

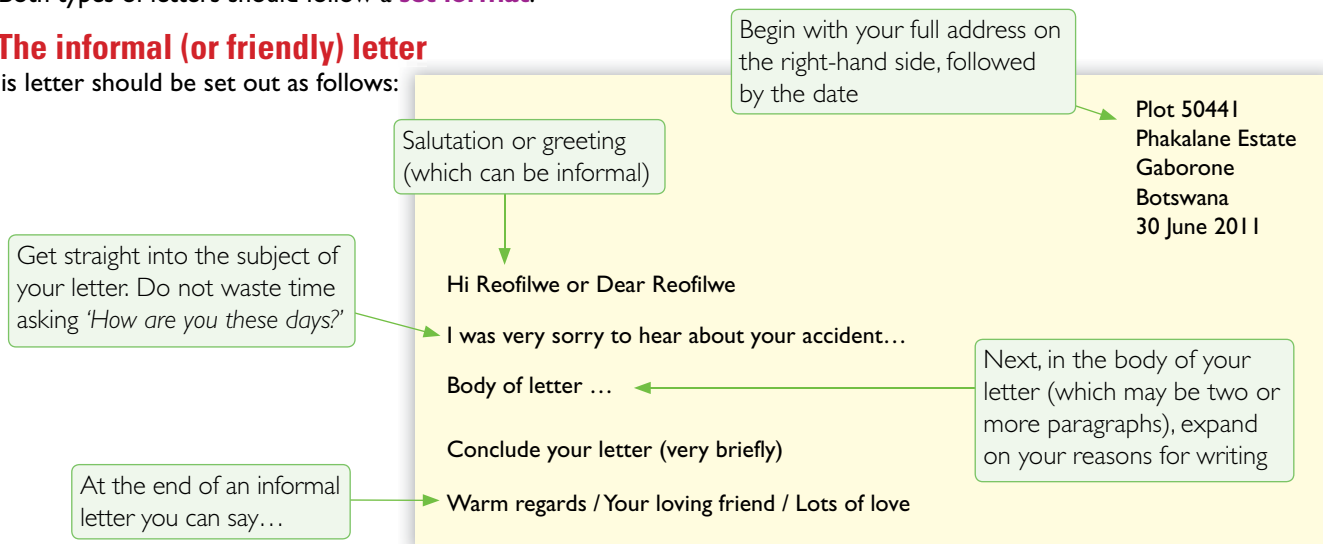
Letter writing

There are two main types of letter:

- ♦ The **informal** or **friendly** letter which you write to friends, relatives and acquaintances. The language and tone of this letter are therefore **friendly, playful** or conversational.
- ♦ The **formal** or **business** letter which you write to the Editor of a newspaper, manager of a store, a politician, or the manager of a company, for business reasons. The language and tone of this letter are **polite** and **businesslike**.
- ♦ Both types of letters should follow a **set format**.

