



FCE Writing

An Informal Transactional Letter

Part 1 of FCE Paper 2 is **compulsory**. You always write a letter to ask for or give information of some kind. This letter may be **formal** or **informal**. A formal letter is a letter you write to someone you don't know, or don't know very well. An informal letter is the kind of letter you write to friends, members of your family and other people you know well. Look at the following phrases and mark them **F** (formal) or **I** (informal).

1. Dear Sir / Madam ___
2. Love,
Edith ___
3. See you next week! I can hardly wait! ___
4. I look forward to receiving your reply. ___
5. Yours faithfully,
Robert James Scott ___
6. I am writing in reply to your letter of 21 May. ___
7. Give my love to your parents. ___
8. Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us at the above address. ___
9. Write back soon and tell me all your news. ___
10. I'm sorry I haven't written for such a long time, but I've been really busy.
11. I would be most grateful if you could send me any further relevant information. ___

Remember! Learning to write **correctly** and **appropriately** in English means building up a stock of **fixed phrases and expressions**, such as those above, which you can adapt to the specific situation as required. This is much better than trying to translate your Italian thoughts into English, which is likely to result in strange and unnatural writing.

Always read the instructions carefully and decide what kind of letter, formal or informal, you are supposed to write.

Look at this task. Will your answer be formal or informal?



Some young people you met last summer are planning to visit your country on holiday and have asked you to suggest some places of interest to see. Write a letter of reply using the notes below. (120-150 words)

- when? - how long? - come and stay?

Now look at the plan for the above task and put the points in a logical order, by numbering them 1-7.

Apologise for not writing sooner. ___

Thank them for their letter. ___

Ask when they will be coming. ___

Tell them to write again. ___

Invite them to stay for a few days. ___

Suggest places to visit and things to do. ___

Say why you haven't replied sooner. ___

Think of ideas: a reason for not replying; things they might enjoy doing and seeing. Is there a particularly good time of year to visit these places? What can your friends do there?

Remember that you will need to divide the letter into clearly marked **paragraphs**, usually three or four.

Here are some phrases you can use in this letter:

Thank you for your letter.

It was great to hear from you.

Sorry I haven't written back for so long.

Sorry it's taken me so long to reply.

I've been really busy recently.

I've been working really hard.

I've been studying like mad for my final exams.

I'm really pleased you're coming to Italy.



It's great that you're coming here soon.

When exactly will you be coming?

Do you know when you're coming?

When are you going to be here?

Why don't you come and stay with me for a few days?

I'd love to put you up for a few days.

Would you like to stay with me for a few days?

You could visit Lerici and Portovenere.

The Cinque Terre are well worth a visit.

I'm sure you'd really love the Museo Lia.

You can swim and sunbathe on the sandy beaches.

We could go for walks in the countryside together.

Write back soon and tell me your plans.

Write and tell me exactly when you are planning to come.

Here is an example:

Dear John and Clare,

Thanks so much for your letter. Sorry I haven't replied sooner, but I've been really busy at work in the last few weeks. It's great that you're coming to Italy soon – why don't you come and stay with me for a few days? My parents will be happy to put you up.

There are lots of things to see and do in Italy. How long are you going to stay altogether? You really must visit Rome and Florence, and if you have time try to pay a visit to Venice as well. While you are here we can visit local towns like Lerici and Portovenere, or if you prefer, we can just go swimming and relax on the beach.

Write soon and let me know exactly when you are coming and we can arrange everything. Can't wait to see you!

Best wishes

(Your name)