

Writing 4: Formal Reply Email (Part A) – Pre-writing tasks

Name: _____ () Class: S5 () Date: _____

Students are guided to refresh their understanding of the genre features, including language and structural requirements for this writing context.

I. Identifying the Features of a Formal Reply Email

- A formal reply email is a _____ communication that responds to a specific _____, or _____.
- Understanding the features of a formal reply email is crucial for crafting clear, concise, and effective responses in various professional or formal contexts.

1. Structure of a formal reply email: (LF1)

Selected learning focuses (content, language, organisation) as a feature of learning-oriented assessment to achieve purposeful learning through the assignment.

- Greeting: Start the email with an appropriate _____, such as “Dear [Recipient’s Name],” or “Hello [Recipient’s Name],”
- Introduction: Begin by expressing gratitude or _____ the sender’s message to establish a positive tone. For example, “Thank you for your email regarding [topic].”
- Body paragraphs: Provide a focused and organised response to the sender’s inquiry or request. Use clear and concise language to address each point individually.
- Closing: Conclude the email with a polite closing statement, such as “Thank you for your attention to this matter.” or “I look forward to hearing from you soon.”
- Signature: Sign off with a professional closing, such as “_____” or “_____,” followed by your name and contact information.

2. Language and tone of a formal reply email: (LF2)

- Formal language: Use appropriate vocabulary, avoiding _____ or overly _____ expressions. Maintain a professional tone throughout the email.
- Politeness and courtesy: Employ polite and courteous language to show respect for the recipient. Use phrases like “please,” “thank you,” and “I appreciate your understanding.”
- Clear and concise communication: Convey information in a precise and straightforward manner. Avoid unnecessary _____ or complex language that may confuse the reader.
- Professionalism: Demonstrate professionalism by maintaining a _____ and business-like tone. Avoid making personal comments or using informal language.

3. Content of a formal reply email: (LF3)

- Addressing the inquiry or request: Respond directly to the sender’s inquiry or request, providing _____ and accurate information.
- Providing additional information: If necessary, include any additional information or details that may assist the recipient.
- Offering solutions or alternatives: If applicable, propose solutions or suggest alternatives to address any concerns or issues raised by the sender.
- Closing remarks: Offer assistance or further support, and express willingness to provide further clarification or answer any additional questions the recipient may have.

Students are guided to recall language features that convey meaning according to the communicative purposes of this writing context.

II. Language Support – Expressions to Respond Politely on Behalf of an Organisation (LF2)

The following are expressions that may help you effectively respond to the sender’s inquiry/request while maintaining a professional and polite tone. These expressions acknowledge the sender’s concerns, provide explanations or opinions supported by facts, clarify any misunderstandings, admit imperfections (if necessary), and conclude the response in a rational and persuasive manner.

1. Acknowledgement/recognition of the sender's inquiry/request:

- We _____ your inquiry regarding [topic], and we understand the significance of addressing this matter promptly.
- Thank you for reaching out to us with your request for information on [topic]. We _____ the importance of providing you with the necessary details.
- We _____ the effort you have put into your inquiry, and we are committed to providing you with a comprehensive response.
- Your inquiry demonstrates your _____ to understanding [topic], and we commend your proactive approach in seeking further information.
- We value your interest in [topic] and appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns in a timely manner.

2. Expression of opinions/explanation with facts:

- Based on our thorough evaluation of the situation, we are _____ that [your proposed solution/alternative] is the most appropriate course of action to achieve [desired outcome].
- Considering the compelling evidence presented, we firmly believe that it is _____ to [take a specific action/solution] to effectively address [issue/concern].
- This decision/plan/proposal is firmly rooted in our ongoing policy/principle of prioritising [relevant principle/policy], which ensures [desired outcome/goal].
- We have analysed the available data extensively, and it is evident that [your proposed solution/alternative] offers the most promising results.
- Our stance is supported by authoritative research findings, which demonstrate that [your proposed solution/alternative] has consistently yielded positive outcomes.

3. Clarification of misunderstanding:

- We understand that upon initial review, [situation/idea] may appear [misconception]. However, it is crucial to clarify that [clarification/explanation] to provide a comprehensive understanding.
- It must be made clear that [misconception]. However, our intention is to [explanation/clarification] and ensure there are no misunderstandings.
- While it may seem that [opinion/fact] could lead to [misunderstanding], it is important to note that [clarification/explanation] to ensure accurate interpretation.
- We appreciate your perspective, and we would like to _____ any potential confusion regarding [topic].
- To avoid any _____, it is important to understand that [clarification/explanation].

