

WALT plan an informal letter - Hot Task

Your hot task over the next few days is to write an informal letter, imagining that you are a soldier on the front line and you are writing a letter home to your parents.

Let's remind ourselves of the structure...

1. Sender's address
2. Recipient's address
3. Salutation (greeting)
4. Introductory paragraph asking about how they are
5. Information about what you have been doing
6. Concluding paragraph (miss you etc)

Let's remind ourselves of the writing features...

- first person
- vocabulary that is chatty / informal
- address the reader directly
- extra information within a sentence (embedded clause)
- fronted adverbials to help structure and sequence our letter

You might also like to include...

- Rhetorical questions directly addressing the reader – e.g. *wie gehst du?...how are things back in Blighty?*
- Purposeful misuse of standard English – e.g. *we was playing...it were like we were old friends...ain't*
- Using apostrophes for colloquial contractions – e.g. *'im...playin'...'ave...* and normal contractions – e.g. *aren't...how's*
- Conversational style and language – *having the time of our lives...blind as a bat...it's been ages since I saw you*
- Slang – e.g. *tommies, archies, dekkor, Boche, Blighty, Heimat*
- Use of personal pronouns throughout – *I, you, we*
- Question tags – *would go to No Man's Land... crazy, right?!... You know how much I like my sleep, don't you?!*
- Use of exclamation marks – *tommies and all! Repulsive latrines!*
I walloped from miles away!
- Use of parenthesis for personal commentary – *(like my hopes) (I saved it for later) (that means you're a beauty)*

What might you write about in your letter home?

Dear Bert,

Just a few lines to let you know I am alright, hoping you are the same... At the present time we are in dugouts. The weather is simply awful, raining day after day and especially night after night... To tell you the truth, while writing this letter I am wet through to the skin and not a dry thing for a change. We have got our winter fur coats and gum boots, but the latter cause more curses than you can imagine, for instance last night I was sent off to select dugouts for our platoon, which is number 37. It was pitch dark, no light allowed and in a strange place, well honestly I fell over at least 20 times got smothered in mud from head to feet and on the top of that wet though for it rained in torrents. On a round of inspection this morning to see if all were 'comfortable' I was 'blinded' up hill and down dale, 'Sergeant this' and 'Sergeant that'.

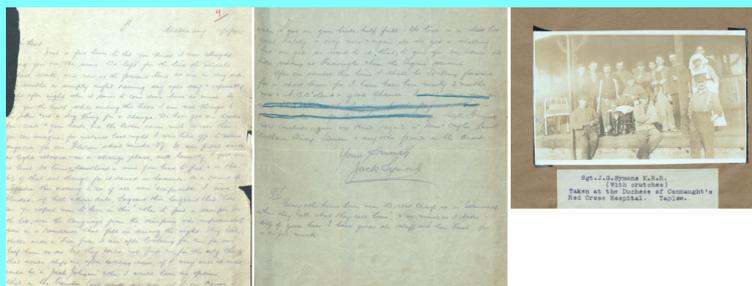
How can you expect men to live in this, and then to put a dampener on the lot, was the language from the occupiers who unfortunately were in a residence that fell in during the night. They took shelter under a tree from 2am after looking for me for half an hour or so, but they could not find me, for the only thing that would shift me, after settling down, if I may call it that, would be a 'Jack Johnson' and then I would have no option.

While in the trenches last week John and I were up to our knees in water and got our gum boots half full. The line is a bit quiet lately and only now and again do we get a shelling, but one gets used to it. That, to give you an idea, is like sitting at Paddington and hearing the engines screech.

After our stretch this time I shall be looking forward for a short leave for I have been here nearly three months now and we stand a good chance. Well I must now conclude... Yours sincerely

Jack Symons

P.S. Every other home down near the rest camp is an Estaminet (small French café) where they sell what they call 'beer', and as much as I like a drop of good beer I have given the stuff out here 'best' for is awful muc.



Dear Gerald

Many thanks for letter which was somewhat a surprise to me. No the news was quite fresh as I do not hear from anybody in the office.

We have just come from the trenches where we were for seven days and had a most awful time. We were three days in the Reserve and put in the firing line where we took part in an attack and were also under a very heavy bombardment.

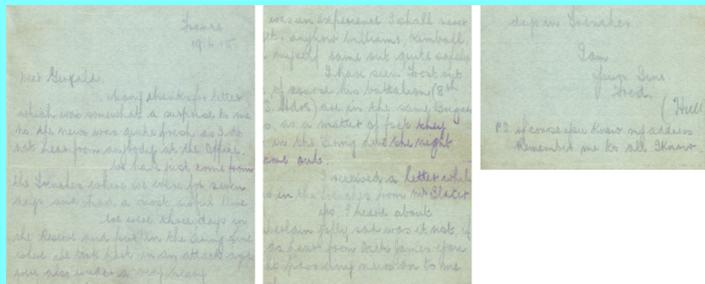
I am sorry to say we had many casualties thirty five killed and one hundred and thirty eight wounded and I can assure you it was an experience I shall never forget. Anyhow Williams, Kemball and myself came out quite safely.

I have seen Frost out here, of course his battalion (8th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders) are in the same brigade also, as a matter of fact, they were in the firing line the night we came out. I received a letter while I was in the trenches from Mr Slater. Yes, I heard about Chamberlain, jolly sad was it not, if you do hear from Dick James you might pass any news on to me...

Shall be glad to hear from you. I could write more, only am a wee bit tired after seven days in trenches.

I am yours sincerely, Fred Hull.

P.S. Of course you know my address. Remember me to all I know.



WALT plan an informal letter - Hot Task

Your hot task over the next few days is to write an informal letter, imagining that you are a soldier on the front line and you are writing a letter home to your parents.

Today, use the blank plan to plan out your informal letter.