

Letters That Work

Study how a formal complaint explains a problem and asks for action.

8.11.D "compose correspondence that reflects an opinion, registers a complaint, or requests information in a business or friendly structure."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that states the writer's purpose, circle two details that show why the problem matters, and number each specific request in the final paragraph. These choices help you see how a formal complaint is organized.

A Letter to the Library Director

- ① Dear Ms. Alvarez, I am writing to complain about the broken water fountain beside the west entrance of Riverbend Community Library. On three visits this month, the fountain has either produced only a trickle or stopped completely. The library welcomes many students after school, and the nearest working fountain is on the second floor. Carrying a bottle upstairs is difficult for younger children and for people who use mobility aids, especially during busy afternoons each day.
- ② Because the fountain is unreliable, I have seen students leave the building to buy drinks at nearby stores. This creates a problem for families who cannot spend extra money, and it takes time away from reading, homework, and library programs. A repaired fountain would give visitors free access to drinking water. It would also help the library remain a comfortable place for everyone who uses its study rooms and computers throughout the day in every season.
- ③ Please arrange promptly for a maintenance worker to inspect the fountain and let the public know when it will be repaired. If a repair will take more than a few days, please consider placing a water dispenser near the entrance. You can reach me at morgan.lee@email.com if you need more details about the problem. Thank you for considering this request. I hope the library can solve it soon for all visitors who need water while studying there. Sincerely, Morgan Lee

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the writer's purpose, and who is the letter addressed to?

2 What accessibility concern does the writer explain in the first paragraph?

3 List two actions the writer asks the library to take.

4 What greeting and closing show that this is a formal business letter?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-paragraph formal complaint email about a problem at a school, park, library, or community space. Include a greeting before paragraph one and a closing after paragraph three, explain the problem with two specific details, and make at least one clear request.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that states the writer's purpose, circle two details that show why the problem matters, and number each specific request in the final paragraph. These choices help you see how a formal complaint is organized. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's purpose, and who is the letter addressed to?	The writer is complaining about a broken library water fountain and requesting action. The letter is addressed to Ms. Alvarez.
2	What accessibility concern does the writer explain in the first paragraph?	The nearest working fountain is on the second floor, which is difficult for younger children and people who use mobility aids.
3	List two actions the writer asks the library to take.	Answers include inspect the fountain, tell the public when it will be repaired, and place a water dispenser near the entrance if repairs will take several days.
4	What greeting and closing show that this is a formal business letter?	The greeting is "Dear Ms. Alvarez," and the closing is "Sincerely, Morgan Lee."

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Mr. Chen, I am writing to complain about the missing trash cans near the basketball courts at Oak Street Park. After weekend games, cups and snack wrappers often collect beside the benches. Families sometimes carry their trash home, but others leave it because the nearest can is by the parking lot. This litter makes the court area less pleasant and can blow onto the grass after windy weather. Please place two covered trash cans near the benches and arrange for them to be emptied regularly. You may contact me at jordan.rivera@email.com if you would like the dates when I observed the problem. Thank you for considering this request. I hope the park department can make this busy area cleaner for players and families. Sincerely, Jordan Rivera

Accept equivalent descriptions of the letter's purpose, evidence, requests, and formal features. For the writing task, look for a clear complaint, specific supporting details, an appropriate request, and a businesslike greeting and closing.