4. Admittance of imperfection (if necessary):

- We acknowledge that our current [processes/policies/strategies] may benefit from further studies/investigations to better [understand/improve/refine] [topic/issue].
- While we strive for excellence, we recognise that there is always room for _____. Therefore, we appreciate your feedback in helping us enhance our [topic/issue].
- We understand that additional efforts are needed to [refine/improve] [topic/issue], and we are committed to undertaking further studies to address any existing limitations.
- While our current approach represents progress, we acknowledge the need for ongoing refinement to achieve _____ results.
- We are dedicated to continuous improvement and are actively exploring ways to enhance [topic/issue] based on valuable _____ such as yours.

5. Concluding statement:

- The examples provided above rationalise the decision and demonstrate the effectiveness of [solution/approach] in achieving our desired outcome.

- These instances exemplify our _____ to delivering optimal solutions that address concerns and yield _____ results.
- We are confident that the proposed [action/decision] will have a significant impact on [desired outcome/goal] and contribute to overall success.
- By implementing [solution/approach], we anticipate a substantial improvement in [outcome/impact].
- Your support in this matter will play a _____ role in realising our shared vision of [desired outcome/goal].

Progressive learning that gradually empowers students to manage their learning process as they apply their understanding through bite-sized tasks

III. Tips for Making Appropriate Responses in a Reply (LF3)

It is important that you understand the task's expectations so that you can draft the most suitable responses to serve the required communicative purposes. The following shows some strategies that you shall bear in mind when trying to write a reply to others depending on the situation.

1. Assess the context:

Understanding the context helps you adapt your communication style appropriately. Consider factors such as formality, the person being addressed, and cultural considerations.

- Example: You received an email from a parent expressing dissatisfaction with a recent school event.
- Time to think: What factors should you consider to understand the context of this interaction? (E.g. formality, person being addressed)

2. Identify the purpose:

Rationale and strategies: Clarifying your purpose helps you tailor your language and expressions effectively. It ensures your response aligns with the intended goal, whether it's addressing concerns, providing information, or asserting a position.

- Example: The purpose is to address the parent's concerns and provide a satisfactory response.
- Time to think: What expressions would you use to convey empathy and offer solutions?

3. Tailor the language to the situation:

Rationale and strategies: Adapting your language to the situation and the individual you are communicating with enhances effective communication. Consider the level of formality, power dynamics, and expectations of the person you are addressing.

- Example: You are writing an email to a teacher about a scheduling conflict.
- Time to think: Rewrite the following sentence to make it more appropriate for a formal email: "Hey, can we talk about the class schedule? I think there's a problem."

4. Use confident and assertive language:

Rationale and strategies: Using confident and assertive language helps you express your perspective clearly and

directly while maintaining professionalism. Provide well-reasoned explanations supported by facts or evidence to convey authority and credibility.

- Example: You are responding to a peer who has made an incorrect statement in a group discussion.
- Time to think: How would you assertively correct your peer while maintaining a respectful tone?

5. Maintain a respectful and professional tone:

Rationale and strategies: Maintaining a respectful and professional tone is crucial in all interactions. Avoid confrontational language and focus on addressing concerns respectfully, providing constructive solutions or alternatives.

- Example: You are addressing a complaint from a customer who received a damaged product.
- Time to think: Rewrite the following sentence to address the customer's concern while maintaining a professional tone: "I'm really sorry, but I guess it's our fault. We're not very good at packaging."

6. Empathize and validate concerns:

Rationale and strategies: Demonstrating empathy and validating concerns helps create a positive and understanding atmosphere. Acknowledge the other person's perspective and validate their feelings while still asserting your position.

- Example: A coworker is upset about a decision made by the team.
- Time to think: How would you acknowledge your coworker's concerns and validate their feelings while still asserting the team's decision?

7. Provide clear boundaries and limitations:

Rationale and strategies: Clearly establishing boundaries and limitations is important when dealing with unreasonable demands or expectations. Politely and assertively explain your organisation's policies, guidelines, or limitations that prevent you from accommodating every request.

- Example: A student is requesting an extension on an assignment beyond the given deadline.
- Time to think: Write a response that clearly explains the deadline policy and why an extension cannot be granted.

8. Seek common ground and offer alternatives:

Rationale and strategies: Seeking common ground and offering alternatives foster collaboration and problem-solving. Look for areas of agreement and propose alternative solutions or compromises that address concerns within reasonable boundaries.

- Example: A group member wants to pursue a different approach for a team project.

- Time to think: Propose an alternative solution that addresses the concerns of the group member while still aligning with the project requirements.

