

## Writing Business and Personal Letters

### CONTENTS

Introduction

#### **PART 1 – THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE.**

##### **1. The importance of punctuation.**

The use of commas

Beginning a sentence with a conjunction

Making use of semi-colons, colons and the dash

Use of the question mark

Use of exclamation marks

Putting punctuation into practice

Key points from Chapter 1

##### **2. The importance of grammar**

Making use of your sentence

Using nouns correctly

Using verbs correctly

Understanding verbs

Past participles

Paragraphing letters

Using quotation marks

Key points from chapter 2

##### **3. Spelling**

Forming words

Forming plurals  
Changing the form of a verb  
Using long and short vowels

Adding '-ly' to adjectives.  
'I' before 'e' except after 'c'.  
Using a dictionary  
Looking at words  
Making use of a thesaurus  
Key points from chapter 3

#### **4. Apostrophes and abbreviations**

Using apostrophes to show possession  
Making a singular noun possessive  
Making a plural noun possessive  
Using possessive nouns correctly  
Abbreviating words  
Using apostrophes to abbreviate words  
Abbreviating words without using apostrophes  
Handling contractions  
Handling acronyms  
Key points from chapter 4

#### **5. Using the correct English**

Recognising common mistakes  
Revising sentence construction  
Revising the correct use of verbs  
Avoiding the misuse of pronouns

Revising spelling  
Avoiding common mistakes  
Avoiding mistakes when using apostrophes and abbreviations  
Avoiding unnecessary repetition  
Avoiding tautologies  
Varying the sentence  
Making comparisons  
Eliminating jargon  
Avoiding clichés  
Creating similes  
Using metaphors  
Improving your style  
Economising on words  
Using the active voice  
Avoiding negatives  
Developing your own style  
Key points from Chapter 5

## **PART TWO WRITING LETTERS**

### **6. Writing business letters**

Aiming your letter  
Who is your reader?  
What does your reader need?  
Consider how to approach the task  
Decide where and when to write  
Key points from chapter 6

## **7. Planning and structuring a letter.**

The contents of your letter

Decide the sequence of delivery

Forming paragraph structure

Control your sentence length

Using a range of punctuation

The full stop

Semi-colon

Colon

Commas

Brackets

Question marks

Key points from chapter 7

## **8. Layout of letters**

Choosing an appropriate salutation

Using informative headings

Start with the reasons for writing

End by pointing the way ahead

Matching the end of the letter to the salutation

Choosing an appropriate tone

Sample business letters

Key points from chapter 8

## **9. Writing personal letters**

Personal salutations

Sample personal letters

Key points from chapter 9

**10. Editing and proofreading**

Visual impression

Reading for sense

Reading for detail

Sequence

Paragraph

Sentence

Punctuation

Active voice

Familiar words

Concrete words

Cliches

Jargon

Fulfilling your aim

Key points from chapter 10

Glossary of terms

Index



## Introduction

This book is a brief introduction to the art of letter writing. After long deliberation, I decided not to produce a book full of standard letters for the reader to copy rote fashion. Although many books of this nature do exist, there seems no point in merely allowing the reader to copy someone else's work.

The main point when producing letters is that the writer must understand the very essence of the language in which he or she is writing. This involves understanding grammar and punctuation – in short understanding the basis of the language, in this case the English language.

Mastery of language and the ability to express oneself, in the business or personal domains, is a wonderful achievement. Mastery and effective use of language is akin to painting a beautiful picture.

This book dwells at the outset on grammar and punctuation and other finer points of the language. It shows the writer of the business or personal letter how to express what it is they are trying to say, how to lay it out and how to take care that the letter achieves its aim.

This little book is rigorous but rewarding. It does not seek to layout 50 different types of letter but to show the reader how to understand the complexities of the language and to coach the

reader into a position where he or she will begin to enjoy the language more and to produce an effective letter, whether of a personal or business nature.