

Writing letters  
formal x informal language

# Complete the missing information and find the mistakes in the text.

?Whose address?

?Date?

Lingua Services Galactic Ltd  
69 Milk Street  
LONDON SW7 6AW

?Salutation?(I know the name/I do not know the name)

Translation Brochure

Send us your brochure and price list about your translation services.

We're currently developing our sales literature and web sites and we're interested in translating these into five languages apart from English.

I look forward to hear from you.

?Closing?(I know the name/I do not know the name)

Andrea Philips

Andrea Philips  
Marketing Manager

# Key

Dreamtime Movies Universal Ltd  
54 Oxford Road, Skagnes SK3 4RG  
Tel: 0223 123 4567 Fax: 0223 765 4321  
Email: [info@dreamtimemovies.com.uk](mailto:info@dreamtimemovies.com.uk)

11 November 2003 (UK) / November 11, 2003 (US)

Lingua Services Galactic Ltd  
69 Milk Street  
LONDON SW7 6AW

Dear Sirs (Dear Mr Brown)

Translation Brochure

I should be grateful if you would send us your brochure and price list about your translation services.

We are currently developing our sales literature and web sites and are interested in translating these into five languages apart from English.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully (UK) / Yours truly (US) (Yours sincerely (UK) / Sincerely (US))

Andrea Philips

# Formal writing

## **Remember:**

- do not use everyday, colloquial language; slang or jargon
- do not use contractions (I'm; it's, we've, etc)
- do not use emotive, subjective language (terrible, rubbish etc)
- use 'modal verbs' such as would, could and should.
- „Please send me“ → more formally „I would be grateful if you could send me“
- Don't overdo it though, and don't make your language too formal or maybe old fashioned.

## Tips for formal letter

- as short as possible but not shorter
- clearly written
- clearly set out
- well structured – paragraphs
- appropriate in tone and style

## Key – examples

- Example 1: settlement
- The first **case** was **settled for** £2,000, the second piece of **litigation** **was disposed** out of court for £2,500, while the price of the agreement **reached** in the third **suit** was £5,500.
- Solution: Sentence is too long and contains inconsistent vocabulary to describe the same thing.
- Redrafted version: The first case was settled for £2,000, the second for £2,500, and the third for £5,500.

## Key – examples

- Example 2: offer of a settlement
- My client is willing to settle this case for £7,500, to be paid to your client, and your client must immediately return the blueprints and specifications and must remove all his equipment from the property. Moreover, my client insists upon having replacement of the entire section of fence which your client took down, the replacement to be at your client's expense.
- Solution: Not set out in a clear way
- Redrafted version: My client is prepared to settle this case for £7,500, provided that your client:
  - (1) returns the blueprints and specifications,
  - (2) removes all his equipment from the property,
  - (3) and replaces at his own expense the entire section of fence he took down.

## Key - examples

- Example 3: personal injury
- Mr Brown hit the windscreen of the car with his head, but as it was composed of celluloid he was unhurt.
- Solution: Unclear whether it is Mr Brown's head or the windscreen that is composed of celluloid.
- Redrafted version: Mr Brown hit the windscreen of the car with his head, but as the windscreen was composed of celluloid he was unhurt.



## Key - examples

- Example 4: contract
- John drafted the contract for the client during the meeting itself and he then read it through carefully.
- Solution: Not clear who read the contract, whether the client or John.
- Redrafted version: John drafted the contract for the client during the meeting itself and the client then read it through carefully.