prepositions. Then do the same with the reply to it.

- (i) We (just/form) a photographic society our school. Our membership (now/reach) almost a hundred, and we (intend) (give) a series lec-

tures next term. I (wonder) whether you (like)
 (give) a talk some photographic topic. As you (be)
 such a well-known photographer birds, perhaps a
 lecture photographing birds (be) most suitable.
 We (have) a first-class projector the school if
 you (like) (use) it (show) slides. I (do)
 (hope) you (be able) (spare) a few
 hours your valuable time (give) us a lecture.
 Any week-day evening (do), though Fridays (be)
 best.

- (ii) (Thank) you your invitation (give) a
 lecture your photographic society. I (be) de-
 lighted (come) and (talk) about my experiences as
 a bird photographer. I (suggest) Friday, 3rd February.

(b) Write out the following inquiries, inserting the correct verbs and prepositions:

- (i) I (be) interested (take) a holiday
 Japan. I (believe) you (be) the agents
 several organized tours that country. I (oblige)
 if you (be able) (send) me some leaflets
 your tours.
- (ii) Last Saturday I (leave) an umbrella your cinema
 the 9.30 performance. If it (find), I (be)
 grateful if you (be able) let me (know) I (live)
 rather a long way the cinema, and (not/want)
 (travel) Ipoh if you (not/find) it.
- (iii) We (hold) our annual sports Wednesday, 4th
 November the school sports field. We (wonder)
 whether your firm (like) (sell) soft drinks
 the girls this occasion. As there (be) no shop
 the sports field, you (have) (erect) a stall
 such as I (notice) you (put) up the
 Catholic Boys' School Annual Sports last month.
- (iv) We (hold) a fair next month (raise) money
 the local hospital. a similar fair (hold) by the
 local Scout Troop I (remember) (see) a large
 slide children which (be) very successful. I (tell)
 that it (borrow) your school. (you/think)
 we (be able) (borrow) it our fair?
 The fair (hold) 17th May, and we (like)
 (take) it the 16th, and (return) it
 the 18th. Naturally, we (take) good care it. As
 the fair (be) aid charity, I (do)
 (hope) you (be able) (help) us.
- (v) I (write) you behalf our bad-
 minton club. Several members (like) (be able)

(learn) (play) squash as well, but unfortunately we (have) no court the school. One our masters (be) a good player, and (offer) (teach) us if we (obtain) the use a court. We (wonder) whether we (be able) (use) the university courts some time the week when they (be) not great demand the students. All the boys (concern) (be) senior boys (..... sixteen), and (accompany) a master when (use) the courts.

(c) Write out the following letters of thanks, inserting the correct verbs and prepositions:

(i) I (write) (thank) you (lend) us two canoes (belong) the Training College our camp last month. The boys (enjoy) (learn) (sail) them very much, and we now (plan) (build) two our own next term.

(ii) I (like) (thank) you very much the trouble your firm (take) (make) spare parts my old refrigerator, which (be) now unobtainable the makers. The refrigerator (work) perfectly.

(d) Write a letter of invitation to a lady who, before her recent marriage, was a nurse, asking her to give a talk to a group of girls on 'Nursing as a career' OR to a local police inspector to give a talk to a group of boys on 'A career in the police'.

(e) You want to form a life-saving society at your school, but you have no qualified instructor. Write to the secretary of the local life-saving club to see whether any member of the club can give you instruction once a week.

(f) Write letters to business firms asking for details as given:

- (i) To a radio shop inquiring about the supply of record-playing and public address equipment for a school or club.
- (ii) To a china shop asking whether they can get to special order some pieces of crockery you have broken.
- (iii) To a book store asking whether they can get you some books published overseas.
- (iv) To a food shop asking whether they can make up a parcel of foods typical of your country to send overseas EITHER to a pen-friend so that he can taste your national dishes OR to a friend who is now studying or working abroad on the occasion of his birthday or some national holiday or festival.
- (v) To the makers of fishing tackle OR sewing machines asking for further details about their products which you have seen advertised in the newspaper.
- (vi) To a bus company reporting the loss of your season ticket and

asking whether you can be supplied with a new one without further charge.

- (vii) To the local library reporting the loss of some library books and offering to pay for them.
- (viii) To a theatre, cinema, or sports arena asking whether you can book tickets by post for a certain performance.
- (ix) To a local radio station asking whether it is possible to attend the live performance of your favourite show.
- (x) To the manager of a local factory asking whether a party of boys or girls from your school can go on a guided tour.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Letters of Complaint and Answers to Them

Most of the letter will consist of a statement of the substance of the complaint: 'Your dog destroyed my flowers' or 'The watch you sold me does not work', but some phrases must be learnt to make your complaint forceful and yet polite. Complaints may be either against individuals, usually on account of behaviour, or against businesses, usually about the quality of their goods, or the poorness of their service. The latter sort are perhaps simpler. Be sure to give full details of the transaction from which your complaint arises (how long you have had a faulty article, or the date on which you ordered some goods not yet delivered). At the end suggest the course of action you wish to be taken (do you want an article exchanging? do you want to cancel an order you have made?) The following examples should illustrate adequately how to compose such a letter—naturally the content can vary a good deal with the type of complaint.

I bought the enclosed watch only one month ago with the usual written guarantee. The guarantee form is numbered XLB/50092/108 and dated the 9th August. The watch has not been dropped or misused in any way, as you can see from the external condition, but it has proved most unreliable. Although I have wound it regularly, it has stopped five times, and when going has gained about three minutes in twelve hours. I should be obliged if you could either repair or replace it.

I am returning the electric toaster which I bought from your store a week ago. I am unable to bring it back in person as I live some way from your shop but I wanted to return it as soon as possible, as it has already broken. It worked perfectly for three days, then, on the fourth morning there was a large flash from the inside when I plugged it in, and the fuse was blown. I should be glad if you could either repair or replace it, and give me some assurance of the machine's safety.

Letters of complaint to individuals are more difficult, because they are likely to take offence at any criticism you make of their behaviour, while a manufacturer will accept the fact that one of his products might be at fault. If the individual does take offence, then not only may you find yourself with a quarrel on your hands, but he may be disinclined to do anything about your complaint! You must be very tactful indeed. Note the following introductory sentences:

I am sorry to have
to complain about { the noise made by your children.
your dog.
the smell from your drains.

I hope you won't mind
my writing about { something which happened yesterday.
the noise made by your piano.
the condition of the stairway.

I'm afraid I have to
write to you about { the behaviour of your son.
the fumes which come from your chimney.
the water supply in my flat.

If you are complaining about the noise of a party or someone's piano, or the damage children are causing in their games, it may be suitable to add something like:

It's not that
Please don't think that { I want to be a kill-joy.
I want to interfere with your enjoyment.
I am trying to interfere in business which
is not my own.

and then you state exactly why you think you have just reason for complaint:

However, I think the trees make our neighbourhood much more pleasant, and the children are wilfully destroying them.

However, we find it very difficult to get our baby to sleep with all the noise.

If possible, suggest some method by which the source of the complaint could be removed:

Perhaps your daughter could practice the violin earlier in the evening.

Perhaps the children could play in the park.

You can also add some remark to suggest that the person to whom you are writing did not realize he was causing a nuisance:

I realize that probably you did not appreciate just how much noise you were making.

I am sure that you did not know that the cooking smells have been escaping from the cracked chimney into my flat.

You can also add some further conciliatory words if you like:

I hope that you won't misunderstand me, or think that I am complaining unnecessarily.

I do hope you can see my point of view.

Although you must always be polite in making a complaint, if your complaints are ignored, you may have to be rather more forceful, and possibly make a threat:

This is the tenth time my watch has been back to you for repair. As the watch is so unreliable, I think it should be exchanged for a new one. My wife tells me that you have refused to do this. Unless you can replace the defective watch with a new one, I am afraid I shall have to take up the matter with { the manufacturer whose agency you hold. your head office in Geneva.