9. Practice active listening:

Rationale and strategies: Active listening is essential for effective communication. Fully understanding the other person's concerns before responding allows you to tailor your response appropriately and demonstrate that their viewpoint has been considered.

- Example: A parent is expressing concerns about their child's academic progress.
- Time to think: How can you demonstrate active listening by summarising the parent's concerns before responding?

10. Seek guidance or support when needed:

Rationale and strategies: Recognising when to seek guidance or support is crucial in challenging situations. Involving higher-level management or seeking advice from experienced individuals can provide valuable insights and help navigate difficult interactions.

- Example: You are dealing with a difficult and unreasonable customer complaint.
- Time to think: Describe a situation where seeking guidance or support from a supervisor would be appropriate and explain why.

The provision of writing samples with different levels of teacher's support to empower students to complete the writing task through active and critical evaluation of the contextual requirements and the application of lexico-grammatical resources.

IV. Analysis of Writing Samples

The following are two contexts where formal reply emails are written. Analyse the samples by completing the annotated remarks.

Example context 1: Formal email invitation from the school's principal to an alumnus, inviting them to participate in the Career Day event and requesting their input to enhance the programme.

<u>Email prompt 1</u>	<u>Formal reply email sample 1</u>
<p>Subject: Invitation to Participate in Career Day 2024</p> <p>Dear [Alumnus's Name],</p> <p>I hope this email finds you well. As the principal of Hong Kong College, I am delighted to invite you to our upcoming Career Day event, scheduled for 27 January 2024. The Career Day serves as an invaluable opportunity for our current students to gain insights into different career paths and benefit from the experiences of our esteemed alumni like yourself. We would be honoured to have you join us as a guest speaker to share your career journey, accomplishments, and any advice you may have for our students. Your presence and expertise will undoubtedly inspire and</p>	<p>Subject: Confirmation and Suggestions for Career Day 2024</p> <p>Dear [Principal's Name],</p> <p>I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for extending the invitation to participate in Career Day 2024 at Hong Kong College. I am honoured and delighted to accept the invitation and contribute to this significant event. (1)</p> <p>As an alumnus, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share my career insights and experiences with the current students. I believe that my journey can provide valuable guidance and inspiration to help them navigate their own professional paths. (2)</p> <p>Furthermore, I appreciate your openness to suggestions for enhancing the programme. In that regard, I have a few ideas that I believe will benefit the students and contribute to the smooth run-down of the event. (3)</p>

<p>motivate our students as they embark on their own professional journeys.</p> <p>Furthermore, we value your perspective and suggestions on how we can enhance the programme to maximise the students' benefit and ensure the smooth run-down of the event. We encourage you to share any ideas or recommendations that you believe will enrich the Career Day experience. Your input is highly appreciated and will contribute to the overall success of the event.</p> <p>Additionally, we are considering introducing an extended aspect to the Career Day this year by incorporating company visits or job shadowing opportunities for interested students. This would provide them with practical exposure to various industries and help them make more informed decisions about their future career paths. We would appreciate your thoughts on this proposal and whether you would be willing to facilitate such visits or job shadowing experiences.</p> <p>Once again, we sincerely hope that you will accept our invitation and join us in making Career Day 2024 a truly memorable and impactful event. Please kindly confirm your availability by 12 January 2024. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued support of Hong Kong College. We look forward to welcoming you back to our campus.</p> <p>Warm regards, Chris Wong Principal</p>	<p>Firstly, alongside individual presentations, organising panel discussions with multiple alumni from various industries can offer diverse perspectives and engage the students in interactive conversations. These discussions can focus on specific topics related to career exploration, industry trends, and personal experiences. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and gain insights from a range of professionals, broadening their understanding of different career paths. (4)</p> <p>Secondly, incorporating practical skills workshops can equip students with the necessary tools for their future careers. These workshops can focus on essential skills such as resume writing, interview techniques, and networking. Alumni or industry experts can facilitate these workshops, providing hands-on guidance to help students develop their professional skills. By participating in these workshops, students will gain practical knowledge and confidence in presenting themselves effectively to potential employers. (4)</p> <p>Additionally, allocating dedicated time for alumni and students to interact and network can foster mentorship opportunities and create lasting connections beyond the Career Day event. This can be structured as a networking reception, where students have the chance to engage in conversations with alumni from various fields. It can also include activities such as speed networking or roundtable discussions to facilitate meaningful interactions. By connecting with alumni, students can gain valuable advice, insights, and potential career opportunities. (4)</p> <p>Moreover, including company visits or job shadowing experiences is an excellent idea. It would provide students with hands-on exposure to different industries and help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications. Students can witness firsthand how concepts and skills they learn in school are applied in professional settings. I would be more than willing to facilitate such experiences and collaborate with the school to make it a reality. This can involve coordinating with companies, arranging logistics, and ensuring a valuable and safe learning experience for the students. (5)</p> <p>Once again, thank you for the invitation, and I am thrilled to be a part of Career Day 2024. I look forward to contributing to the event's success and making a positive impact on the students' career aspirations. If there are any further details or preparations required from my end, please do not hesitate to let me know.</p> <p>Thank you for your dedication in organizing this event and for considering my suggestions. I commend Hong Kong College for its commitment to providing valuable opportunities for its students. Together, we can help shape the future of these young individuals and inspire them to achieve their goals. (6)</p> <p>Best regards, Frankie Tong 2000 Form 7 Graduate</p>
<p>(1) Expressing gratitude and acceptance: The email starts with a courteous expression of gratitude and acceptance, acknowledging the invitation and the alumnus's _____ to participate.</p> <p>(2) Enthusiasm and personal connection: The alumnus expresses excitement and emphasises the <u>personal relevance</u> of their experience to inspire and guide current students.</p> <p>(3) Transition and opening for _____: The alumnus acknowledges the principal's openness to suggestions and sets the stage for providing ideas to enhance the programme.</p> <p>(4) Specific suggestions: The alumnus provides three _____ suggestions for improving the Career Day programme, including panel discussions, skills workshops, and an alumni networking session.</p> <p>(5) Agreement and willingness to collaborate: The alumnus expresses _____ with the principal's proposal for company visits or job shadowing and offers to actively _____ in facilitating such experiences.</p> <p>(6) Closing remarks and appreciation: The email concludes with a reaffirmation of gratitude, compliments the school's commitment to student opportunities, and expresses _____ to contribute to the event's success.</p>	

