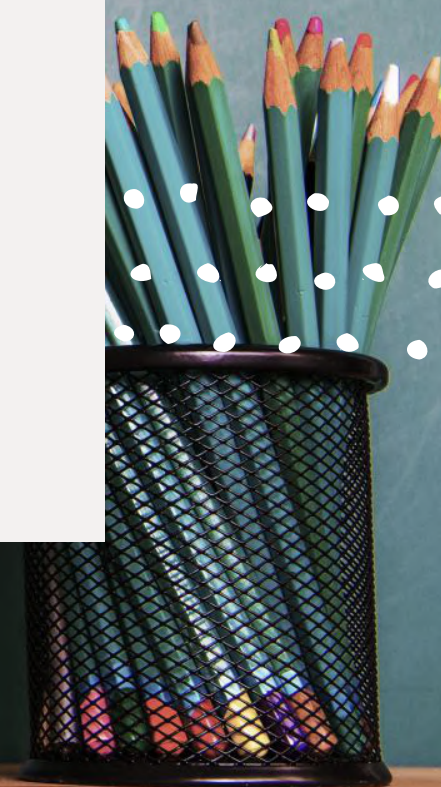


Open Letter

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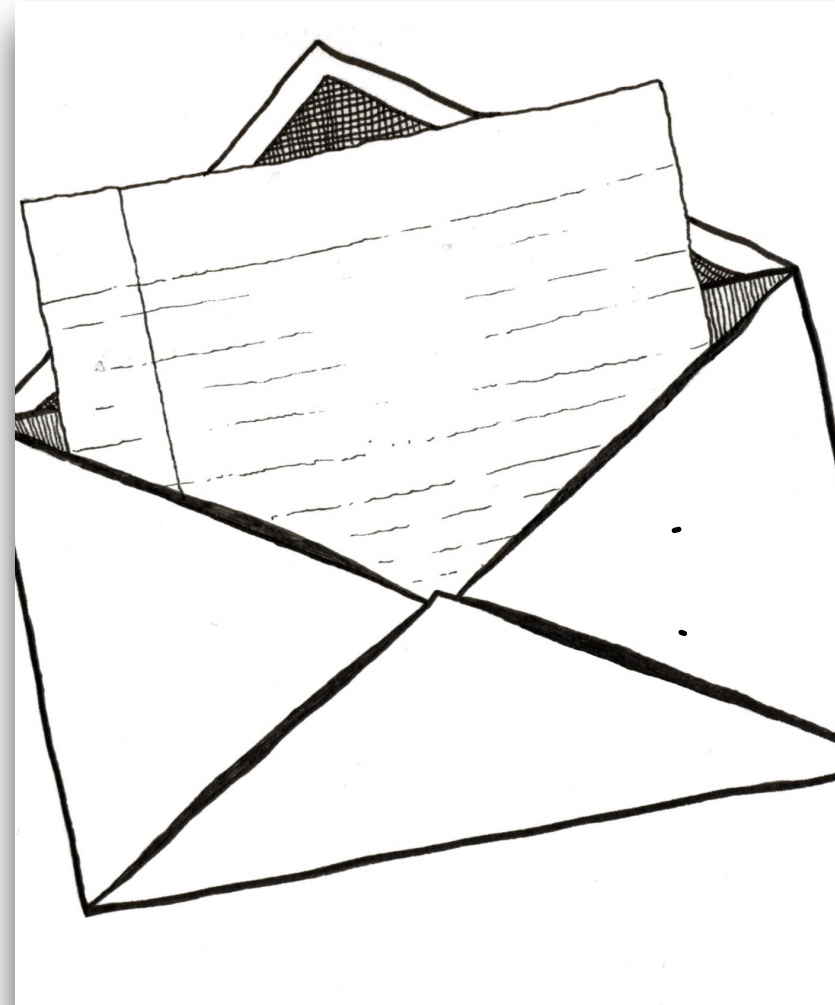


Why write an open letter?

To reach a wide audience

To defend oneself, express a strong view or make an appeal

Open letters are often aimed at an individual or group but are intended to be shared with the public



Format of an Open Letter

The name of the author and the date usually appear at the top of the letter. However, there is no hard and fast rule and if you prefer to sign off at the end, you may do so.

There is no need for the sender/recipient's address

If you wish to address your open letter to an individual or a group, do so. You can do this by giving your open letter a title: 'An open letter to all those who offer unwanted advice'

Provide a brief introduction outlining the reason or reasons you felt you had to write the letter

Your points should be logically organised

Be coherent and precise throughout

Your conclusion should be related to the point you made at the outset and should, ideally, include some sort of call to action

An illustration on a dark red background shows a grey stick figure falling backwards into a dark oval hole. The word 'Pitfalls' is written in a white, cursive font across the figure's back. Three grey exclamation marks are floating in the air above the figure.

Pitfalls

Attacking the reader or the subject of the letter in an inappropriately aggressive manner: you can of course criticise, but your tone should be reasonable and rational

Providing unnecessary information or going off topic

Structuring your letter poorly

Failing to make it clear what you hope to achieve by writing this letter

Sample Open Letter

- The next slide contains the text of an open letter written by Siegfried Sassoon in July 1917
- It was distributed widely, read in the House of Commons and printed in the London Times



Lt. Siegfried Sassoon

3rd Batt: Royal Welsh Fusiliers

I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those with the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them and that had this been done the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised upon them; also I believe it may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share and which they have not enough imagination to realise.

C. Lt. Siegfried Sassoon.

3rd Batt: Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

July, 1917.

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The Question – 2022

Some students believe that the study of poetry should be an optional rather than a compulsory element of the Leaving Certificate English course. Write an open letter, to be published on a popular social media platform, to encourage discussion on this topic. In your open letter you should: explain what, if any, value you found in the study of poetry as part of your Leaving Certificate English course, explore the reasons why you think the study of poetry should be an optional or a compulsory element of Leaving Certificate English in the future and seek to anticipate and refute views that might potentially be offered in opposition to your chosen stance. *50 marks*



Four Questions You Should Ask Yourself

- What is the task? - In this case, it is quite clear: an open letter
- What should the content be? - This will be determined by the question
- Who is my audience? - The public
- What sort of language should I use? - Formal, language of argument and/or persuasion

Your letter

Audience: will determine the content and tone of the letter.

Message: be clear, and state your purpose in the introduction

Supporting evidence: facts, statistics, current events (anecdotes unlikely here)

Language: formal, calm, reasonable – no ad hominem attacks

Call to action: what do you want the reader/s to do next?

Possible Points – Optional Study



Forcing students can lead to their disliking poetry



Poetry can be too challenging for some students



Is it valuable in terms of future studies/career?



Poetry is deeply personal: some poems may not be relevant to students



Poems chosen may not represent modern life, students' cultural heritage etc.

Possible Points - Compulsory



Different perspectives



Like music/songs, poetry provides an outlet for emotion



Lack of rules in poetry writing might suit expressive students who struggle with conventional writing



Symbolic, figurative language can allow students to express complex emotions and thus improve social and emotional resilience



Can help teach grammar and punctuation by examining how poets follow, bend or break the rules

Quotes About Poetry

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know".
John Keats - 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

There is no money in poetry, but then there is no poetry in money, either. - Robert Graves

Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood. T.S. Eliot

Poetry is life distilled. - Gwendolyn Brooks

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat. - Robert Frost