I think you will agree that I have been patient for a long time, but as you have taken no notice of my previous complaints, I am afraid that I shall have to complain to the landlord unless you stop practising your trumpet so late at night, and without regard for your neighbours.

Replies to Letters of Complaint

Although replies to a complaint made to a business are perhaps really business letters (see p. 82), the following are given as examples of suitable replies to the complaints made about the watch and toaster above. Note that both apology and the promise of some definite action is required.

Thank you for your letter about your watch No. XLB/50092/108, which you returned to us on the 12th of this month. We have examined the watch, and found a defective part which has been replaced.

We are now returning the watch to you. If you find any further difficulty with the watch, please do not hesitate to contact us again. The watch should now work perfectly, but if you have any more trouble, we shall be pleased to exchange it for a new model. We are sorry for the difficulty you have had.

We have examined your electric toaster, and found that the damage was caused by a wire coming loose in transit. We notice that some darkening has occurred on the casing as a result of this accident, and we are therefore returning it to the manufacturer, and replacing it by another one. We have examined the inside of this one very carefully, and can assure you that it is perfectly safe. We are sorry about this mishap, which we have reported to the makers so that they can ensure it does not happen again.

If you receive a letter of complaint from someone and you think the complaint is justified, then you must be apologetic, and give assurances that it will not happen again. You can even thank the person for making the complaint—this will reassure them that you are sincerely sorry, and that you are in no way offended. Thus:

Thank you for your letter complaining about the noise of my gramophone. I am so sorry that it has been disturbing you, and am very glad that you have told me about it. I shall make a point of keeping the volume down in future. If it still disturbs you, please don't hesitate to let me know. Apologizing for the inconvenience I have caused you, I remain

I must apologize for the damage my dog has done to your garden. I had no idea of this until I received your letter. Naturally, I shall pay for new plants, and so on, and I have made sure that the dog will not be let off his leash near your house again.

On the other hand, you may feel that the complaint is not justified—you may even feel that, for some reason, you have more reason of complaint than the person who has written to you! In this case, still be polite, but justify yourself fully.

I was surprised to receive a letter from you complaining about the noise you say I made at my party last week. If we did disturb you, I am sorry, but in fact the party ended well before midnight, and not at one o'clock as you allege. Any noise you heard at that time must have come from someone else's party. As we took good care to keep the volume of the gramophone down to a reasonable level, I think that all the noise must in fact have come from another flat: the walls and floors here are, as you know, very thin.

I am sorry if parking my car in front of your house is causing you any inconvenience, but I would point out that there is nowhere else that I can put it, and that as a parking space is marked out there, I think I am legally entitled to park there. After all, if I didn't someone else

would. This sort of inconvenience seems inevitable in Hong Kong, and under the circumstances, I'm afraid that I cannot agree to move my car elsewhere.

I am surprised that you should object to my typing late at night, as the noise from your television is so loud that I should have thought it would have drowned it completely. In fact, it is only because the noise of your television is so loud, preventing me from sleeping, that I do my typing so late, and if you would be so considerate as to quieten your television, I should be delighted to do my typing at a more reasonable hour.

EXERCISE 32: LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

(a) Write out the following letters of complaint and answers to them, inserting the correct verbs and prepositions:

(i) (1) I (buy) ten yards material your shop the 16th of May, which (make) curtains. I (assure) the salesman when I (buy) the material that it (not/shrink) However, upon (wash), the material (shrink) badly. You (be able) (see) this clearly as the lining (not/shrink) and therefore (be) now longer several inches than the curtain. I (send) you the curtains post your examination as I (now/move) another district and it (be) not easy me (get) your shop. I (be) grateful if you (be able) (make) me new curtains similar material that (not/shrink)

(2) We (receive) your letter and your curtains. We (be) extremely sorry that they (shrink) We (have) no other complaints this type cloth, but (conclude) that you (must) (buy) a defective length. We (return) your curtains the manufacturers immediately. We (make) you some more curtains as replacements pleasure; we (enclose) some samples which you (be able) (choose)

(ii) (1) I (be) sorry (have) (complain) about the noise your son's motor-cycle. I (think) the exhaust (be) defective as the noise it (make) (be) far greater than a normal motor-cycle. I (mention) this him several times, but he (take) no notice. I (be) grateful if you (tell) him (fit) a proper silencer the machine

as the moment our children (awake)
 nightly the noise.

(2) (Thank) you your letter my son's
 noisy motor-cycle. As I (now/live) away my
 home a few weeks, I (not/know) anything
 this. I (telephone) my son this morning
 (tell) him (buy) whatever (need).....
 his motor-cycle at once. I (be) sorry he (take)
 no notice your earlier complaints, and (hope)
 that you (not/trouble) the noise
 any further.

- (b) Write a letter of complaint to a business firm about the following:
- (i) A rain-coat which is not waterproof.
 - (ii) Some books you ordered three months previously and have not yet received.
 - (iii) A piece of furniture you bought believing it was teak but now find is made of cheap wood cleverly painted.
 - (iv) The lack of service for a sewing-machine. You have telephoned six times, but no mechanic has come to look at the defective machine.
 - (v) A tape-recorder which has broken down twelve times in twelve months.
 - (vi) The rudeness of a shop assistant in a large store.
 - (vii) The refusal of a bus driver to stop for passengers though the bus was partially empty.
 - (viii) Some luggage which the railway company has failed to deliver.
 - (ix) Some photographs which have faded after only three months.
 - (x) A model steam engine which exploded and caused damage to your property though it did no injury to yourself.
- (c) Write suitable replies (i) accepting and (ii) declining responsibility for the complaints in (b) above.
- (d) The members of a visiting sports team caused some damage to your changing room. Write a letter of complaint to the secretary of that club.
- (e) At the annual general meeting of a club some new rules were passed which you disapprove of. The chairman gave very little time to the discussion of these changes, and this you believe is against the constitution of the club. Write to him complaining about this, suggesting what he should do, and saying what course of action you will follow if he does not accept your suggestion.
- (f) Your landlord has refused to make certain repairs to your flat. You believe that you have a right to these repairs under the terms of your agreement with him. Write him a letter re-stating your complaints, referring to the agreement, and saying what you intend to do if he continues to refuse to make the repairs.
- (g) There is a small plot of grass outside the block of flats in which you

- live. Some small children are ruining it with their games—though the grass plot is not large enough to give them real pleasure, and there is a public park close by. Write a letter to their parents.
- (h) You are the owner of a small shop. You sell sweets and ice-cream to the children from a nearby school, and the profit they help you to make is a substantial part of your business. However, some pupils have been making a nuisance of themselves, and some of them have been stealing. Write a letter to the headmaster or headmistress of the school. Remember that you do not want the head teacher to forbid the children to come to your shop.
- (i) You live in a flat. Your neighbour upstairs is very fond of table-tennis. He plays the game sometimes very late at night, and the noise of the ball hitting the bat and the table, though not loud, is very annoying. Write to tell him about this.
- (j) You own a bicycle and live in a block of flats. You leave your bicycle on the ground floor, under the first flight of steps. The owner of the block of flats has written to you saying that other neighbours have complained to him about your bicycle, saying that it often blocks the stairway and that it looks unsightly. Write a reply to him, defending yourself against what you think are unjustified complaints.

CHAPTER NINE

Letters of Application for Jobs

This is one of the most important types of formal letter—for obvious reasons. However, letters of application are not too difficult to write, if you keep in mind the main requirements, and write in simple direct English using the following sentence patterns. Although the exact wording must vary from individual to individual and from job to job,

certain standard sentence patterns can be followed. In general the letter should contain the following five sections: an introduction; a statement of qualifications; reasons for your wanting the job and reasons why the employer should find you particularly suitable for that particular job; a statement of referees; your availability for interview.