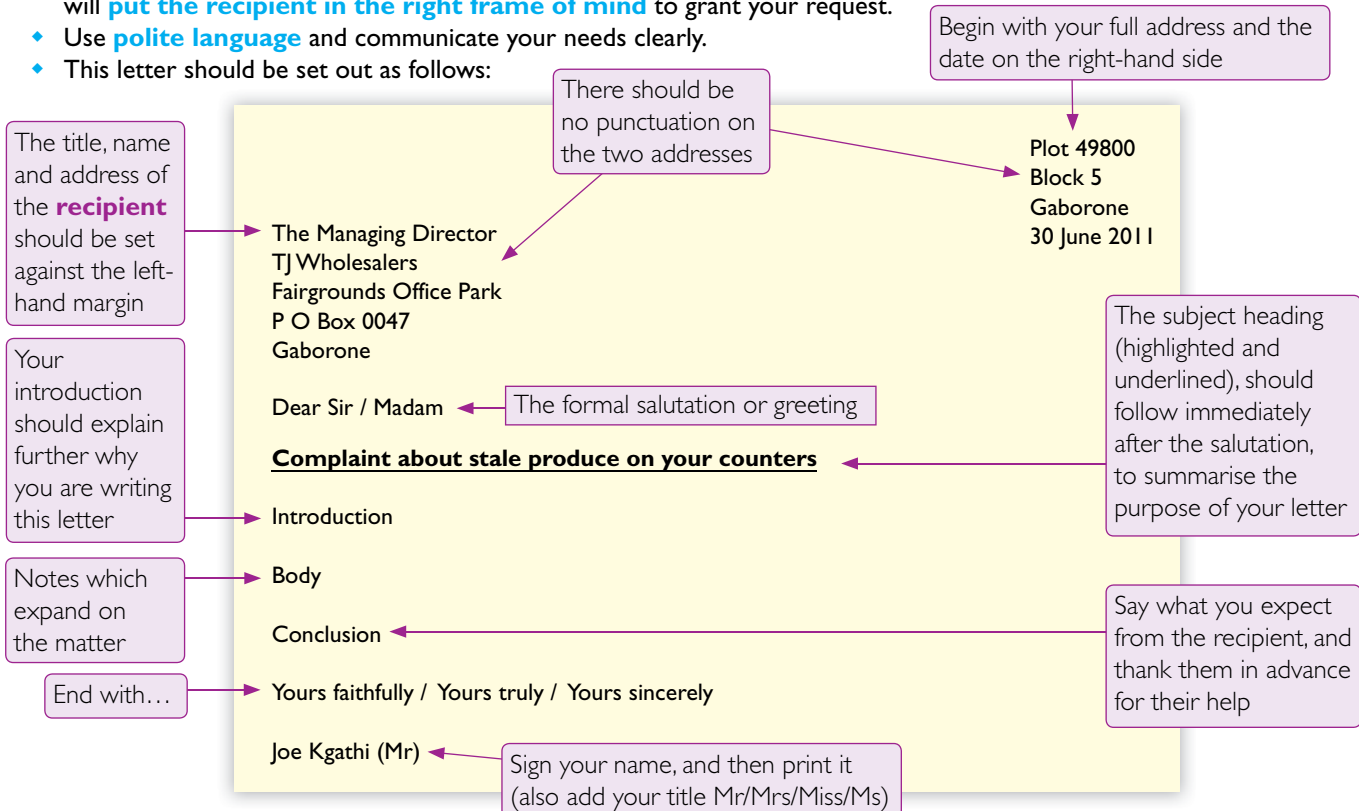
► The informal (or friendly) letter

This letter should be set out as follows:



► The formal (or business) letter

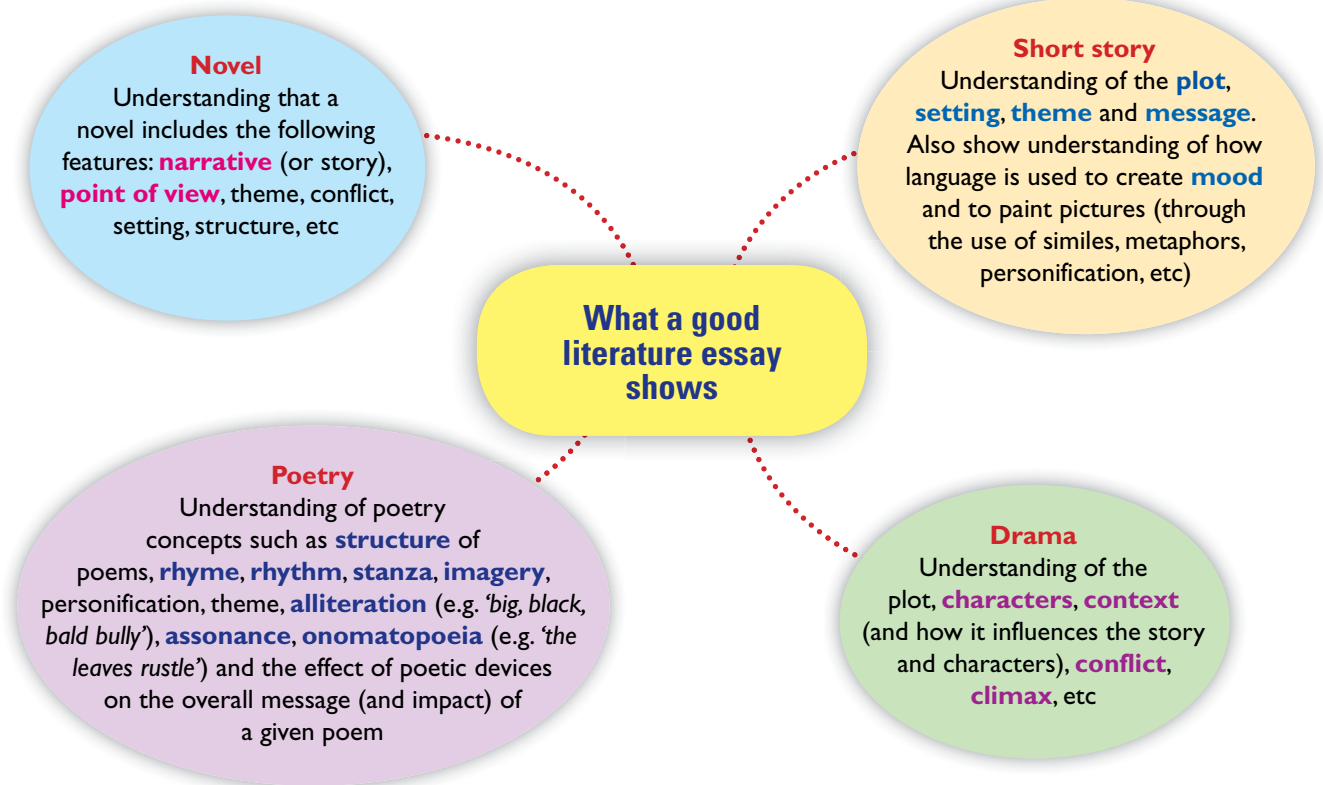
- ♦ In this letter, you are writing to someone who requires a formal letter **in order to do something for you**. Therefore, you have to write in such a way that your tone and presentation (the overall impression that you will give) will **put the recipient in the right frame of mind** to grant your request.
- ♦ Use **polite language** and communicate your needs clearly.
- ♦ This letter should be set out as follows:



