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## **General Task 1 – Brainstorming and writing your letter**

Take a look at the IELTS question below and see how I have created my own details for each of the bullet points:

**An old car was left on the street near your apartment block several weeks ago. You telephoned the local Council to get them to take it away, but nothing has been done about it. The car is now causing a problem for residents.**

**Write a letter to the Council. In your letter**

- **describe the car**
- **outline the problems it is causing**
- **tell the Council what you want them to do about it**

### **Describe the car**

- Make – Nissan Micra
- Colour – blue
- Number plate – 38 PR 3022
- Anything else? – broken passenger window, 3 flat tyres

### **Outline the problems it is causing**

- Not much parking space so it's a problem for residents
- Looks bad in a residential street
- Youths are stealing parts from it
- The broken glass is dangerous for children

### **Tell the Council what you want them to do about it**

- Tell the police?
- Organise someone to take it away?

You can use the 3 bullet points from the question as a guide to organising the paragraphs of your essay. With brainstorming you are just generating ideas. That means, in your final writing you only include the best ideas.

When you look at the question, you need to decide what is the purpose and tone of the letter. In the letter question above you are going to write a complaint letter so you need to use appropriate letter expressions – [you can find these here](#). You will also need to focus on using formal expressions as you are writing to a council employee.

Before you start your letter you need to think about whether you know the name of the person you are writing to. If it's informal the answer is definitely yes, and if it's formal you have a choice. This is important as it determines how you will finish your letter. Look at the options you have:

### You know the name of the person you are writing to

Formal	Informal
Dear Mr. Johns,	Dear James,
Yours sincerely, (your name)	Best Regards, (your name)

### You don't know the name of the person you are writing to

Formal only
Dear Sir, (or Dear Madam)
Yours faithfully, (your name)

When you write letters you also need to use appropriate starting and finishing sentences, and these can also be formal or informal. I've created a table of useful sentences – learn a few of them and that should be sufficient for your exam.

Starting Sentences	
Formal	Informal
I am writing with regard to... I am writing in connection with... I would like to express my concern about... I am a resident of...and I would like to draw your attention to...	It was lovely to see you and your family last month... It was great to get your letter... It's been ages since I last saw you...
Concluding Sentences	
Formal	Informal
Thank you for your attention to this matter. I hope the situation will be resolved shortly. I look forward to hearing from you.	I'm really looking forward to... Bye for now. See you soon. Take care.

So, using all the information above, and appropriate letter expressions, here is a sample answer:

*Dear Sir,*

*I am writing to express my concern about a blue Nissan Micra that has been abandoned in Parker Street. Several weeks ago I telephoned your department to notify you of this problem, but nobody has visited our neighbourhood or offered to remove the car.*

*As there are several apartment blocks in this area finding parking spaces for all the residents can be difficult, and this extra car does not help our situation. Furthermore, it has been noted that some young people have started stealing various parts from the vehicle, and in the process a passenger window has been broken. This adds to the problem as the broken glass is dangerous for the children who live and play in this area.*

*I hope that following this letter you will either notify the police about this situation, or organise for someone to come and remove the car. Thank you in advance with regard to this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you shortly.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Anna Karper*

(Word count 169)

Now let's look at another question, this time for an informal letter.

**Your English speaking friend is moving to your neighbourhood with his/her children and wants some information about the local school.**

**Write a letter to him/her, in your letter**

- **Explain about the school and its facilities**
- **Give your opinion about the school**
- **Explain why his/her children will enjoy this school**

**Explain about the school and its facilities**

- Name – English International School
- Teaches from ages 4 to 18 in small classes
- Sports facilities and open playing fields

**Give your opinion about the school**

- Very strong academic record – some friends have children there
- Beautiful campus in a busy, crowded city

**Explain why his/her children will enjoy this school**

- Lots of students from different countries so won't feel different
- All teaching in English
- Her children enjoy sports and swimming

*Dear Sally,*

*It was lovely to receive your letter and hear about your plans to move here in the autumn. I'm very excited about you coming and I'm looking forward to being neighbours again.*

*You asked me about a local school for your children and I can recommend the English International School. My friends have told me it has an excellent academic record.*

*It's located in a beautiful campus which is a great escape from the crowded, noisy city. They also have excellent sports facilities and playing fields.*

*I think your children will love it here because I know how much they enjoy swimming and the school has one of the best pools in the city. Changing school and making new friends can be difficult, but all the students come from different countries so they won't feel so foreign when they get there. And all the teaching is in English so they won't have any problems with understanding. If you want I can ask the school to send you a brochure.*

*I'm really looking forward to seeing you again soon. Take care.*

*Best Wishes,*

*Anna*

(Word count 185)

**So to summarise,**

- **Read the letter question and brainstorm the details for the bullet points**
- **What is the purpose and tone of your letter? (eg. Complaint and formal)**
- **Do you know who you are writing to?**
- **Work out which starting and finishing sentences you are going to use**
- **Try to include any other useful expressions – [see here](#)**
- **Try to write between 150 and 200 words**

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