



Five steps to better writing

What are your most common problems with written English? Choose from the list or your own ideas.

- spelling
- grammar
- punctuation
- coming up with ideas
- using natural phrases
- organising your ideas
- finding the right words
- other

Many of us have a difficult time knowing where to even begin when asked to draft a letter or email to someone. Here are some simple guidelines that you can follow in order to make drafting correspondence easy and efficient.

The five steps below will help you to write more effectively in English. Which steps do you already follow?

1. Preparing and gathering information

Before you begin writing, think about your audience, what you need to say, and what tone of voice you should use. If you are responding to a letter, telephone call, or other message, you should have that message or letter in front of you.

2. Structuring

Put your ideas into a logical order. Make each point in a separate paragraph. Remove any ideas which don't fit your structure.

Briefly explain the **purpose** of the letter. The first paragraph of any legal correspondence should explain why you are writing to the recipient. For example "I am writing in response to your letter dated..."

3. First draft

Write a first draft. Keep it short. Say what you have to say as clearly and briefly as possible.

4. Checking

Ask questions such as : Is there a better word/phrase that I could use? Have I used enough punctuation? Have I used the correct verb forms/prepositions?

5. Final draft

Finalise your writing. Check it for spelling, grammar and punctuation

Drafting letters/emails

Useful Language

To begin:

Dear Colleague,
Dear Victoria/George,
Dear Sir/Madam,
To Whom It May Concern

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday,
Thank you for your letter/email of 10 May 2017
I am writing to
I am writing in response to/with regard to

To request:

Could you please send me further information
I would be very interested in finding out more about
I would be grateful if you could send me
I would really appreciate if you sent me
Please find attached/I have attached
It would be very much appreciated if you could send me
Please forward a to my office for my review at your earliest convenience.

To offer:

I will be happy to provide any clarifications and guidance if needed.
Please feel free to contact me should you have any/further questions.
Please let me know if you need any help
I will be happy to provide any additional information that may be of use.

To express opinion:

From my point of view,
As I see it,
In my view,

To end:

Please let me knowat your earliest convenience.
Thank you in advance for your time.
I look forward to hearing from you soon.
Kind/ Best regards,
Yours sincerely,
All the best,
Best wishes,

Writing Task:

Background info: only to be explained upon request of the participants

It may happen that parties initiate court proceedings on parental responsibility concerning the same child and the same cause of action in different Member States. This may result in parallel actions and consequently the possibility of irreconcilable judgments on the same issue.

Article 19(2) regulates the situation where proceedings relating to parental responsibility are brought in different Member States concerning:

- the same child and
- the same cause of action

In that situation, Article 19(2) stipulates that the court first seised is, in principle, competent. The court second seised has to stay its proceedings and wait for the other court to decide whether it has jurisdiction. If the first court considers itself competent, the other court must decline jurisdiction. The second court may only continue its proceedings if the first court comes to the conclusion that it does not have jurisdiction or if the first court decides to transfer the case pursuant to Article 15.

Write a short e-mail to your foreign colleague based on the information given on your card.

Judge A: You're dealing with a case (children K and G) where the father initiated proceedings on 10 September 2016 before the Court in Member State A, seeking custody rights over his two children, both born and raised in Member State A. At a court hearing, the father's legal counsel refers to a procedure started in Member State B, where the mother has returned with the children (the mother is originally from that state). You do not have any information about the proceedings pending before the Court in Member State B, so you decide to find it out by writing a short e-mail to your colleague (Judge B) who is working at the competent court in Member state B.

Judge B: You've just received an e-mail from Judge A from Member State A, requesting some information about a case related to parental rights over the children K and G, whose mother started proceedings in your state on 13 December 2016. You did not know that the father is seeking for custody rights in Member State A. Explain the situation and inform your colleague about the steps you're going to take.