Example context 2: Formal email reply from the school's principal to a concerned parent regarding enquiry on school activities and explaining school policies on allocating vacancies for activities.

Email prompt 2

Subject: Inquiry about School Activities and Vacancies
Dear Mr Wong,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the number of school activities available for students at Hong Kong College. As parents of a student in your esteemed institution, we believe that extracurricular activities play a vital role in our child's holistic development.

We have noticed a limited range of activities being offered, and it seems that there are not enough vacancies to accommodate all the interested students.

This has left our child feeling disappointed and excluded from participating in the activities they are passionate about.

We understand that there may be logistical challenges in organising a wide variety of activities, but we believe it is crucial to provide ample opportunities for students to explore their interests and talents. It is disheartening to see our child's enthusiasm dampened due to the lack of available spots in the desired activities.

We kindly request clarification on the process of allocating vacancies for various activities. It would be helpful to understand how the selection is made and whether there is any consideration given to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for all students. Furthermore, we would appreciate it if you could provide insights into your plans for expanding the extracurricular programme to accommodate more students. We believe that a well-rounded education includes both academic and non-academic pursuits, and it is essential for the school to provide a diverse range of activities to cater to the interests and talents of all students.

We sincerely hope that you will address our concerns and take the necessary steps to enhance the extracurricular offerings at Hong Kong College. We believe that by providing more opportunities for students to engage in activities they are passionate about, you will not only foster their personal growth but also create a more inclusive and vibrant school community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to ensure the best possible educational experience for all students at Hong Kong College.

Best regards,

Marvin Yau

Phone: 9123 4567

Formal reply email sample 2

Dear Mr Yau,

Thank you for reaching out to us regarding your concerns about the arrangement of school activities and the availability of vacancies. We appreciate your feedback and the opportunity to address these issues.

Firstly, I apologise for any inconvenience caused by the scheduling of extracurricular activities. Our aim is to provide a well-rounded educational experience for all students, and we understand the importance of balancing academic and extracurricular commitments. **(1)**

To ensure a fair distribution of activities throughout the school year, we have implemented a comprehensive scheduling system that takes into account various factors such as student preferences, teacher availability, and facility constraints. However, we recognise that there may be instances where conflicts arise, and we are committed to addressing them promptly and finding suitable solutions. **(2)**

Regarding the availability of vacancies in specialised programmes or clubs, we understand the desire for equal opportunities for all students. We have taken steps to improve the transparency and accessibility of information regarding these programmes. For instance, we have created a dedicated section on our school website where students and parents can find comprehensive details about each programme, including eligibility criteria, application processes, and deadlines. **(3)**

Additionally, we have implemented a fair and impartial selection process that ensures equal consideration for all interested students. This process includes a thorough review of applications, interviews (where applicable), and the involvement of a selection committee comprising teachers and administrators. **(4)**