I. INTRODUCTION

This consists of one or two sentences stating how you know that the vacancy has occurred:

- I have read/seen your advertisement for a private secretary in to-day's/yesterday's 'Calcutta Times'. I should like to apply for this post.
- OR I should like to apply for the post of photographer advertised in last week's 'Standard'.
- OR I have noticed from a circular on the school-notice board that there are vacancies for clerks in your company.
- OR I wish to become a journalist, and my Headmaster has suggested that I write to you to see whether any vacancies are available or likely to occur soon on your newspaper.
- OR I wish to become a nurse, and my Headmistress has told me that I should make application to you.

2. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

If you are applying for your first job after school, you obviously cannot give details of previous employment. If you have already had a job, however, you should still make some reference to your school record, and particularly the results of any external examination (such as G.C.E. or a local School Certificate) that you have taken. You will normally send along with your application a copy or photostat of your external certificate and school leaving certificate or any similar paper which your school has given you on leaving. There is no need to repeat in detail everything in these documents—in fact to do so would be tedious and would be wasting the time of your prospective employer. However, you should mention that you have enclosed such documents, and bring his attention to any special points in them which have a bearing on your application—any subject at which you are particularly good *and which would be useful in the job you are seeking*.

If you have already had a job or several jobs, give reasonably full details about them, and, where possible, make it clear how you think your experience in previous jobs is going to help to make you a useful employee in your new one. If you are trying for an entirely different type of job you may say quite frankly that you think you chose the wrong type of job—but you must make it clear that you are qualified

for the new one. Otherwise, your employer may think you are an undecided and shiftless individual who is not at all sure what sort of job he should be in.

School

I studied at King's College for five years, and I enclose photostat copies of my Leaving Certificate and my School Certificate. From these you will see that my science subjects are particularly good.

I left Queen's College last June, and this will be my first job. You will find enclosed copies of my Leaving Certificate and Testimonial. You will notice that I obtained particularly good results in English and Chinese.

I shall be leaving school next month. Although I have not yet taken my School Certificate, my academic record has been very good. I am in the 'A' stream, and am expected to get a good certificate. I shall forward my results as soon as they are published.

I am enclosing a certified copy of my academic record at school. As my headmaster mentions in his testimonial, I was prevented from taking my School Certificate by illness, and family circumstances have since obliged me to leave full-time education. However, I am studying in evening school, and shall be taking my G.C.E. externally this year.

Work (Previous employment)

I have been employed as a mechanic for three years.

As my testimonials show, I am now in my third job since leaving school, all of them in the catering trade.

I have now had in all ten years' experience as an accountant with a large company.

3. REASONS FOR WANTING THE JOB: WHY YOU THINK YOU WOULD BE SUITABLE

Do not say here that you will be suitable because you are a very clever person—this your employer-to-be can judge for himself. Do not try to flatter him and say he is such a famous man that you feel you must work for him. If the reasons are simply that you want to be a clerk or whatever it is, or because you think the salary is attractive, there is no need to insert this section at all. Only mention anything which might be relevant. Often this section overlaps with section 2 above:

I should like to become a guide as I am looking for a job which is varied, interesting, and can offer me scope to use my linguistic ability.

My father is a photographer, and with his encouragement I have been interested in photography since I was quite young.

My father and several of my uncles are sailors, and I myself have always wanted to go to sea. I have been a member of the sea scouts for five years.

The overlap between this section and section 2 is well illustrated by the following three extracts, where qualifications and reasons for wanting and feeling suited to a job are closely related. Study these illustrations closely, as they cover the three possible positions you may be in when applying for another job: that the job is the same type of job; that it is different but similar; or that it is quite different.

Applying for the same type of job

I have been employed as a stenographer with Messrs. Lomax for the past two years, and have thus had experience of secretarial work. In this post, I have had to assume a certain amount of responsibility: for six months I have been in charge of the typing pool, and for the last three months have been acting as private secretary to the managing director. I have enjoyed this type of work, but with the return from sick leave of the director's secretary, there is no longer any scope for me to do this more responsible work in my present employment.

Applying for a similar type of job

I have not had experience of precisely the kind of work the post you advertise entails, but my work as a refrigerator engineer has been somewhat similar, and I have studied air-conditioning theory at the Technical College. I have also done occasional work on air-conditioners. I think I should have no difficulty in adapting myself to the new kind of work, and I think my languages would be a definite asset: I speak Yoruba, French and English fluently.

Applying for a quite different type of job

At the moment I am working as a clerk in a lawyer's office. I have not found this work at all interesting, and wish to make a career in salesmanship. Although I lack previous experience in this field, I think I have the necessary personal qualities, my academic record is good, and my present employer will testify to my willingness to work hard, even though I have not found work in a law office very congenial.

4. REFEREES AND TESTIMONIALS

A referee is someone whose name you give 'as a reference'. Your prospective employer will then write to him to ask his opinion about your suitability for the job. Before giving anyone's name as a referee, you must of course ask this permission (see below). A testimonial is a report about you of which you yourself have a copy, and which you send together with your application. A testimonial will only mention your good points (otherwise you wouldn't send it)—for this reason nowadays most employers will give more weight to what the referees tell them, but

some employers do not require testimonials at all. On the other hand, a testimonial gives *some* idea of an applicant and you may well be asked to provide one when you apply for a job.

This section of your letter of application can be very short:

I am enclosing a photostat copy of my school testimonial. Mr of and Mr of have consented to act as referees.

Requesting someone to act as referee

This can be dealt with as a formal INQUIRY (see p. 81). Here is an example:

I am applying for a post with the Gas Company as a clerk, and
I wonder whether you { would kindly consent to act as a referee.
 { could let me have a testimonial.

5. AVAILABILITY FOR INTERVIEW

It is not for you to state a time for an interview, but you may add some remark such as:

I am available for interview at any time.
I am afraid that I shall be away for the next fortnight on a previously arranged visit to Singapore for my present firm, but I shall be available for interview, if required, after the 18th of this month.

6. APPLICATION FOR A SCHOOL PLACE

The following give guidance in the principal circumstances when you might be looking for a school place:

I wish to apply for a place in your school. I have been studying up to now at St. John's College, but the school is unable to offer me a place next year because of the strong competition for places in the Sixth form. Although, as you can see from the accompanying copy of my school record, I have done quite well at school, I'm afraid that the school certificate results are not considered adequate for a place in the Science Sixth. I wonder whether there might be a vacancy in your school for which I could be considered?

I am unable to continue studying at my present school as I wish to study science next year, and the Loretta Convent has no facilities for such study. I should like to be considered for a place in your Sixth Form.

I have just arrived in Ibadan from Lagos. I should like to study at your school in the Sixth Arts if there is a vacancy.

Copies of school leaving certificates or of academic records will be enclosed of course and some mention made of them as in 4 above (pp. 94-5).

7. APPLICATION FOR A PLACE AT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

This will normally be made on a special application form, but certain phrases from the above section may be adapted for inclusion in an accompanying letter.

8. REPLIES TO APPLICATIONS

These are perhaps strictly speaking business or professional letters (see p. 82), but the following standard replies are given in case you need to use them.

Thank you for your application for the post of typist in our company, which is now being considered.

Thank you for your application for the post of service engineer in our firm. I am sorry to have to tell you that the post has now been filled.

Thank you for your application for the post of private secretary to the managing director. You have been placed on the short-list, and are requested to come for an interview on Saturday, 5th August.

I am pleased to be able to offer you the post with our company for which you recently applied. Would you please write and let us know as soon as possible whether you will be accepting the post?

EXERCISE 33: APPLICATIONS

(a) Write out the following application, inserting the correct prepositions and verbs:

I (wish) (apply) the post salesman
 your bookstore, which I (notice) this
 morning's paper. the moment I (work) a
 photographic shop a salesman. I (be) quite successful
 while I (be) there, but I (be) not very interested
 cameras. the other hand, I (be) very inter-
 ested books. school I (be) interested
 books, and (like) (continue) my studies the
 university, but unfortunately family circumstances (prevent).....
 this. I (do) well both English language and literature.
 You (notice) that my school certificate I (gain)
 distinctions both these subjects. My English (improve)
 while I (work) the camera shop, and I (read)
 a great deal.

