

Writing skills practice: An invitation letter – exercises

Look at the exam question and model letter and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–j next to the numbers 1–10.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1..... changeable | a. to become interested in an activity |
| 2..... a wilderness | b. to give someone somewhere to sleep |
| 3..... to get into (something) | c. sophisticated and having experience of people and things from different parts of the world |
| 4..... to take your time | d. very modern and innovative |
| 5..... to be good company | e. relaxed |
| 6..... deserted | f. a wild, natural area |
| 7..... to put (somebody) up | g. able to change quickly and unpredictably |
| 8..... laid-back | h. (for a place) having no people in it |
| 9..... cosmopolitan | i. to be friendly and entertaining |
| 10..... cutting-edge | j. to do something slowly or at your own pace |

Exam question

Write a letter to your friend who lives in another country. In your letter:

- invite him/her to a public event in your country
- describe the public event
- explain about other plans you have for your friend when he/she will visit.

Write at least 150 words.

Dear Malika,

[1] How are you? I saw you posted some amazing photos of the coastline near your hometown. You're really getting into your photography! Right now I'm taking a break from social media to write you an old-fashioned email.

[2] Remember you said you'd like to come over to the UK sometime this year? Well, I was thinking that this year you might like to come to the Edinburgh Festival with me in August. I've got an aunt with a flat in the city centre who could put us up.

[3] Do you know much about the festival? It's legendary – the biggest, most cosmopolitan arts festival in the world! There are loads of things going on – art exhibitions, concerts of all kinds, modern dance, a book festival, comedy. The thing it's most famous for is cutting-edge theatre. Companies come from all over the world and perform in their own language with English subtitles. At festival time the city has a really cool vibe and a laid-back atmosphere – it's lovely to just hang out and chat to people.

[4] In Scotland you have the best of both worlds: culture and wilderness. After the festival, we could hire a car and go up to some of the islands off the west coast, like Skye. The weather can be changeable in August, but the landscape is absolutely stunning, with deserted beaches and rocky mountains. It's the perfect place for you to take photos. Afterwards, we could head back to the east coast and visit my friend Rob in St Andrews. It's really pretty and Rob's great company. You'd get on well with him.

[5] So, why don't you have a think about it and then get back to me? Take your time, there's no rush.

Speak to you soon,

Sophie

Top Tips for writing

1. Pay attention to the question and instructions. They will tell you the text type, what to write about and how many words to write.
2. Cover all three points mentioned in the question. Make one paragraph per point.
3. Include some small talk (social chat) at the beginning.
4. Use the right style: formal, informal or neutral. In this example, an informal style is appropriate.
5. Include varied and complex vocabulary and grammar to demonstrate your language level to the examiners.

1. Check your writing: matching

Match the content points with the paragraphs and write a–e next to the numbers 1–5.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1..... Paragraph 1 | a. First content point (invite him/her to a public event in your country) |
| 2..... Paragraph 2 | b. Second content point (describe the public event) |
| 3..... Paragraph 3 | c. Third content point (explain about other plans you have) |
| 4..... Paragraph 4 | d. Request for a reply |
| 5..... Paragraph 5 | e. Opening greeting and small talk |

2. Check your writing: gap fill

Fill the gaps in the informal phrases with the correct words from the box. The phrases in brackets have the same meaning but in a neutral style.

put us up	thinking	cool	rush	loads
Remember	hang out	lovely	– (dash symbol)	

- _____ you said ...? (= Do you remember you said ...?)
- I was _____ that you might like ... (= I was wondering if you would like ...)
- It's legendary _____ the biggest, most cosmopolitan arts festival in the world! (= It's legendary. It's the biggest, most cosmopolitan arts festival in the world!)
- There are _____ of things ... (= There are a lot of things ...)
- The city has a _____ vibe. (= The city is attractive and fashionable.)
- It's _____ to just _____ and chat to people. (= It's pleasant to just spend time with people and chat.)
- I've got an aunt with a flat in the city centre who could _____. (= My aunt lives in the city centre. She could let us stay with her.)
- There's no _____. (= I'm not in a hurry.)

3. Check your writing: gap fill

Write a word from the letter to fill the gaps. The meaning and the paragraph number where the word can be found are shown in brackets.

1. Her dress was rather _____ but still looked good. (= not modern; paragraph 1)
2. The main star of the show is the _____ singer, Bethany Mills. (= very famous and respected; paragraph 3)
3. The diverse communities in the city give it a very _____ atmosphere. (international and sophisticated; paragraph 3)
4. This gallery has the most _____ art exhibitions in town. (modern and innovative; paragraph 3)
5. Most of my teachers are strict, except my English teacher – she's very _____. (relaxed in her approach; paragraph 3)
6. It's normally warm, but the weather's _____ in spring. (= often changes quickly; paragraph 4)
7. There are usually _____ sunsets on this beach. (very beautiful; paragraph 4)
8. The best thing about the coastline is the number of _____ beaches. (quiet, without people; paragraph 4)

4. Check your vocabulary: gap fill

Complete the second sentence with a phrasal verb so that it has the same meaning as the first. You need to add two words: a verb and a particle (either an adverb or a preposition).

1. My family can give you a bed for the night.
My family can _____ you _____.
2. In the evening we usually just relax in the park.
In the evening we usually just _____ in the park.
3. He's just started learning Chinese, but he already really likes it.
He's just started learning Chinese, but he's really _____ it.
4. They have a very good relationship.
They _____ really well with each other.
5. Could you send me your reply by next Thursday?
Could you _____ to me by next Thursday?

6. A lot of things are happening in the arts centre this week.
Lots of things are _____ in the arts centre this week.
7. When are you going to visit us in the UK?
When are you going to _____ to the UK to visit us?
8. After the match let's return home.
After the match let's _____ home.

Discussion

Are there any events where you live which would attract tourists from abroad?