We are committed to continually improving our communication channels and providing timely updates to address any concerns or questions. We encourage you to regularly visit our school website and subscribe to our newsletters to stay informed about upcoming activities, vacancies, and other important announcements. **(5)**

Lastly, we value your feedback and appreciate your engagement in your child's education. Your input plays a crucial role in helping us identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments. We encourage you to continue sharing your concerns and suggestions with us so that we can work together to enhance the overall experience for our students. **(6)**

Thank you once again for bringing these matters to our attention. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and enriching environment for all students, and your feedback is instrumental in achieving this goal. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Warm regards,
Chris Wong
Principal

- (1) Expressing gratitude and acceptance: The principal expresses gratitude for the parent's feedback and acknowledges the concerns raised.
- (2) Addressing the issue and explaining the background rationale: The principal addresses the issue of scheduling extracurricular activities and explains the implementation of a comprehensive scheduling system that considers various factors. This highlights the _____ made by the school to balance academic and extracurricular commitments.
- (3) Acknowledging the concerns: The principal acknowledges the concern about availability of vacancies in specialised programmes or clubs and mentions the steps taken to improve _____ and _____ of information through the school's website.
- (4) Explaining the principles behind policies: The principal outlines the _____ and impartial selection process in place for specialised programmes or clubs, which includes a thorough review of applications and the involvement of a selection committee.
- (5) Reiterating school's rationale: The principal emphasises the school's _____ to improving communication channels and encourages parents to stay _____ about activities, vacancies, and other important updates through the school's website and newsletters.
- (6) Closing remarks and appreciation: The principal expresses _____ for the parent's feedback and highlights the importance of ongoing engagement and _____ between the school and parents for _____ improvement in the educational experience.

Multiple question choices available:
a self-directed learning element catering
for learner's diversity.

Authentic writing contexts that provide
an opportunity for students' reflection
on their everyday experience and
development of positive values
through writing application.

V. Writing Questions

Choose any one of the questions below. Write your formal reply email in about 200 words.

Question 1 – Staff members' reply to the principal's announcement about upcoming staff meeting

Imagine you are a staff member at Hong Kong College. Write a formal reply email to the principal's formal email announcement about the upcoming staff meeting. Express your appreciation for the information provided, confirm your attendance, and request clarification or support regarding the reminders from the principal so as to facilitate a productive discussion.

Question 2 – Parent's formal reply to the class teacher's concerns about student's misbehaviour

Imagine you are a parent of a student at Hong Kong College. Your son's class teacher has sent a formal email expressing concerns about your son's misbehaviour, such as being unpunctual, using electronic devices without permission, and displaying rudeness towards fellow students and teachers. Write a formal reply email to the class teacher, expressing your gratitude for the teacher's concern, acknowledging the issues raised, and showing sincerity in cooperating with the school to address your son's behaviour. Initiate a sincere conversation with the teacher to discuss any underlying factors that may be affecting your son's behaviour, such as mental health, and propose possible solutions or strategies to support your son's growth and development.

Question 3 – Principal's formal reply to parent's enquiry about school's punishment for plagiarism

Imagine you are the principal of Hong Kong College. A parent has emailed you expressing dissatisfaction with the school's punishment of their son for using AI to complete an English writing homework assignment, which was viewed as plagiarism. The parent's email raises concerns about the school's approach to integrity and the impact on the student's learning. Write a formal reply email to the parent, addressing the parent's concerns while emphasising the school's commitment to academic integrity and the importance of students' personal development. Explain the rationale behind the school's stance on plagiarism, provide information on the consequences of such actions, and offer suggestions for ensuring the student's learning is not compromised while maintaining academic integrity.

Question chosen: _____ (Also indicate your choice on the writing plan and writing paper.)

Name: _____ Class: _____ () Date: _____

Ying Wa College
2023-2024 S5 English Language

Writing 4: Formal Reply Email (Part A) – Question analysis and writing plan

Question chosen: _____ (Also indicate your choice on the writing paper.)

Analyse your question of choice using the Field-Tenor-Mode table below.

Students are guided to do task analysis using the Field-Tenor-Mode framework from Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Field	
Tenor	
Mode	

Having analysed the task requirements, students then use the writing plan to organise their ideas during the brainstorm stage and collect feedback from peers and the teacher.

Do your writing plan using the template below.