I (enclose) a testimonial my present employer and
copies my school certificate and school leaving certificate.
I (be) available interview any time suitable
..... you.

- (b) Re-write the following letters of application, inserting in the appropriate place these words and groups of words which have been taken out:

since	as a	was educated at
at any time	copies of	consequently
taken dictation	have worked	vacancies in
at evening school	available for interview	G.C.E.
should like to apply	from your advertisement	passed

I have noticed in to-day's paper that there are
your firm for shorthand-typists. I for one of these posts.

I the City Girls' School, where I took my School
Certificate and I left school, I in the
Far East Import-Export Company copy typist, though I
have occasionally I have studied typing and shorthand
..... and several Pitman examinations.
I am now looking for a post in which I can use these skills.

I enclose my School Certificate, G.C.E., and Pitman
Examinations.

I am

- (c) If you are still at school:
- (i) What career do you want to take up when you leave school?
 - (ii) Is any other member of your family doing this job?
 - (iii) Why do you want to go into this job?
 - (iv) What sort of a job would you least like to do?
 - (v) Do you know anyone who is doing this job?
 - (vi) What is your best subject at school?
 - (vii) Is this also the one you like most? If not, which do you like most?
 - (viii) Why do you like it most?
 - (ix) Which do you like least?
 - (x) Why do you like it so little?
 - (xi) Is this also your worst subject?
 - (xii) Do you play any sports? If so what? If not, why not?
 - (xiii) What hobbies and interests have you?
 - (xiv) Do you think any of these would help you in a career?
 - (xv) When you apply for a job, what facts do you think will be most in your favour?
 - (xvi) What are your weakest points, so far as being considered for the job is considered?

If you are now working:

- (i) What were your best and worst subjects at school?
 - (ii) Have these subjects helped or hindered you in your work?
 - (iii) Have any sports or hobbies from your school days helped you in your job?
 - (iv) Why did you choose that particular job?
 - (v) Have you been happy in your work? If so, what did you like most? If not, why don't you like your job?
 - (vi) What sort of a job would you like to apply for?
 - (vii) Why do you think you would be particularly suitable for such a job?
 - (viii) What weaknesses do you think you have for such a job?
- (d) Now, with your answers to (c) in mind, and with the models given on previous pages, write a letter of application for the job you would like after leaving school—or for the job you would like to have after the one you now hold.
- (e) Write letters of application in answer to the following advertisements:
- (i) Telephonist wanted for European trading company. Box. no. 17896.
 - (ii) Salesman required. Must be able to speak English, Malay, and Chinese fluently. Previous experience essential. Apply in writing to The Universal Camera Company.
 - (iii) Doctor requires receptionist, female. Must be able to do some typing, and to speak fluent English. Apply in writing to Dr. Tamil . . .
 - (iv) Applications are invited by the St. Mary Hospital for probationer nurses. Apply in writing to the Matron, giving full details.
 - (v) Manager required for small factory producing rubber goods. Previous managerial experience in this or similar line essential. Box. no. 19876.
 - (vi) A part-time teacher (evenings) required for science subjects in a local evening school. Good qualifications, preferably a degree, required. State salary required. Apply Box. no. XX678.
 - (vii) There is a good career for the right boy in the police. Apply now to the Superintendent in charge of recruitment, Central Police Headquarters.
 - (viii) Unusual and challenging job offered to personable and able young man. Managing director of large hotel requires personal assistant to train as assistant manager. University graduate preferred, but degree not essential. Languages a definite asset. Apply in writing to the Manager, Astoria Hotel, Calcutta.
 - (ix) A large firm of lawyers has a vacancy for an articled clerk. Box no. 457.
 - (x) The Pacific Maritime Co. has vacancies for trainee stewards

on its liners. Excellent prospects. Apply in writing to the Personnel Manager.

- (f) You would like to work in a travel bureau. You think you are well qualified for this post. It will be your first job from school. You have seen no advertisement for a vacancy, but think that it might be a good idea to write to the bureau to see if they have any jobs, or if any are likely to come up soon. Write a suitable letter.
- (g) You have been working for seven years as a clerk but are bored with this work. You want to travel and see the world, but have no money. You think you would like to work on an ocean liner. You can play the piano well, you are a keen photographer, and you are good at games. You think these talents may be of help to you. Write a letter to the personnel manager of a shipping line asking whether you have any chance of getting employment.
- (h) You have studied for a year at the university, but have had to leave because of your family circumstances. You would like to work in an accountant's office and study in your spare time to become qualified. Write a letter of application in reply to an advertisement in your local paper.
- (i) You would like to become a hairdresser. Although there are hairdressers in your town, none of them could employ you as a trainee. Moreover, you would prefer to be trained by a larger and more fashionable hairdresser in a nearby city. Your headmaster/headmistress has suggested a firm to you—he/she knows the manager well, and has agreed to act as referee and to help you as much as possible, if the hairdresser's has a vacancy. Write a letter of application.
- (j) You have already had four posts of varying periods as a salesman, and now wish to apply for a fifth, which offers you more scope. Give full details of your previous posts, and say why you think you would be suitable for this new one. (You may decide yourself what articles you have been selling, and whether it has been the same article or different articles in the past.)

CHAPTER TEN

Letters to the Press

A letter to a newspaper should be addressed to its Editor, and set out as any other formal letter—that is, as shown in the diagram on page 73. The layout can also be seen clearly from the example of a letter to a newspaper on page 109. There is no set pattern for the contents of the letter, but it should always be short, to the point, and well-reasoned. You should make it clear as early as possible in the letter what it is you are writing about. If your letter arises out of something which appeared in the newspaper, you should refer as exactly as possible to it—giving, for example, the title of the article, and the date of the edition of the paper in which it appeared.

The subject matter of the letter may be almost anything, but most letters to the press may be divided into the following types:

1. *Letters conveying information:* The reader may have some knowledge which he wishes to share as he feels it useful or interesting—a recipe, a way of growing flowers, some aspects of local history, the derivation of some word, the reason for some national custom, and so on.
2. *Letters seeking information or help:* The information may be sought either from the newspaper, or from any other reader who may have it. A wide range of topics may be covered, as indicated in (i) above.
3. *Letters making suggestions, or stating opinions and beliefs:* These may cover local, national, or international affairs—or they may be on more general topics, such as cruelty to animals, the degeneracy of modern youth, and so on.
4. *Letters of complaint:* These complaints could be about something which has appeared in the newspaper, written either by a member of the newspaper's staff, or by another reader in the correspondence columns. On the other hand, the complaints could be about some aspect of politics, local government, other people's behaviour etc.
5. *Letters of appreciation:* These are the reverse of (iv)—they express the writer's pleasure at something he has seen in the paper or his feeling that some praiseworthy aspect of public life or conduct should be made known through the newspaper.

Some letters will naturally not fall into any of these categories, and many may be of more than one type. For instance, a letter of complaint will often contain suggestions for a remedy—and many letters stating beliefs will also contain criticism of people holding contrary ideas.

1. LETTERS CONTAINING INFORMATION

Here is a short example of the body of such a letter:

In answer to your reader who wants to know whether gold has ever been mined locally, I can state quite definitely that a mine was in operation about twenty miles from the city centre, up river and on the north bank, in the early nineteenth century. It is mentioned in Smith's account of the area, and traces of the old workings were found just after the First World War, when the new highway was being built. According to Smith, the yields from the mine were very disappointing, and the company went bankrupt. I do not think any further attempts at gold mining have been made since this time.