NOTE: Aside from the sender's address, you should write everything else **flush** against the left hand margin. Remember to use the block paragraph method, where you leave a line between each paragraph. Do not mix paragraphing methods, i.e. indent first, then block paragraph next.

Literature (essay) writing

- Your Junior Secondary syllabus focuses on the study of these genres: **short story**, **drama**, **novel** and **poetry**. The mind map below summarises what aspects you need to know well in order to get good marks in an essay based on a particular genre.



Here are five steps that will help you to tackle literature essays more effectively.

Step 1: Be clear what your task is

- ♦ Understand the topic before you begin to work on it, i.e. break the topic up into its important parts.
- ♦ Identify **task words**, e.g. **explain** (why?); **describe** (how?); **discuss** (talk about); or **evaluate** (give your own reasons for).
- ♦ Identify **content words**, i.e. the words that tell you what the topic is all about, e.g.

'Discuss (**task word**) the incident in *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo cuts off the head of the head messenger with a machete (**content words**) and explain (**task word**) how this incident completely changes Okonkwo's character (**content words**).'

Step 2: Choose the relevant facts from a set book

- ♦ Which details address your topic? Make notes as ideas pop into your head, and make sure the ideas are connected.
- ♦ Make sure all your ideas are relevant to the topic or question.

Step 3: Arrange your ideas in a logical sequence

- ♦ Make notes on which idea you will begin with. How will you link your ideas?
- ♦ Jot down the main ideas and arrange them in the order in which you will present them.

Step 4: Write your first draft

- ♦ Arrange your ideas into a first draft, and once again check that what you are writing is relevant to the topic.
- ♦ Make sure you are presenting your ideas in a logical sequence.

