

SBS Foundation English

Tips for Situational Writing (Formal)

Example: Formal Email to Discipline Master

Purpose: to **inform** him about an incident that happened in school canteen.

The keyword in purpose statement is inform. If students had written “I am writing to report to you...”, they were marked down. Similarly for those who used ‘Reported by’, ‘report about’ in their opening sentence.

Because the word “report” carries a different meaning and intent as compared to “inform”

However, if students were to start with “I am writing to let you know about...”, this can be accepted as it is synonymous with ‘inform’.

The lesson here is to make sure you understand the purpose of the writing and keep true to it. Use the action words given in the question stem, do not paraphrase it.

Concluding sentences / paragraph:

The last few lines should include the intended action or response of recipient, in this case the Discipline Master.

Avoid ending with “I look forward to your reply.” for formal writing whose purpose is to inform as mostly the recipient, i.e. the Discipline Master is not expected to reply to you.

Instead you can use the following accepted examples:

Examples of accepted ending:

- “If you need further information, I will gladly be of assistance.”
- “I hope that this information will be of use in your investigation.”
- “I hope that the information that I gave/ provided is useful to you.”
- “I hope that you **could** speak to Gina and let her know that her actions were wrong.”

You may also decide to want to suggest something, maybe the Discipline Master could hold an assembly talk. However, the tone of the suggestion has to be polite and not forceful.

A possible example would be “I hope that you speak to the students on the importance...”

Appropriate formal ending salutations

Due to the formal tone and language of the writing, the ending salutation must also match it. Many salutations are surprisingly allowed for formal writing, not just restricted to “yours sincerely”. These include;

- Yours faithfully
- Best Regards
- Regards
- Sincerely

However these are definitely not allowed;

- From (please take note! They are strict on this.)
- Cheers
- Love

Hence, it is important for us to take note of these details as it affects the intent of the writing and you can be penalised in terms of Task Fulfillment. Working on extracting the required content is important, but if the writing is not set in a formal setting, marks will definitely be lost unnecessarily.