Opening	<i>Tips:</i> <i>Begin by expressing gratitude or acknowledging the sender's message to establish a positive tone.</i>
Body paragraphs	<i>Tips:</i> <i>Provide a focused and organised response to the sender's enquiry or request. Use clear and concise language to address each point individually.</i> <i>What are the communicative purposes and how do you attain them?</i> Body paragraph 1 Body paragraph 2 Body paragraph 3 (optional)
Closing	<i>Tips:</i> <i>Conclude the email with a polite closing statement while maintaining the target tone.</i> <i>Include a professional sign-off.</i>

Ying Wa College
S5 English 2023 - 2024
Writing 4: Formal Reply Email (Part A)

Form-based evaluation form for feedback on selected learning focuses.

Name: _____ Class: _____ () Date: _____

Evaluation Form

Students conduct self- & peer-evaluation of their writing as they apply their knowledge of task requirements gained from the pre-writing stage.

Self & Peer Evaluation

Evaluate the writing yourself and invite one of your friends to evaluate your piece. Tick the appropriate boxes. Then give specific and constructive comments in the space provided.

Assessed learning areas		Self			Peer (Name: _____)		
		Good job ☺	Not bad ☹	More hard work needed ☹	Good job ☺	Not bad ☹	More hard work needed ☹
Content							
LF1	Content of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the “field” of the corresponding writing question Relevant elaboration in the reply in response to the email concerned 						
Language							
LF2	Language and Tone of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal language Politeness and courtesy Clear and concise communication Professionalism 						
Organisation							
LF3	Structure of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greeting Introduction Body paragraphs Closing Signature 						
Other Comments (Class-based, optional)							

Teacher's Feedback

Students can cross-check their results of self- & peer-evaluation with teacher's feedback using the same set of assessment criteria as they review their learning outcomes.

Assessed learning areas		Good job 😊	Not bad 😐	More hard work needed 😞
Content				
LF1	Content of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none">Addressing the “field” of the corresponding writing questionRelevant elaboration in the reply in response to the email concerned			
Language				
LF2	Language and Tone of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none">Formal languagePoliteness and courtesyClear and concise communicationProfessionalism			
Organisation				
LF3	Structure of a Formal Reply Email <ul style="list-style-type: none">GreetingIntroductionBody paragraphsClosingSignature			
Other Comments (Class-based, optional)				

Name: _____ Class: _____ () Date: _____

Ying Wa College
2023-2024 S5 English Language
Writing 4: Formal Reply Email (Part A)
Post-writing tasks & writing review

Part 1: Overview of performance

Make notes of what the class and your teacher share about the overall performance of the class.

	Students are encouraged to self-evaluate their writing marked by the teacher and observe areas of appreciation and areas of improvement through collaborative contribution.
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Part 2: Evaluation of peer's work

Students go through peer-evaluation of selected samples while reflecting on the task's contextual requirements using the Field-Tenor-Mode framework.

Several pieces of work from the class have been typed as samples for your review. Read them thoroughly and make notes of the good features **shown** and / or **intended** (Hint: _____).

Do refer to the Field-Tenor-Mode framework for each writing question. (Because of the popularity of questions, only questions 2 and 3 are included in this task.) Also highlight some useful language features in the samples.

	What is shown in the writing?	What is the intention?	What could have been done better?
Q2			
Q3			