2. LETTERS SEEKING INFORMATION OR HELP

Here is an example of the body of such a letter:

I have just been clearing out a lot of old papers after the death of my mother, and among them I found this old photograph of Accra. I think it must have been taken at the turn of the century. There is no writing on the back of it. I wonder whether any of your readers can recognize where it was taken, or say what sort of ceremony is taking place?

EXERCISE 34: INFORMATION

(a) Imagine you are the reader referred to in the letter about the gold mine above. Write out the letter you wrote to the newspaper which prompted this reply. Make your letter as short as possible.

(b) Write a suitable reply to the letter about the old photograph of Accra. Imagine that the photograph was in fact taken of somewhere in your own area. Write about 100 words.

(c) Write out the following letter, with appropriate addresses, dates, valediction and signature, and putting the verbs in brackets into the correct tenses.

I (try) (write) a history of St. Mary's Convent School. I (be) most grateful for any material in the way of reminiscences, magazines, photographs, etc. that your readers (be able) (provide) As all the records of the school (destroy) in the war, I (be) particularly glad of anything to do with the pre-war history of the school.

(d) Imagine you are an old pupil of St. Mary's Convent School. Write a suitable reply to the above letter. Note that in this sort of case, unless the information were of wide appeal, you would in fact write directly to the correspondent. You may write either sort of letter—to the Editor, or to the correspondent.

- (e) Write letters to the Editor asking for:
- (i) Support for an art exhibition—you would like both voluntary helpers and also a large number of people to come along. The proceeds are for charity.
 - (ii) A new type of article to be included in the newspaper or magazine.
 - (iii) A recipe of which you have only the name.
 - (iv) Members to form a new type of club.

3. LETTERS MAKING SUGGESTIONS, OR STATING OPINIONS AND BELIEFS

Note this pattern, common in letters of this kind:

1.	2.	3.
I	think believe (that) consider	{ too little care is taken of old people. the bus service is a disgrace on a Sunday. we are much luckier than our grandfathers. { shops should open later than they do. we would all soon die of boredom if we had no work. transistor radios ought to be banned from the beach.

Notice that in the first group of clauses in column three events and circumstances are described as they actually are, and so indicative tenses are used, whereas in the second group of three clauses the events have not taken place, and may never do so—they express the wishes of the writer. Consequently 'would' 'should' and 'ought' are used. Be careful in constructions with 'think', 'believe', 'consider', and similar verbs, to use the correct form of the verb in the noun clause following.

A writer to an Editor often feels the need to state his qualifications for writing on a given topic, or the special reasons which have prompted him to do so. The following patterns are most common:

- (a) { As a schoolteacher of many years' experience, I think that
 { As a ratepayer, I consider that
- (b) I have lived in this city or near it all my working life—with the exception of the war years. I believe that

The second way—using two sentences—is preferable if the introductory material is likely to be lengthy.

EXERCISE 35: SUGGESTIONS, ETC.

- (a) Write out the following sentences, using the correct form of the verb:
- (i) I (think) that something (do) about the state of the bus shelters in the city.

- (ii) I (believe) the present summer holidays (be) too long and (shorten)
- (iii) The people who (write) to you last week about traffic problems (consider) the following points.
- (iv) I (consider) that a local society (form) (help) mentally-retarded children.
- (v) The police (pay) more attention to catching criminals rather than booking parking offences.
- (b) The following is the body of a letter stating a point of view. Put the verbs into the correct tenses:
- I (believe) that local policemen (continue) (carry) guns, at any rate for the time being. Several correspondents (point out) that in Great Britain police (arm) only in exceptional circumstances. However, as someone who (live) both in England and here for many years, I (feel) sure that conditions in the two places (not/be) comparable. In several incidents (report) recently in your newspaper, policemen (be) at the mercy of desperate criminals if they (not/arm) Moreover, depriving policemen of their revolvers (lower) police morale and (make) recruitment even more difficult. I (feel) sure the sentiments (express) by recent correspondents (not/reflect) accurately the opinion of the majority of local citizens.
- (c) Write short letters to the editor of your local newspaper stating your belief in:
- (i) equal pay for women.
 - (ii) the importance (or the stupidity) of exploring space.
 - (iii) free education for all.
 - (iv) free medical treatment for all.
 - (v) votes for everyone at 18.
 - (vi) the essential honesty of people.
 - (vii) the basic similarity of human beings from all parts of the world.
 - (viii) the existence of flying saucers.
 - (ix) the value (or evils) of advertising.
 - (x) the harmful effects of modern forms of entertainment.

4. LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

Much of the information in Chapter 8 (p. 85) will be of use here. See also the letter to a newspaper in Chapter 11 Example 6 (p. 109). Remember to suggest sensible remedies if possible, as in that example letter and the two in the exercises below.

EXERCISE 36: COMPLAINT

(a) Write out the letter below, inserting the correct prepositions:

I read the article the old fort yesterday's edition your newspaper considerable surprise. It was inaccurate several respects. The fort we now see was fact built two hundred years later than the article says. The fort the Portuguese built was destroyed fire 1781. The iron rings that can now be seen the south wall (not the north wall as the writer says) were never used slave-trading, but probably animals. Indeed, I know no record slave-trading having been carried here since this particular fort was erected, or even the time the Portuguese fort that matter. The legend which the article perpetuates may be interest local guides wishing to arouse the interest tourists, but, as a teacher local history, I feel that I cannot let such misleading statements go unchallenged your columns.

(b) Write out the following piece, inserting the correct article 'a', 'an' or 'the'. Sometimes no article may be required.

I wish to protest vigorously against point of view put forward in your leader column this morning. I am sure that your attitude to Arts does not represent that of large body of your readers. It is quite true that there are not enough people in this town to support theatre run on purely commercial principles. theatre will have to be subsidised by city, but how is this 'waste of public money'? True, some people may in fact be helping to pay for staging of plays they do not see. But we already all pay for public parks, whether we walk through them or not, and public libraries, whether we read books or not. Surely civic theatre should be considered in this way. cost of subsidy is minute part of annual expenditure of city council. If we cannot afford this paltry sum, we are poor city—in every respect.

(c) Write letters of protest or complaint about the following:

- (i) the continued use of rickshaws—you consider this to be an undignified and sub-human occupation.
- (ii) the poor drainage in your area in the rainy season.
- (iii) an unfair criticism of a play or film which has appeared in the pages of the newspaper.
- (iv) the pollution of the beach by oil, or the pollution of the atmosphere by petrol and diesel fumes.
- (v) the increasing amount of litter which is being left around the streets.

- (vi) overcharging by certain shopkeepers.
 - (vii) the low standard of driving locally, and the dangers it holds for people.
 - (viii) the bad manners of local schoolchildren.
 - (ix) the dying out of old traditions and customs.
- (d) Write replies to letters you imagine to have been written on any of these topics.

5. LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Here are examples of this sort of letter. They are usually quite short:

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed your series on life in the United States. I thought it was most informative and entertaining. I do hope you will be able to publish more articles of the same kind on life in other parts of the world.

Yesterday evening, as I was walking along the pier, a little girl fell in the water. A passer-by immediately dived into the water, rescued the child, gave her into the care of her mother, and then at once disappeared without giving his name. Although it was not possible for the mother to thank this gallant gentleman personally, because of his excessive modesty, I think that his act deserves mention and commendation in your paper, particularly when young people are being criticized as being selfish and exhibitionist. I do not think the hero of this story could have been more than 18 years old.

EXERCISE 37: APPRECIATION

Write short letters of appreciation about:

- (a) a local celebrity who has just retired.
- (b) a local concert given by some schoolchildren.
- (c) an article on life-saving in the paper.
- (d) a person who anonymously returned a wallet.
- (e) a radio programme.
- (f) help given by the public in raising money for some charity.
- (g) a new swimming pool which the local council have just had built.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Some Examples of Formal Letters

In a formal letter set in an examination, you will usually have to invent less background material than in an effective personal letter (see p. 59), but some imagination is normally called for. If the formal letter is one written in real life, then remember to keep to the point, not to add unnecessary detail, and to be always as polite as possible. The following examples are treated as answers to examination questions, with an added commentary as on pages 59-63.