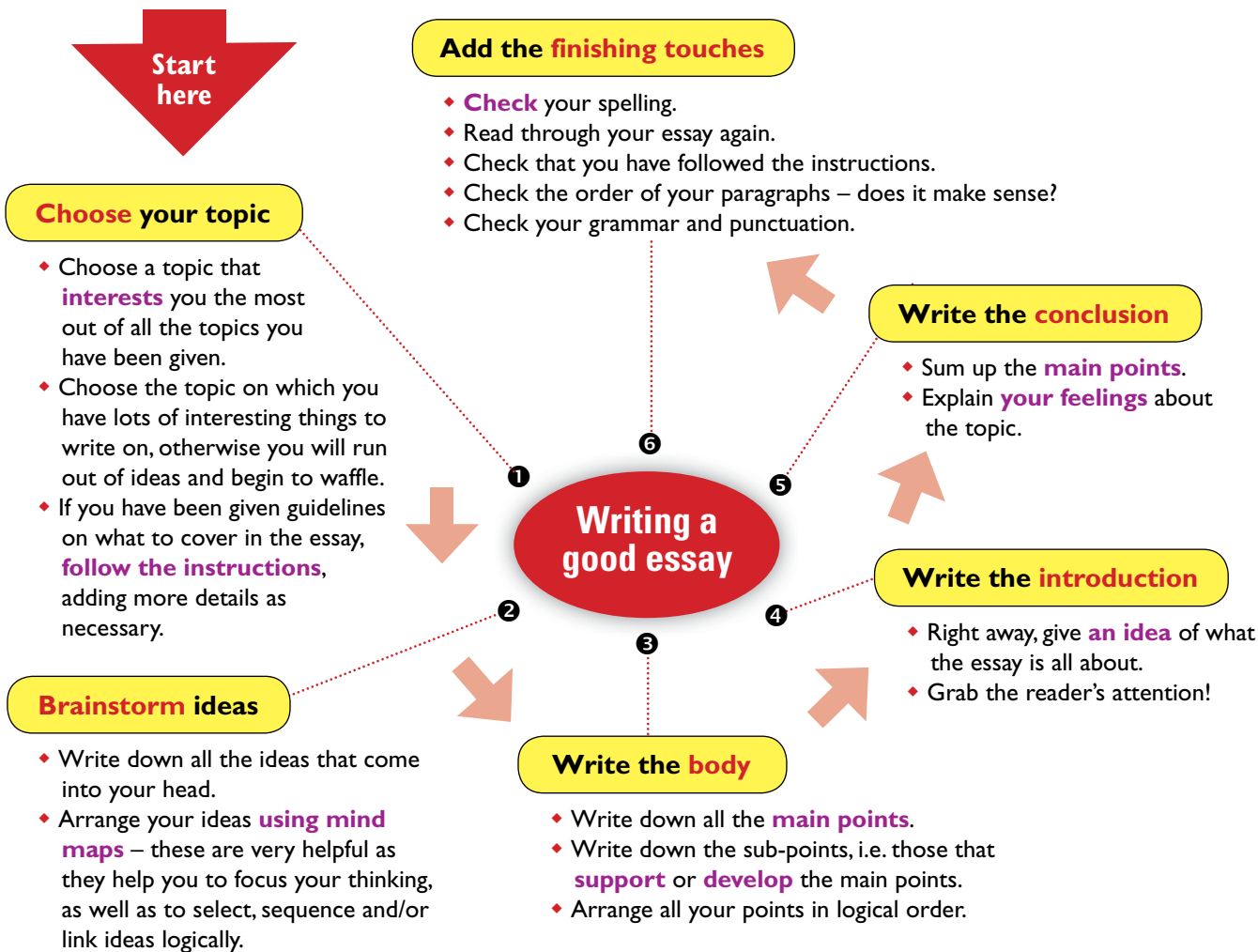
Step 5: Write your essay, and check your work before you hand it in

- ♦ Check spelling and grammar.
- ♦ Make sure each paragraph focuses on one main idea, and that paragraphs flow well from one to the next.
- ♦ Check that you are addressing the topic throughout, i.e. that your text is always relevant.

Lastly, if you want to quote what a character says in a set book (word for word), use inverted commas as you have been taught.

Tips for effective essay writing

Six steps to writing a good essay in an examination



A good essay

- ◆ is well structured and focused
- ◆ is arranged logically
- ◆ grabs the reader's attention
- ◆ uses colourful language which will appeal to the reader's imagination and senses
- ◆ lists references used as necessary

Paragraphs: the secret to easy reading!

- ◆ Do not forget to paragraph your work. Paragraphs will make your essay easy to read.
- ◆ Each paragraph should have a **topic sentence** (which introduces or sums up the information in the paragraph) and **developers** (which provide further details in the paragraph), e.g.

Thabang and Tlotlego were very busy the week before Christmas. ← topic sentence

They watered the garden and cleaned the house. ← developer

They washed and ironed their clothes. Then we all went shopping for presents.

↑ developer

↑ developer

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