

The two questions below are very similar but their **forms** differ (one is a letter and one is a leaflet). Whilst different forms of writing can have different features, the ideas covered and the language techniques used are often very similar. Work your way through the tasks in this resource and then choose one of the questions to answer.

1. 'The environment is precious. There are many habitats and animals we must take steps to protect. We have a responsibility to future generations on Earth.'

Write a formal letter to the editor of a broadsheet newspaper in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
[40 marks]

2. 'The environment is precious. There are many habitats and animals we must take steps to protect. We have a responsibility to future generations on Earth.'

Write the text for an informative leaflet in which you persuade readers to agree with this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
[40 marks]

For these two questions, you could include any of these **ideas**:

- we suffer as a result of previous generations not doing enough to protect the environment, and we therefore have a responsibility to make a change
- the environment is composed of a number of areas which we should consider: endangered animals and habitats, our use of fossil fuels and renewable energy, industry, recycling, littering, reduction in use of plastics, corporate v individual responsibility ...
- we live in a relatively affluent age and live in comparative wealth: we should use this to the advantage of the whole planet, both those living on it now and in the future
- we are making some progress, but need to work together to have the biggest impact possible
- we should act now, and make plans for the future, in order to protect the environment
- we cannot do everything, so we should prioritise our actions.

The letter and leaflet explaining the writer's point of view could include some or all of the following **techniques**:

- persuasive language (such as rhetorical questions and triples/rule of three)
- anecdotes or examples
- formal (letter) or a mixture of informal and formal tone or register (leaflet)
- imagery (metaphors, similes, personification)
- a range of sentence structures.

Task one

Read the following sentences. Can you work out which were written for a letter and which were written for a leaflet? What are the differences? What clues did you use?

<p>The environment, we understand, is the responsibility of all.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged by many that the environment is the responsibility of all of us, but you may not see your role clearly and therefore feel at a loss to contribute.</p>
<p>'What difference can I make?' you might ask. Everything. If we all work together, many drops of rain make an ocean.</p>	<p>I am sure that we can agree that one of the main benefits of caring for the environment is the sense of community shared by those working together to save the planet.</p>
<p>We must take action and it must be decisive action.</p>	<p>Decisive action is what we need, but you might not know what this means for you. Let us help ...</p>
<p>Not only do the big things matter (volunteering for an environmental project, or making regular donations to charities which will help the environment) but also what you might think are the small things (recycling cans or donating old clothes to charity).</p>	<p>It is simply not enough to recycle the odd can or donate old clothes to charity when we bother to remember.</p>

Task two

Read the table below, which is one way of organising the eight extracts into examples from a letter and a leaflet. Look at how the same technique can be used to explore the same idea in both a letter and a leaflet. Highlight the features in the example columns which show the use of the technique named. One example has been done for you. Once you have done this, identify how the examples differ and use the hints to help you explain why.

Technique	Idea	Letter example	Leaflet example	How are they different?
Use of [1 st person] pronouns	Working together to help the environment is a positive thing.	I am sure that we can agree that one of the main benefits of caring for the environment is the sense of community shared by those working together to save the planet.	‘What difference can I make?’ you might ask. Everything. If we all work together, many drops of rain make an ocean.	The letter example is written from the first person singular viewpoint, implying a single writer. Whereas the leaflet example is more personalised to the individual reader. It uses the second person pronoun ‘you’ and also a minor sentence ‘Everything’.
Multi-clausal sentence	We are all responsible for caring for the environment	The environment, we understand, is the responsibility of all.	It is acknowledged by many that the environment is the responsibility of all of us, but you may not see your role clearly and therefore feel at a loss to contribute.	<i>Hint: Look at the embedded clause in the first example (to whom does it refer and why?) and the use of the co-ordinating conjunction and subsequent clauses in the second.</i>

<p>Use of active voice</p>	<p>We need to do something now.</p>	<p>We must take action and it must be decisive action.</p>	<p>Decisive action is what we need, but you might not know what this means for you. Let us help ...</p>	<p><i>Hint: Comment on active voice and 'call to arms' tone in first, and different register in second.</i></p>
<p>Adjectives and adjectival phrases</p>	<p>Opinions on what actions the readers should take.</p>	<p>It is simply not enough to recycle the odd can or donate old clothes to charity when we bother to remember.</p>	<p>Not only do the big things matter (volunteering for an environmental project, or making regular donations to charities which will the environment) but also what you might think are the small things (recycling cans or donating old clothes to charity).</p>	<p><i>Hint: Comment on adjectives and tone created in first, and additional adjectives and view created in the second (linked to genre and purpose)</i></p>

Task three

For the same writing tasks, complete the table with examples of the following techniques. Then explain why this technique **would not** work for the **other** form of writing.

Technique	Example	Why wouldn't this work in the other form?
Letter a formal mode of address, the use of address and a date		
Letter an appropriate mode of signing off		
Leaflet a clear/apt/original title		
Leaflet organisational devices such as inventive subheadings or boxes, and bullet points		

Now explain to your partner why each of your examples wouldn't really work in the other form of writing.

Task four

In summary, what have you learned from these activities about:

- the language techniques you could use in a letter and the text for a leaflet
- the ideas you could cover in a letter and the text for a leaflet
- the differences between writing a letter and the text for a leaflet?

Now choose your favourite form: a letter or the text for a leaflet. Using the ideas above, write out a full answer to the question.

To make your writing as successful as possible, write for a specific audience (e.g. letter to an editor of a specific publication, such as the *Guardian*, or the text for a leaflet given to people your own age) and tailor the language, style and structure to suit your reader.

Suggested answers

Task two

The intended outcome is that students come up with lots of possible interpretations, since there are so many crossovers between the techniques used and the ideas covered. There's no 'right' answer.

Task three

Technique	Example	Why wouldn't this work in the other form?
Letter a formal mode of address, the use of address and a date	Dear Mr Smith	It is overly formal in its address and would not be suitable for an informative leaflet addressed at a more general reader.
Letter an appropriate mode of signing off	Yours sincerely	It is inappropriate in an informal leaflet which is aimed at supporting the reader in improving the environment, rather than expressing a strong point of view.
Leaflet a clear/apt/original title	What can I do for the environment? Everything!	This may not work in a formal letter. The exclamation may be considered too emotive for a formal letter.
Leaflet organisational devices such as inventive subheadings or boxes, and bullet points	Subheadings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean for me? • Can I get involved? • Isn't it someone else's problem? 	This wouldn't work in a formal letter. The subheadings, boxes and bullet points are not accepted as formal features of the genre and the graphology of a letter does not include these.