

Writing a Letter

Matthew Williams • English Language • April 21, 2026

Structure

- **Sender's Address** — your full postal address, top left; no name here
- **Date** — written in full below the sender's address
- **Recipient's Address** — recipient's full name (if known), title, organisation, and address
- **Salutation** — Dear [Title] [Surname]: — colon for formal, comma for informal
- **Opening Paragraph** — state the purpose directly; no filler openers
- **Middle Paragraph(s)** — supporting details, evidence, or elaboration
- **Closing Paragraph** — your specific request, next steps, or how to reach you
- **Complimentary Close** — Yours sincerely (name known) / Yours faithfully (name unknown)
- **Signature and Name** — your full name with title in brackets

Key Conventions

- **Do not** open with "I am writing this letter to...", "I hope this finds you well", or "My name is..."
- All text is **left-aligned** in block format — no paragraph indentation
- Use a **colon** after the salutation in formal letters; a comma in personal letters
- **Yours sincerely** when you know the recipient's name; **Yours faithfully** when you do not
- Your name never appears at the top — it goes at the end, after the signature

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Sender's Address | Your full postal address, top left. Do not include your name here,
that goes at the end. | [Street Address]\n[Town]\n[Parish]\n[Country] | break
14 Mango Walk
Half Way Tree
Kingston 10
St. Andrew
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Date | The full date, written below the sender's address. Spell out the month in full.
| [Day Month Year] | break
March 5, 2025
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Recipient's Address | The recipient's full name (if known), title, organisation, and
postal address. | [Full Name (if known)]\n[Title]\n[Organisation]\n[Address] | break
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The Manager
FreshMart Supermarket
67 Constant Spring Road, Kingston 8

Salutation | A formal greeting. Use a colon after the salutation in business letters, not a comma. Use "Dear Sir/Madam:" when the name is unknown. | Dear [Title] [Surname]:
or Dear Sir/Madam: | break

Dear Sir/Madam:

Opening Paragraph | State the purpose of the letter directly in the first sentence. Include the key facts: what happened, where, and when. Do not use filler openers. | Purpose of the letter. What happened, where, and when. Clear statement of why you are writing. | break

On Tuesday, March 2, 2025, I purchased a carton of twelve eggs from your establishment at 67 Constant Spring Road. Upon returning home, I discovered that six of the eggs were cracked and two were visibly rotten, emitting a foul odour upon opening.

Middle Paragraph | Provide supporting details, context, or evidence. Strengthen your case with specifics – dates, reference numbers, or relevant history. | Supporting details and evidence. Background context. Any documentation or history that strengthens your position. | break

This was not my first experience with a quality issue at your store. In December 2024, I purchased a litre of fresh milk that was sour well before its stated expiry date; I did not report that incident at the time. I have since retained the receipt from my most recent purchase – Transaction Number 0042, dated March 2, 2025 – which I am prepared to submit as evidence.

Closing Paragraph | State your specific request or desired outcome. Let the recipient know how and where to reach you. | Your specific request or desired action. How and where the recipient can contact you in response. | break

I respectfully request a full refund for the defective goods and ask that your team review the quality control procedures applied to perishable items. I trust this matter will be treated with the urgency it deserves. I may be contacted at the address above or by telephone at 876-312-4498.

Complimentary Close | Use "Yours sincerely" when the recipient's name is known; "Yours faithfully" when it is not. Followed by your signature. | Yours sincerely / Yours faithfully, \n[Signature] | break

Yours faithfully,

Name and Title | Your full name, followed by your title in brackets. Never abbreviated.

| [Full Name (Title)]

Tanya Brown (Ms.)

Study Vault