EXAMPLE 4

QUESTION: You have been forced to leave your school at short notice. Write a letter to your Head teacher explaining this, and thanking him or her for your pleasant time in the school. Ask for a testimonial etc. to help to find a place in another school.

COMMENTARY: Some invention is necessary here: why have you left school? The suggestion that you return (see the last paragraph of the specimen letter) is not called for in the question, but may be included. Notice how the facts of the case are stated simply in the first paragraph, some personal comments follow in paragraph two, then come the requests for a testimonial and an academic record. Finally comes the polite suggestion of paying a social call at some time in the future—and the possibility of again studying at the school. You apologize for any inconvenience caused in giving rather short notice. Thus your Head teacher is fully informed of the facts of the case, and has the impression that you are grateful for what you have received at the school. He will be suitably inclined to help you with as good a testimonial as you deserve.

589 Roberts Street,
Kowloon,
HONG KONG.

27th August, 1965.

The Headmaster,
St. Luke's College,
Burke Road,
Singapore.

Dear Mr. Eason,

I am writing to tell you that I shall not be returning to school at St. Luke's next term. I came to Hong Kong four weeks ago, after the end of last term, with my parents for a holiday. My father has decided to open up a branch of his business here, and to superintend it himself, at any rate for the first two years. We are therefore going to live here for that period at least.

I am very sorry to have to leave St. Luke's, and also sorry that I have not been able to give you longer notice, but under the circumstances, this was not possible. I have been very happy at the school, and shall miss both my class-mates and the staff, who have been so kind and helpful to me.

Could you please let me have a testimonial and a copy of my academic record to help me in finding a school place here?

I hope I may come to visit you when I return on holiday to Singapore, and that if we do return after two years, I shall be able to return to St. Luke's.

Yours sincerely,

Gok Kok Tang

EXAMPLE 5

QUESTION: 'Trainee service mechanic wanted by local watch company. The trainee will have to undergo a period of training abroad at a later date. Apply to the Manager, giving full details.'

Imagine you are suitably qualified for this job, and want to apply for it. You have already spent a year since leaving school in a similar but not identical job in which you are not happy. Write a suitable letter of application.

16 Mendoza Avenue,
Quezon City.
15th April, 1962.

Dear Sir,

I have noticed your advertisement in this morning's press for a trainee service mechanic in your company. I should like to apply for this post.

I finished my studies at the Technical High School last year. While there I was particularly good at manual work, especially when working on small instruments, and I did very well in the practical examinations. Unfortunately, I did not do so well at the theoretical examinations. My mathematics are very weak. Therefore, I decided not to continue my studies, but to obtain employment as a mechanic.

I have worked for ten months as a car mechanic, but I find this work monotonous and uninteresting, and it mainly consists of routine servicing. I have always been interested in watches, and at the moment mend them as a hobby. I have for some time been looking for a suitable vacancy in a first-class watch company where I could gain experience as a watch mechanic. I believe I would be well suited to the post. I notice that your advertisement says that the applicant appointed will later have to serve a period at a maker's factory in Switzerland. I am quite willing to travel to Switzerland for this purpose. Incidentally, my mother is German, and besides English and Filipino I speak a certain amount of German and Spanish and I can read both fairly fluently.

I enclose testimonials from my former Principal, and from my present employer.

I am available for interview at any time.

Yours faithfully,

S. Ramos

The Personnel Manager,
The Precision Watch Company,
Marcos Road,
Manila.

COMMENTARY: This is a straightforward letter of application, but you have to invent some convincing background material on previous career and the nature of the 'similar but not identical job'. The idea of being good at manual tasks but not good at mathematics is imaginative. Mathematics are not required of a watch mechanic. The German might be useful, though it would not be essential, if going to Switzerland. He would also be able to read technical magazines in German.

EXAMPLE 6

QUESTION: One week-end you go out to the beach with your family by public transport to swim, but you have to wait a very long time to get back in the evening. You feel this is the fault of the transport company. You write to the manager of the company without any effect, so then decide to write to the Editor of your local paper. Write a suitable letter to send.

26 Montgomery Avenue,

Yaba.

15th November, 1966.

The Editor,
Daily News,
Lagos.

Dear Sir,

The Sunday before last I went for an outing to Victoria Bend. Many other people also went. However, when we wanted to return at five o'clock, many of us were unable to get on the single bus available, and I, together with dozens of other people, had to wait a very long time for an empty bus back. For some reason, there seems to be a very poor service from the beach in the late afternoon. This is very inconvenient, particularly if one has to wait about for long periods with small children.

This is not a new problem, and I have complained to the bus company several times without result. I have pointed out to them that the bus service is inadequate at the busiest times. In the early afternoon, when there is not the same rush to get home, there are plenty of empty buses. Would it not be possible to rearrange the timetables to allow most buses at busy times and a limited service at other times.

I am hoping that this letter will induce other readers to write to the bus company to convince them that there is a need for alteration to the timetables at busy week-end rush-hours or perhaps the manager would like to explain in your columns what insurmountable obstacles he finds to this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Oyewole Sebayo

COMMENTARY: It is necessary to provide background information here, and to think of reasons why you should not be able to get back from the picnic. All this is realistically done in the specimen letter. A bus is imagined to be the form of transport—but it could be a ferry boat if that fitted in with the locality of the person writing the letter. It would be wrong to write about an outing by car or on a bicycle, of course—because the question specifies public transport. Notice the irony in the last line. Which word is ironic?

CHAPTER TWELVE

Revision of Grammatical Points Important in Letter-Writing

Letters can be about anything. Thus any point of grammar could be important in writing letters. Obviously, the whole of English grammar cannot be reviewed in one chapter, but here you will find some rules which must be particularly remembered when writing letters: the illustrations of the grammatical points are sentences such as might well be needed in letter-writing.

I. VERB TENSES

(a) *The Present Simple*

- (i) Use this for statements about yourself and your life which are generally true at all times:

I like swimming; I live in Sabah; I speak Urdu; I love fishing; I work hard; I go to school.

Note that you may not be doing these actions at every moment of the day, but you do them regularly, or they

refer to some general truth about you. Thus this tense would be very common in a letter to a pen-friend, particularly a first letter.

- (ii) If you want to, you can use it to tell the story of a film—though you can also use the past (see p. 55).
- (iii) In English, we often use the present to express a future action already decided and arranged:

I take my examination to-morrow; I leave for Australia next month.

(b) *The Present Continuous*

- (i) Use this for statements which are true at the time of writing but not always so:

I am now living with my aunt (BUT NORMALLY YOU LIVE AT HOME).

I am now taking my annual examinations.

Note the frequency of this tense in letters in introductory statements of this type:

I am writing to you to thank you for . . .

I am thinking of buying a boat, and . . .

I am wondering whether you can help me to . . .

(Note You can also say 'I *wonder*'—but you would NOT say 'I *write*', 'I *think*' in these cases.)

- (ii) You can also use it for actions which continue over a period of rather longer time:

I am learning English.

I am studying at the University.

I am being treated for my ulcers by the family doctor.

- (iii) Note the use in English of the Present Continuous to express a future action already arranged (cf. (a) (iii) above)—but usually with a verb of motion: 'go' 'come' 'leave' 'visit':

I am visiting a factory with the school next week.

I am going to see my grandmother on Thursday.

- (iv) An extension of (iii) is the idiom 'going to' plus infinitive:

I am going to visit a factory with the school next week.

I am going to go to see my grandmother next Thursday.

This is extremely common in letters. Note that no idea of motion is necessary:

I am going to stay at home and read a book today.

Here you are not moving physically at all. 'Going to' simply indicates the future.

