

Work with a Model



1 Read the task below and answer the questions that follow.

The city council is planning to develop new digital teaching materials to enable parents to homeschool their children. They want students in the city to give their opinions of this idea.

- Write a **letter** to the city council to explain your opinion. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your letter, "Dear City Council Members".

1. What do you think of the idea?
2. Who are you writing to, and what is your purpose for writing? **city council members; to express my opinion**
3. What should you include in your letter? **reasons to support my ideas**

2 Read the model letter and complete the plan. Use the words below. Then answer the questions that follow.
state • sum up • refer • explain • suggest

Plan	Model
Greeting	Dear City Council Members,
Par 1 <u>Refer</u> to the proposal in the task. Show the issue is relevant to you. <u>State</u> your opinion.	I am writing with regard to the plan to invest in new digital resources for parents to use to homeschool their children. As a high-school student, I do not believe that the city council should encourage parents to educate their children at home, and I am not in favour of public money being spent on these resources.
Par 2 <u>Explain</u> one reason for or against the proposal and support your view.	<u>First of all, parents are not qualified to teach the range of subjects that young people need to master.</u> At school, students are taught by many subject specialists, and they can learn different methods and ideas from each one. No matter how well prepared parents are, they cannot provide the same level of academic knowledge at home.
Par 3 Explain another reason for or against the proposal and support your view.	<u>An even greater problem to consider is that students who are homeschooled miss out on opportunities to spend time with other young people.</u> Students at regular schools learn to cooperate with others, and developing social skills is just as important as learning maths or science.
Par 4 <u>Sum up</u> your opinion. <u>Suggest</u> what should happen.	All in all, I feel that it would be a mistake for the city council to waste any of its budget on homeschooling. The money should be spent on materials that will benefit all students.
Signing off	Yours faithfully, John Ross

1. Is the writer for or against producing digital materials for homeschooled students? **against**
2. The writer presents one main reason in each of paragraphs 2 and 3 to support her opinion. Underline them.
3. In paragraph 3, the writer makes an important point about the social aspects of going to school. What is it? **Developing social skills is as important as learning maths or science.**
4. What suggestion does the writer make in paragraph 4?
The money should be spent on materials benefitting all students.

3 IMPROVING YOUR WRITING: Formal language In a letter to someone in an official position, you need to use formal expressions. Find phrases in the model letter that mean:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. This letter is about (par 1) | 5. We should also think about another problem (par 3) |
| 2. I am at high school and I don't think (par 1) | 6. It's a bad idea to (par 4) |
| 3. I don't agree with (par 1) | 7. to spend money without a good result (par 4) |
| 4. It makes no difference (par 2) | |

Prepare for Your Task

4 Read the task and answer the questions that follow.

Forestview High School has announced that all 16-year-old students will be offered the chance to spend a semester studying abroad, with the school paying part of the cost. They want students to give their opinions of this idea.

- Write a **letter** to the principal to explain your opinion. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your letter, "Dear Principal".

1. What do you think of this idea?
2. Who are you writing to and what is your purpose for writing? **school principal; to express my opinion**
3. What should you include in your letter? **reasons to support my ideas**



5a BRAINSTORM IDEAS Think of one advantage and one disadvantage of students studying abroad. What could you say to support each point of view? See Teacher's Guide for possible answers.

5b Are the following ideas advantages or disadvantages of students spending a semester abroad? Write A or D.

1. Participants may get homesick. ...
2. Students will miss lessons and have to catch up. ...
3. Participants will get to know people from other cultures. ...
4. It will encourage students to learn a foreign language. ...
5. It is unfair to those students who cannot afford it. ...
6. Teenagers need to live at home under their parents' guidance. ...
7. It will be the experience of a lifetime and broaden students' horizons. ...
8. Students will learn to be more independent. ...

5c Decide whether you are for or against the school allowing students to study abroad for a semester. Choose the ideas from 5b that you can use in your letter and think of details to support them. Now say if you think the school should spend money from the budget on covering part of the cost. See Teacher's Guide for possible answers.

Your Task

6 Read the task in Exercise 4 again and write your letter. Use Exercise 5 and the plan below to help you. Remember to use formal language. See Teacher's Guide for model writing.

Plan	Formal Letter
Greeting	Dear <i>Principal, / Sir, / City Council Members,</i>
Par 1 • Refer to the proposal in the task. • Show the issue is relevant to you. • Express your opinion.	I am writing with regard to the <i>proposal to / news that</i> is planning ... <i>As a high school / 16-year-old student, ...</i> I am <i>(not) in favour of / against / I (dis) approve of</i> ...
Par 2 Give one reason for or against the proposal and support your view.	First of all, ... One important consideration is ...
Par 3 Give another reason for or against the proposal and support your view.	An even greater problem is ... An even more important benefit is ...
Par 4 • Sum up your opinion. • Suggest what should happen.	All in all, I feel ... For these reasons, I believe ...
Signing off	Yours faithfully, / Yours truly,