

Exercise walk-through

Purpose, audience and register ■ 2.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- work out the purpose and audience from the task before writing anything
- choose formal or informal language to match them
- keep the register consistent, and spot where a draft slips

Method — Read the task, then answer three questions

- 1 **Who** will read this? A friend? A head teacher? A magazine's readers?
- 2 **Why** am I writing? To invite, to complain, to persuade, to report?
- 3 **What form** is it? An email, a letter, a report, an article, a review?

Those three answers decide everything else.

Method — The register scale

Informal	Neutral	Formal
Hi Sam	Dear Mr Lee	Dear Sir or Madam
I'm really sorry	I am sorry	I would like to apologise
get in touch	contact me	I look forward to hearing from you
loads of people	many people	a considerable number of people
Can't wait!	I am looking forward to it	I anticipate the event with interest

Method — Where students slip

- **Contractions** (*don't, I'm, can't*) belong in informal writing only.
- **Exclamation marks** almost never appear in a formal letter.
- A formal letter that begins “Dear Sir or Madam” ends “Yours faithfully”; one that names the reader ends “Yours sincerely”.
- One informal phrase in an otherwise formal letter is noticed. Keep the register **consistent**.

Practice 2.1 ■ 1 mark

For each task, state the audience and whether the register should be formal or informal.

- (a) An email to your cousin about your holiday.
- (b) A letter to a company about a faulty phone.
- (c) An article for the school magazine about homework.

Solution 2.1

Method: Read the task, then answer three questions

Worked steps

(a) a family member / a friend — informal **B1**. (b) a company or its customer service department — formal **B1**. (c) other students at the school — informal to neutral, but written for a wide readership rather than one friend **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 1 mark

Rewrite each sentence in a formal register.

- (a) "Thanks loads for sorting that out."
- (b) "I'm writing 'cause your delivery never turned up."
- (c) "Get back to me soon, OK?"

Solution 2.2

Method: Where students slip

Worked steps

(a) "Thank you very much for resolving this matter." **B1** (b) "I am writing because the delivery did not arrive." **B1** (c) "I look forward to hearing from you." **B1**

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

Rewrite this formal sentence so it suits an email to a friend: "I would be grateful if you could inform me of your availability."

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

Any natural informal version, for example “Let me know when you’re free.” **B1**

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 3 marks

Read this extract from a letter of complaint to a shop manager. Identify **three** places where the register is wrong, and correct each one.

Dear Mr Osei,

I'm writing about the jacket I bought last week. It's rubbish — the zip broke after two days! I want my money back ASAP.

Cheers, Ana Silva

Solution 3.1

Method: Where students slip

Worked steps

Any three, each with a correction **B1** *each*:

- “I’m writing” — a contraction; use “I am writing”.
- “It’s rubbish” — too informal and emotional; use “The jacket is of unacceptable quality”.
- The exclamation mark after “two days!” — remove it.
- “ASAP” — an abbreviation; use “at your earliest convenience”.
- “Cheers” — an informal sign-off; a named recipient takes “Yours sincerely”.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain why the phrase “I want my money back” is less effective than “I would like to request a full refund” in a formal letter.

Solution 3.2

Worked steps

“I want” states a demand and sounds aggressive, which can make a reader defensive **B1**; “I would like to request” is polite and uses the expected formal wording, which is more likely to be acted on and matches the register of the letter **B1**.