Although it is useful, 'going to' can be easily misused.

It is used only for intention (as above), or strong probability:

I think I am going to fail my examination.

It is going to rain.

Warning The present continuous must NOT be used in these two cases:

(i) With adverbs of frequency: 'sometimes', 'occasionally', 'often', 'at times', etc. If 'always' is used literally, then, by this rule, the present simple tense must be used:

I always wash in the morning

But if it really means 'often', then the continuous tense can be used:

I *am always going* to the cinema. BUT

I *often go* to the cinema.

(ii) Verbs of perception (see, hear, feel, taste, smell, etc.) are not normally used in the continuous tense—unless 'see' means 'to consult' or 'visit':

I am seeing a doctor tomorrow about my leg.

Note We can also say:

I have not been feeling very well lately.

(c) *The Present Perfect*

(i) Use for an action starting some time in the past and extending to the present:

I have been ill for a week.

I have been employed in my present job for two years.

Note that the present perfect is used with 'for' plus an expression of time as in the last example. Similarly it is used with 'since':

I have been interested in gardening since we moved to this house.

(ii) Use for a single action if associated with certain adverbs, notably 'already', 'recently', 'just', 'now', 'not yet', 'so far', etc.

I have just received your parcel and have already opened it.

(iii) Use for an action which takes place *at some vague and unspecified* time in the past:

Have you seen any good films this year?

Have you never tasted Chinese cooking?

I have visited Japan.

Note this construction particularly:

This is *the first time that I have* written to you since my accident.

Special Note You may say either:

I have received your letter this morning. OR

I received your letter this morning.

In the first example you must be actually writing in the morning; in the second you must be writing in the afternoon, so that 'this morning' is not now in the present time. Similarly we can say:

This year, I have done well at mathematics

'This year' is an expression of past time but the present perfect is used because, at the time of writing, it is still 'this year'.

(d) *The Past Simple*

(i) This tense is very frequently used in letters to describe things you have done: adverbial expressions of past time may accompany it:

Last Tuesday I *visited* the hairdresser's. I *met* my friend, Chun Wai, and later we *had* tea together.

Remember in particular that this tense, and not the present perfect, must be used with 'ago'.

(ii) You may use it (or the present, see above) to narrate the events of a book or play (See p. 55).

(e) *The Past Perfect*

Note the following constructions in particular:

It *was* the first time I *had tried* to swim.

(cf. Present Perfect in (c) (iii) above)

I *wish* I *had bought* the coat in my own country now I see how expensive they are here.

I $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{expected} \\ \text{thought} \\ \text{supposed} \\ \text{hoped} \end{array} \right\}$ I *had passed* the examination.

Note: This construction is used for events which did NOT take place in the PAST. See page 115 for constructions with 'that . . .' for 'open' events in the past or future.

(f) *The Present Perfect Continuous*

This is used as the Present Perfect, but for an action continuing over a period. It is a very common tense in letters in these sorts of sentences:

I *have been learning* English for eight years.

I *have been thinking* of buying a radio.

I *have been wondering* whether to go to Kenya for my holidays.

Cf. these with the examples on the Present Continuous (p. 111)

(g) *The Future*

Remember that besides the forms with 'shall' and 'will' we use

the present simple and continuous (see above) to express the future in certain cases.

(h) *The Future Perfect*

This tense often causes difficulty: it indicates an action that will be completed before a certain time in the future. Speaking of that action at the future time, one would use the present perfect tense. Thus:

In October, I *shall have been studying* at college for two years. When October arrives, you will say:

I *have been studying* at college for two years.

[Note that the future perfect has a continuous form, as here.]

In letter writing the tense often occurs in these and similar sentences:

By the time you receive this letter, you *will have* (already) *started* school.

You *will have* (already) *heard* (by the time you receive this letter) of the typhoon we had yesterday.

2. VERB PATTERNS

We cannot discuss all verb patterns here: the following four cause most difficulty:

(a) *Verb plus bare infinitive*

e.g. Thank you for *letting me borrow* your typewriter.

Other verbs, common in letters, taking NO 'to' before the infinitive are: see, hear, make, help, feel, watch, listen to, know.

(b) *Verb plus to plus infinitive*

e.g. *Remember to write!*

May I *ask you to lend* me something?

Other verbs, common in letters, taking the infinitive with 'to' are: hope, refuse, want, decide, learn, forget, expect, prefer, wish, care, agree, fail, oblige, force, allow, remind, urge.

(c) *Verbs followed by a particular preposition*: if a verb is regularly followed by a preposition, you should always learn that preposition with the verb as a unit. Thus:

apologize for	be sorry for	complain about
be entitled to	thank for	work as
employ as	take notice of	advertise for
learn from	apply to (a person), for (a thing)	
prevent from	look for	agree to
(plus gerund)	consider for	care about
adapt (oneself) to	pass in	succeed in
fail in		

(d) *Verb plus noun clause*

I { believe
think
hope
suggest
wish
say } that . . .

e.g. I hope that { you did well in your examinations.
you can come to the party.

Note that here the hope is 'open': you do not know whether the person you are writing to did well in the examination or can come to tea. Cf. with the 'closed' type of construction (p. 113). 'Wish' is followed by the past perfect if of something in the past that did not happen, or by the past if referring to something in the present.

Note the following:

- I wish that you had been there.
- I wish I could have stayed longer.
- I wish I could help you.
- I wish I knew the answer.

3. CONDITIONALS

Note particularly:

I should be { grateful
glad
happy } if you could do something for me.

If you can help me, I shall be very happy.

If you could help me, I should be most grateful.

I am sorry if I have caused you any inconvenience by . . .

4. NOUNS

Note the appropriate preposition following certain nouns:

advertisement for	vacancy for	in
scope for	post of.....	in
facilities for	(make a) success of	
opportunities for		

5. ADJECTIVES

(a) **Note** the appropriate prepositions following certain adjectives:

interested in	bored with	angry about
sorry for	possible to	available for
adequate for	careful of	failed in
good at	grateful for	successful at

surprised at	responsible for	anxious about
delighted at	amazed at	aware of

(b) **Note** the infinitive construction in these cases:

It is/was (very)	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{kind} \\ \text{good} \\ \text{thoughtful} \\ \text{nice} \\ \text{considerate} \end{array} \right\}$	of you to	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{lend me your} \\ \text{book.} \\ \text{send your} \\ \text{good wishes.} \\ \text{invite me to} \\ \text{come.} \end{array} \right\}$

Less flattering adjectives: 'stupid', 'ignorant', 'cruel', 'careless', etc. could be used in the same way—but only in angry and rather impolite letters!

The following construction is similar:

I was (very)	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{happy} \\ \text{glad} \\ \text{delighted} \\ \text{pleased} \\ \text{sorry etc.} \end{array} \right\}$	to	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{receive your letter.} \\ \text{hear of your success.} \\ \text{welcome you to my house.} \end{array} \right\}$

Also:

I am willing to	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{give a lecture.} \\ \text{lend your scout troop some bamboo} \\ \text{poles, etc.} \end{array} \right\}$

I am willing for your school to	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{camp on my ground.} \\ \text{use our tennis courts,} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right\}$

The following extremely useful pattern causes a lot of trouble:
Would you be so kind as to lend us your films?

(c) **Note** also the noun clause following certain adjectives:

I am	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sorry} \\ \text{happy} \end{array} \right\}$	that	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{you cannot come.} \\ \text{you did so well in your} \\ \text{examinations.} \end{array} \right\}$

EXERCISE 38

(a) Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct tense of the verbs:

- (i) Recently, I (work)..... very hard, as the examinations (approach) I hope I (be) successful in them. I wish you (be able) (do) them for me, as you (be) so good at mathematics.
- (ii) By the time you (read) this letter, I (finish) my examinations, and I (enjoy) myself doing nothing.
- (iii) I (start) learning the piano three years ago. (you/play) any musical instrument?