<p>Question 2 Sample 1 Subject: Re: Concerns Regarding Your Son's Misbehaviour Dear Miss Chan,</p> <p>I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for reaching out concerning my son's recent misbehaviour at school. I am writing to identify underlying factors that may be affecting Chris' behaviour, in addition to proposing possible solutions to support his personal growth and development, which I believe to be a common goal of ours.</p> <p>I understand that Chris has been misbehaving on several occasions, such as being unpunctual, using electronic devices without permission, and displaying rudeness towards fellow students and teachers. This situation is rather regrettable, as Chris' mother and I have always hoped to instill positive values, such as punctuality and courtesy, into Chris. I see that there is certainly room for improvement in this regard and I bear responsibility for that.</p> <p>A possible factor for Chris' misbehaviour would be academic stress. As I understand, students nowadays are under constant pressure from school, which can harm their mental well-being. This could explain why Chris always seems down when returning home from school, as well as his general reluctance to attend school and his recent misbehaviour.</p> <p>Another potential factor would be Chris' anger management issues. Chris was diagnosed with anger issues two years ago, and his situation seems to have worsened over the past two years. I acknowledge that as parents, we may not have been doing enough to assist our son through his tumultuous adolescence. This could explain his general hostility to both classmates and teachers, and his disobedience in terms of not halting his unsolicited usage of electronic devices in class. This would undoubtedly serve as a hindrance to Chris' academic progress, and is far from ideal.</p> <p>Chris' mother and I hope that through continuous collaboration with Hong Kong college, the mentioned issues can be tackled, aiding Chris' growth and development. Since communication is found to be essential in relieving stress, we will initiate more friendly discussions with Chris whenever we find him in low spirits. Besides, it would be greatly appreciated if the school could arrange regular sessions for Chris to talk with social workers, for example after school. We would gladly pay the fees required for such should it be necessary, since Chris' growth during school years is our top priority.</p> <p>We truly hope that by adopting the proposed methods, Chris will no longer cause such disruptions at school. Chris' mother and I are willing to assist the school to the best of our abilities to ensure Chris' optimal development. Hence, please do not hesitate to contact me via telephone number 1234 5678 should it be helpful to Chris. Thank you again for notifying us of this situation, and I look forward to Chris' continuous improvement in terms of attitude and whole-person development.</p> <p>Best regards, R. Wong Father of Chris Wong</p>	<p>Question 2 Sample 2 Subject: Re: Concerns Regarding Chris Wong's Misbehaviour Dear Mr Chan,</p> <p>I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for reaching out and bringing my attention to my son Chris' misbehaviour in school. I am writing in response to hopefully address your concerns and cooperate with the school in order to solve these issues and help Chris turn over a new leaf to be the best student he can.</p> <p>Firstly, regarding his unpunctuality, I have been made aware that Chris habitually arrives to classes 5 to 10 minutes late. If I understand correctly, he claims to teachers that he was using the washroom or trying to find his way around campus. While I do think that students should be given some leeway time in between lessons for walking and getting around, as well as for any sick emergencies, I completely see your point about how Chris' frequent lateness and his claims do not match up. I am disappointed as Chris' mother and I have always tried to instill values of punctuality in him. He has been confronted on this and has agreed to be on time from now on.</p> <p>Secondly, regarding his usage of electronic devices without permission, to my knowledge, Chris occasionally uses his tablet in class to play games when the school has a strict no-device-during-lesson policy. I was not informed about this when Chris told me that he needed a device for lessons and was under the impression that he would use it to take notes. I appreciate you bringing this policy to light so that his unpermitted use of devices may be stopped. His tablet has been confiscated and his screen time has been limited to facilitate improvement.</p> <p>Thirdly, regarding his rude and unseemly behaviour to fellow students and teachers, I am completely shocked about this as he displays no such tendencies at home. His mother and I have had a long talk about this attitude of his, and I have identified that the cause of this seems to be academic stress and alienation of classmates. He tells me that his classmates are similarly rude to him. I understand that these reasons in no way justify his behaviour, and we sincerely apologise for his behaviour. However, it would be great if the school could also take action to make sure this does not happen again, such as providing a counsellor to Chris to let him speak his mind and alleviate him of academic stress, as well as look into the matter on his classmates' behaviour and why they tend to ignore and alienate Chris. His mother and I have also been frequently trying to get him to open up, in hopes that he may let go of his frustrations. However, I have not taken Chris on his word completely, so I hope the school can investigate to see if such issues causing this exist. Nevertheless, after talking with Chris, he has agreed to offer a sincere apology to any students and teachers involved.</p> <p>Chris' healthy development at school is my top priority, and I wish the best for him, which includes his growth into a better person. Thank you once again for contacting me and informing me of this. His improvement is of utmost importance and I hope the school will take these suggestions into mind. I would be grateful if the school could keep me updated on any repetition of such behaviours from Chris or if there is improvement, so I can take appropriate action at home. His mother and I will assist the school to the best of our ability to resolve this problem. Please do not hesitate to call me at 12345678 or his mother at 98765432 should any further developments arise.</p> <p>Best regards, M. Wong Father of Chris Wong</p>
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Question 3 Sample 1

Subject: Re: Enquiry About School's Punishment for Plagiarism
Dear Mr Wong,

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for pointing out your concerns about the school's approach to integrity and the impact on students' learning. We appreciate your feedback and the opportunity to explain the school's stance on plagiarism.

First, it is regrettable that your son was found directly copying from AI to complete his English writing assignment. It was viewed as plagiarism, which is strictly prohibited. Punishment was carried out by discipline teachers and his English teacher. His assignment was downgraded and a reflection letter was required for him to submit. Our aim is to provide equal opportunity for students to learn and to educate students about integrity, and we understand the importance to balance fairness and encouragement to students.

To promote diverse learning, 'Bring Your Own Device' policy is implemented this academic year, where students are able to use their device to search online for extra resources for completing their assignments and assisting with their learning. To ensure effective learning, referencing from sources is allowed only while completing assignments. Disciplinary actions will be taken if direct copying is found. However, we recognise that there may be instances where conflicts arise about the consequences of plagiarism, and we are committed to addressing them promptly and finding suitable solutions.

