

Unit 4.1 Writing to argue, persuade, advise

Transactional writing – letters

- ✦ Write a letter to your MP. You may argue for or against the use of animals in experiments.



i Dear Mr. John MP.

I have one question, why? What is the real point in animal experimenting? What are the reasons for doing it? If humans are so intelligent why do you need to choose the poor animals fates? Can't they do that?

What actually gives you the right to test on these animals as research shows that seven out of ten animals die in your "experiments" as you so call them, when can we justify being deliberately cruel to these Animals?

O.K. so they may be needed to see if there's a cure for peoples diseases, but can't you take some blood from your self and then test, no!!! because you need to test on these animals.

The Top scientists have shown that cancer has tripled via Animal testing how do you Justify that?

Yours sincerely,

ii

(addresses and date supplied)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to an article I read in your newspaper dated Tuesday, 12 November. After reading the article I felt I had to write and inform you on some facts that I think you will find very interesting.

I have lived on a farm for many years and everyday I am involved in feeding and general care of the many livestock and domestic animals. Therefore I have a wide understanding of their needs. I would like to convey my point of view on the topics of animal testing, cruelty and hunting whilst making it clear to you I have grown up with animals and have a deep respect and love for them.

Firstly, I want to inform you about the motives and reasons for hunting. This is a tradition that has developed and been important for several hundred years. Constantly on our farm we have expensive livestock killed and watch our prospects for profit and for improvement of our standard of living and farm completely ruined as calves, sheep and chickens lie dead, killed and tortured by hungry foxes. If we did not hunt and control the fox population we would be in desperate trouble – as would thousands of



farmers around the country. Do you not think it is hard enough for us to face a crisis such as BSE and watch our months of hard work destroyed in a storm without foxes destroying our hopes as well?

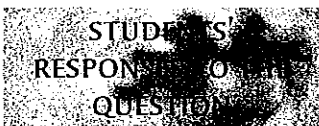
Although I am in support of organisations such as the WWF, I feel that they are such huge organisations that their views are taken as standard and correct and the opinions of people who work with and care for animals everyday are dismissed and simply unheard. There is even outrage by the public about the farmers milking their cows too much. I would very much like to know how the city folk who have never had the experience of working on a farm have come to this conclusion – and how government ministers can come to conclusions without any experience or much knowledge themselves. Therefore, I am sure you can appreciate and understand the barriers we have to constantly work against and push down in order to make a successful living.

Also, several years ago, my grandmother died of cancer, followed shortly after by my aunt. This, as you can imagine, caused widespread grief in our family. There is no cure for their disease which plagued them for so long and caused so much pain. So why is the testing on animals to find cures met with so much resentment? I am sure if people had personal experience of death they would certainly feel the same way. Of course, testing on synthetic cells or tissues would be a better and more humane way forward but at the moment we have to ask ourselves why the death of several mice and rats should be seen as so significant when many humans are dying from presently incurable diseases and causing grief and upset to so many.

I only wish for you to accept another point of view and perhaps reconsider your opinions with this new information.

Yours faithfully,

- ◆ A newspaper has recently printed an article arguing that movie stars are paid too much money. Write a letter to the newspaper giving your views on this issue.



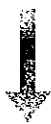
i

(addresses and date supplied)

Dear Mr Jones,

In my opinion I think that movie stars get way too much money for what they do, they should donate more money to charity and stop keeping it for themselves. Compared to nurses they get paid on average 1 million pounds every film which works out to be about £500, 000 per hour and their not even saving peoples lives where nurses are and their on minimum wage. This can't be right.

Yes I think that actors a very talented but still their not



worth the amount of money they get payed. It not just the movie stars that's getting all this money all the celebrities are, the money that they have should be used in a more usefull way like the NHS and making places better for sick people and more things like that.

This is what I think of all this money getting wasted on celebrities but I don't think it's going to make much difference.

Yours sincerely,

ii

(addresses and date supplied)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in reply to the letter published last week, regarding the amount of money paid to movie stars and other celebrities. While I agree with your correspondent's views that these people are paid ridiculous amounts of money considering how many needy people there are in the world, I feel a few points need to be clarified.

Firstly, the people who pay celebrities are different to those who can help the poor and homeless. The sports, music and film industries are huge, multi-million pound businesses and those involved are paid the going rate. Much of the money generated is through advertising and sales and this money is acquired fairly. As long as someone is willing to pay the money for a latest album or dvd, the industry will charge it. Of course, I doubt many of these celebrities deserve the money but it is still acquired legitimately.

Homelessness and poverty are social problems and as such, must be dealt with by society as a whole. Pointing the finger at celebrities, overpaid as they are, doesn't solve the problem. No single person can be blamed, these problems can arise because of all of us. From overpaid 'stars' who avoid paying taxes to each of us who don't put money in charity boxes, we can all be blamed in equal measure.

To the author of last week's letter, I agree that these large salaries aren't deserved. However, instead of begrudging them the money, why not focus on helping those who need help? By setting an example, your friends, family and workmates will soon follow suit and maybe one day we'll all be earning obscene, superstar salaries.

Yours faithfully,

- ✦ Write a letter to your head teacher or principal with your recommendations for improving the appearance of the school or college.



i

(own address and date supplied)

Dear Sir,

I am currently attending your school in Year 11. My purpose for this letter is to suggest some ways of improving the appearance of the school.

