Identifying your audience

When planning your writing, think about why you’re writing and who you’re writing to. You may need to write to many different people. The person or organisation you’re writing to is the audience. For example, you could be writing to:

- the bank manager requesting an overdraft
- the teacher at your child’s school telling them why he or she has been off sick
- the staff at your workplace with an article for the staff newsletter

The purpose of your writing affects:

- the content - the ideas and information you include
- the format - the layout of your writing
- the style - the language you use, including how formal or informal you are.

Tips

- formal language is used when writing an official document, such as a letter to a bank
- informal language is used when writing to family or friends, such as sending a postcard or writing a text message

Example

You’re writing to the manager of your local supermarket. The manager is your audience. The purpose of your writing is to complain about the poor quality of their fruit. You will:

- List the reasons you’re unhappy about the quality of their fruit. This is the content.
- Write a letter. This is the format. The letter format will include the reasons you’re writing, a statement of the problem and what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.
- Use formal language as you are writing a letter of complaint to someone in business. This is the style you will use.