Regarding the disciplinary actions taken, we understand that the discouragement for students to learn and continue using AI. We have taken further steps to explain the guidelines and regulations to students on referencing from online sources. For instance, class teachers have contacted your son to explain the rationale of the punishment in person, so that he can understand more about the school's policy.

In addition, your son's English teacher is continuously providing support to your son to provide assistance with learning English. We aim to provide more support so as to make sure every student has a satisfactory performance. Afterschool tutorial classes are also provided so that one-to-one consultation can be arranged to solve any issues.

We are committed to continuing improving our communication channels and providing timely updates to address any concerns. We encourage you to regularly review your son's work and progress in studying and the use of technologies in assignments.

Lastly, we value your feedback and appreciate your engagement in your child's education. Your input plays a crucial role in helping us identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments. We encourage you to continue to share your concerns and suggestions with us so that we can work together to enhance the overall experience for our students.

Thank you once again for bringing these matters to our attention. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and enriching environment for all students, and your feedback is beneficial to the achievement of this goal. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly again.

Best regards,
Chris Wong
Principal

Question 3 Sample 2

Subject: Re: Concerns Regarding Punishment for Plagiarism
Dear Mr Wong,

Thank you for reaching out to us regarding your concerns towards the school's decision to punish your son due to acts of plagiarism. It has been brought to our attention recently that your son used AI to complete his English writing assignment. The school appreciates your dedication to your son's learning performance, and is more than willing to address any concerns you may have towards the decision.

In Hong Kong College, we strive to ensure that all of our students can achieve "all-round excellence" being dominant in both physical and academic aspects while maintaining good moral values. Plagiarism does not align with our values as it undermines students' ability to think and process information individually while not maintaining academic integrity. According to school rules, usage of AI is considered as plagiarism, and a demerit will be issued to those who violate the rule. While we acknowledge your dissatisfaction towards the severity of the punishment, we insist that the implementation is necessary to discourage your son and other students from violating the rules again. We assure you that the decision is totally fair, and will be ultimately beneficial to your son and the entire school, which has a strong emphasis on discipline.

We acknowledge and agree with the notion that technology and AI will play a significant role in our society in the future, which is exactly the reason why we have been integrating AI tasks in different lessons over the past term. At the same time, we would also like to educate our students on ethics related to AI. The importance of personal development and academic integrity have been repeatedly emphasised by teachers, and we deeply regret that the actions of your son have defied the core values behind using AI. Therefore, his actions have been deemed as plagiarism, and we have no choice but to follow the school policy and give consequences accordingly. It would be greatly appreciated if you could further educate your son on moral values related to plagiarism and encourage him to use AI in a correct and positive manner.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unique perspectives towards the incident. We are certain that the punishment would bring a positive impact on your son's behaviour and can provide a valuable lesson for young individuals in our school as they work and achieve their goals. As clear communication is vital to fostering a positive school-parent relationship, please do let us know if you require any further clarification.

Best regards,
Chris Wong
Principal

Student's written work is anonymised, adapted and typed for whole-class evaluation all the while protecting privacy and avoiding stigmatisation.

Part 3: Development of assessment literacy — Acting as markers

Now that you have analysed the samples, can you try to comment on the writing samples as a marker?

Tips from your teacher regarding the role as a marker:

Flexible arrangement of individual / group tasks with designated reading focuses that cater for learners across language competencies. (e.g. each group focusing on one question or more)

Students are empowered to be self-regulated learners through the development of assessment literacy as they gain the confidence and skills to be markers of other people's work in order to apply their understanding of the marking rubrics.

	C	L	O	Total	Comments
Q2S1					
Q2S2					
Q3S1					
Q3S2					

Students are encouraged to become active learners through the reflection on their skill application for purposeful learning beyond the mere drilling for the public exams.

What do you feel about being a marker? Write in no more than 50 words. (It is an important step of reflection so that you may get better acquainted to the HKEAA's mentality in order that you may better meet the exam expectations.)

Ask a classmate to give you peer response to your feeling. (It is a rare opportunity for you to practise putting usually verbal responses into written words to demonstrate turn-taking in Paper 4.)

Students are provided ample opportunities to co-construct a supportive peer-learning environment for continued development of skills outside the classroom.

Part 4: Writing refinement / extended activity

(To be done after the CNY holidays. Stay tuned!)

In view of the focus on contextual requirements instead of individual language errors in learning-oriented assessment, a modified version of writing correction is adopted in the form of writing refinement that goes beyond word-level and sentence-level review for more effective application of renewed understanding after students' consolidation in the post-writing activities.