I have had many different ideas, however here are the more eye-catching ideas for the school. Firstly I believe that the school front gates need to be repainted, because the old paint has worn out and they have a considerable amount of rust on them.

Secondly, a colourful welcoming sign would improve the school's importance. The schools formality would increase: appearance wise.

Thirdly the schools front wall should be widened and some plant pots should be placed on top. This would improve the natural appearance of the school.

Finally, and the most important is to paint the entire school a colourful colour or even colours. This would dramatically improve the appearance and brighten up the school.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the college. I am a student that attends Any College and will be writing about the appearance of the school and what I recommend that you could do about it. As a pupil of the college I think that it is write that I could have my say.

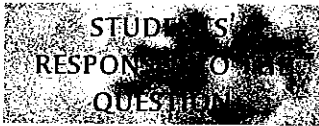
I will start talking about the food canteen, I do not think personally that there is enough choice on the menu especially for vegetarians, seeing as I am one myself it seems that I have the same meal about three times a week. Now if there was more choice I think would be eating the meal I have less than three times, so I recommend that you have more choice for vegetarians to choose from. As for the other food you sell in the canteen they do seem to have more choice, I hope that you can at least think about my comment rather than just saying No.

Nevertheless the girls toilets in the college have never got toilet roll in, I could probably say the same for the boy toilets aswell. I should think you can understand because it probably get on your nerves aswell when you walk into the toilet and don't have no toilet roll to use.

Dispite this I am not atall happy with the grafetti that has been spread around the college it looks a real mess especially when we have people to look around. I hope that you will think about my comments.

Yours sincerely,

- ◆ The government has decided to crack down on anti-social behaviour, which might mean anything from dropping chewing gum on the pavement to drunken behaviour in public. Write a letter to your local newspaper discussing anti-social behaviour in your area and how it might be tackled.



i

(addresses and date supplied)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the safety of the public in the Any Town area.

I read an article that you published last month about anti-social behaviour and it shocked me to read the statistics of the amount of fights caused by drunken behaviour.

My class came up with a few ways in which to crack down on this kind of behaviour. You could increase the amount of security in lager pubs then they will be able to stop fights before they get out of hand.

A second point could be that if the fights or bad behaviour does spill onto the streets closer contact with the police could be an issue.

Please take these points into consideration.

Yours faithfully,

ii

(addresses and date supplied)

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you to discuss how to crack down on anti-social behaviour in my hometown. I am concerned with the amount of teenagers hanging around on street corners with nothing to do but shout out rude or threatening comments. There is also though's who graffiti and litter our streets. Alot of elderly people are also very scared to go out at night because of these young youths. Although we only have three pubs in the area one of them stay's open all day everyday which is another concern as some of the youths hang around outside asking people to get them drink or cigarettis this the same outside the local shops. I am not saying that the pub should close during the day as the owners would lose alot of business with the tourists that come to the village. The long beach gets littred alot and has no beach patrol to make sure the rubbish goes into the bins provided. This then means that animals get harmed and many even die. As a teenager myself, I feel that a youth club should be set up as well as other activities. I also feel a skate park would make a difference and would then get teenagers off street corners. If the government are willing to put any preposells forward I would be greatful if they could come to the village.

Yours faithfully,

Unit 4.1 Comments on the student responses

Letter to MP – Animal experiments

Answer (i) is very clearly on task, but it is typical of many casual responses that invite obvious criticism. The layout features of a formal letter have been largely ignored and the substance of the letter is not very thoughtful. There is no real context or introduction to the letter and, although there is some undoubted rhetorical strength in the argument and some sense of organization through paragraphs, the overall impression is one of sketchiness, not least through the growing number of surface errors. (Grade: F/E.)

Answer (ii) is a huge achievement, especially when one considers the time constraints. It dwells too much on hunting and farming issues but still easily reaches the A/A* band of criteria.

Letter to newspaper – Overpaid stars

Answer (i) is properly organized and offers a clear, coherent viewpoint. Though the piece is undeveloped, it is not far short of a satisfactory length, but the argument posed can easily be countered, particularly when figures are paraded that are probably guessed and are calculated on the length of a film rather than the duration of its production. A little more all-round attention is needed in a piece like this. (Grade: E/D.)

Answer (ii) takes up a stance of defending the rights of celebrities and does so with considerable control and worldly awareness. The argument is mature and sophisticated, the logic impeccable and the tone and expression excellent. A/A* qualities in every respect.

Letter to headteacher/principal – Improving appearance of school/college

Neither of the two examples here is outstanding, but they both show reasonable understanding of the task and the letter genre. They have clear ideas and quite good organization. Arguably, the first letter is better focused on the visual appearance of the college and has a more formal style, while the second letter develops its ideas rather more and makes some strong personal points. Both fit the E/D section of the mark scheme and there may well be some dispute as to which is the stronger response. Needless to say, both could be improved with proof-reading.

Letter to newspaper – Anti-social behaviour

Each of these responses has positive features, but also some obvious shortcomings. They have the correct layout and positioning for a formal letter. Answer (i), though brief, has in its favour the fact that it is orderly and that it sets out to make points clearly. It also ends politely, if bluntly. However, the student appears to have no appetite at all for exploring the issues raised. (Grade: F/E.)

Answer (ii) does genuinely attempt to discuss the issue and manages to raise a range of points, with constructive suggestions offered. However, it lacks the organization of paragraphs, its expression leans towards spoken English and it is prone to surface errors. (Grade: E/D.)