- (iv) I (write) this letter with a new pen which my father (give) me for my birthday last month.
- (v) I (write) many letters each month to my brothers and sisters who (now/live) in the United States for a few years while they (study) at college.
- (vi) Next week I (go) to an exhibition of American paintings which (show) here.
- (vii) I (write) to you for over a year now, (not/I/have)?
- (viii) Yesterday (be) the first time I (try) to roller-skate. It (be) not a very successful attempt. Roller skating (be) quite difficult, (be/not)it? (be able) you skate?
- (ix) I (consider) buying a refrigerator. (be able) you send me some leaflets?
- (x) Next month, we (write) to each other for over a year, (be/not) we?
- (b) Write out the following sentences, inserting 'to' where necessary:
- (i) Please let me pay for the damage.
- (ii) I saw the ball come towards me. I kicked it hard, and we scored our only goal.
- (iii) I have decided become a reporter when I leave school.
- (iv) You must allow me replace your broken window.
- (v) I shall make my young brother pay for the damage he did.
- (vi) If you continue ignore my letters, you will force me consult my solicitors.
- (vii) Family circumstances oblige me leave school this term.
- (viii) I hope you will agree come.
- (c) Write out the following sentences, inserting the appropriate preposition:
- (i) Your children do not seem to care the condition of the gardens.
- (ii) I am sorry the noise which you complained in your letter, but I think I am entitled some relaxation in the evenings and I am sure the noise of my party was no louder than that of your television set.
- (iii) Thank you your letter. I agree what you say.
- (iv) I have been employed a draughtsman for two years.
- (v) I learn Mr Smith, my headmaster, that you are looking a trainee in your sales department.
- (vi) In my School Certificate, I failed two subjects only.
- (vii) I hope the rain did not prevent you holding your fair.
- (viii) I should like to be considered the post advertised.
- (d) Write out the following sentences, putting the verbs in brackets in their correct tense:

- (i) I (wish) it (be) warmer in England. I am so cold!
- (ii) I (hope) you (like) my present.
- (iii) I (hope) (go) to England to study, but I had no money.
- (iv) When I was a small boy, I (wish) (become) a sailor, but now I (hope) (become) a doctor.
- (v) My parents (hope) for a boy, but they (be) now quite happy with my little sister.
- (e) Write out the following conditional sentences, inserting the correct tenses of the verbs:
- (i) I (be) very happy if you (be able) to accept the invitation.
- (ii) If this request of mine (inconvenience) you in any way, please (tell) me.
- (iii) If I (know) that it was your birthday last week, I (send) you a present.
- (iv) If I (see) the sort of pen you (want) in the shops here, I (send) it you.
- (v) If we (make) too much noise last Saturday night, I (be) very sorry.
- (f) Write out the following sentences, inserting the correct preposition:
- (i) I am writing answer your advertisement a window-dresser this morning's paper.
- (ii) I think there will be more scope me the post you advertise as I am good figures and also speak Mandarin fluently.
- (iii) I am surprised your complaint my son, but if he is responsible the damage, he will certainly pay for it.
- (iv) I am very interested boats, and the job you are advertising offers plenty of opportunity me to gain experience of a wide variety craft.
- (v) I am delighted the news your success the competition.

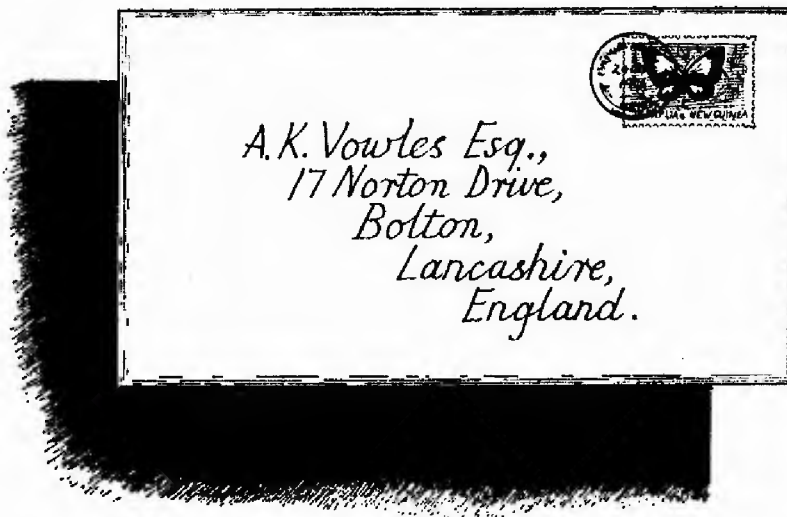
Appendix

I. ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPE

The address of the person we are writing to is written on the envelope in the same manner as you write your own address at the top of the letter (see pp. 6-7 and p. 71).

Note

- (a) The person's name must also be written above the address. 'Mr', 'Mrs' and 'Miss' are used for English-speaking people (that is, French, German, Italian people, etc., have other 'styles' before their name), and these are usually used for non-English speaking peoples when writing to them in English—though in your particular country the convention may be different. Sometimes other titles are used, such as 'Dr' or 'Professor'. For a man we sometimes use 'Esq.' (note that the full stop for the abbreviation here is obligatory) **WHICH IS WRITTEN AFTER THE NAME. Never use 'Esq.' with 'Mr' or any other title.** Thus we can say: 'Mr D. J. Smith' or 'D. J. Smith Esq.' Nor can you use the 'Esq.' form if you are addressing a husband and wife jointly: 'Mr. and Mrs Robinson' is the **ONLY FORM PERMISSIBLE.** If the person has any degrees or decorations, the letters for these come immediately after the name (or 'Esq.' if that is being used), each separated by a comma: Mr H. K. Willis, O.B.E., M.A., B.Sc., or H. K. Willis, Esq., O.B.E., M.A., B.Sc.
- (b) If the letter is to a place outside your country, then you will write on the envelope the country in which the person you are writing to lives. If the letter is being sent within a country, then this is not necessary (cf. the same rule when writing your own address at the top of the letter—p. 6).
- (c) If you are writing a formal letter to a person in an official capacity, then you will write that person's name and address at the top of the letter itself (see p. 73). Exactly the same name and address should appear on the envelope. In the case of such letters, remember that the person's official position is often used instead of his name, which, indeed, you may not know: 'The Manager', 'The Secretary', etc. Here is an example of a properly addressed envelope:



2. A NOTE ON FORMALLY LAID OUT INVITATIONS

Personal invitations, particularly for rather important occasions, are often printed, or printed forms are used which are filled in with the appropriate name and date, etc. They are expressed in the third person. Consequently, a reply should be expressed in the third person. The following examples should show you how to accept or decline a formal invitation.

(a) *The invitation*

Mr and Mrs J. K. Hewitt
request the pleasure of the company of
Miss Kwan
at Dinner
at 8 p.m. on Friday, 23rd July
58 Adelaide Square
Brighton
Sussex

*R.S.V.P.**

(b) *Accepting the invitation*

Miss Kwan thanks Mr and Mrs Hewitt for their kind invitation to Dinner on Friday, 23rd July, and has pleasure in accepting.
10 Melbourne Drive
Lewes
Sussex

(c) *Declining the invitation*

Miss Kwan thanks Mr and Mrs Hewitt for their kind invitation to Dinner on Friday, 23rd July, but regrets that owing to a previous engagement she is unable to accept.
10 Melbourne Drive
Lewes
Sussex

* The initials for the French: 'Répondez s'il vous plait', which means 'please reply'.

'Practical Letter-Writing' is designed for all students who are studying English as a second language. When mastering a language, one of the most useful things to be able to do is to write a letter: also letter-writing is often a compulsory exercise in written examinations. This book instructs in all aspects of both personal and formal letters: layout, subject-matter, modes of address, forms of signature. It contains sample letters and exercises with world-wide application. One special section covers letters of application for jobs.