

St Andrew's Secondary School
Situational Writing
Sec 3E

Introduction to Situational Writing

Situational Writing in Paper 1, Section 2 carries 30 marks. It assesses students' ability to read and analyse given information and to expand the information intelligently to satisfy the task requirement. Situational writing is **not** letter writing. It can be a report, a letter, a brochure, an article etc. Even a report can be an incident report, a school report on a project etc.

1. **Text Type**
In situational writing, you must know the text type required. Is it a report, a letter, an article in a magazine etc.?
2. **Audience**
Who are you supposed to write to? If it is a speech, who are your listeners? This is very important because it will decide on your choice of words, formality etc.
3. **Purpose**
What is the purpose of the writing? Is it to persuade, inform, raise an awareness?
4. **Tone**
Just as with speaking, the tone in writing is affected by the writer's attitudes toward the reader and subject. Tone is VERY important.
For example: If it is a letter to someone close to you, you need to be warm and friendly. But if it is a letter to an official organisation you need to be distant and serious. Usually the question will advise you on the appropriate tone. If the question does not do so, think very carefully what the appropriate tone should be before writing.
5. **Task Fulfillment**
What does the question expect you to write? What details or elaborations do you need to add? Are there any **words in bold** in the question? If there are, you need to remember to give attention to them in your writing.
6. **Format**
You must observe the format carefully. Format is marked under task fulfillment section. If your format is wrong, you might go one band down in Task Fulfillment.
7. **Allocation of Marks**
Task Fulfillment: 10 marks
Language: 20 marks
8. **Writing Time**
Spend about 45 min on this section. Try not to spend more than 45 min. It might be a good idea to start with Situational Writing because many students tend to spend too much time in Section One (Free Writing), leaving themselves too little time for Situational Writing. However, if you begin with Situational Writing, do not spend more time than you should. If not, you will find yourself struggling to complete the Free Writing piece.
9. **Length of Writing**
DO NOT write way beyond 350 words for Situational Writing. In this section, the text types you write are very specific. If you write too long, you would lose the effectiveness of the piece of writing. E.g. if a leaflet is too long (has excessive

information) or if a speech is too long, no one is going to read your leaflet or listen to you respectively.

LETTER WRITING

Basically, there are two types of letters: formal & informal.

Areas of Focus	Formal Letter	Informal Letter
Purpose	To give feedback (commendations, complaints). To persuade (proposals, suggestions). To raise awareness (about an area of interest/concern or a problem etc.). To argue for a particular position (about a particular issue or problem). To thank or to ask for a favour.	To update (about recent happenings or a specific incident). To inform (about a decision/choice). To request (for a favour/help). To find out more (about a particular area of interest/concern).
Audience	Someone distant of a higher rank, status or authority.	Someone who is close to you.
Tone	Formal; restrained, polite and diplomatic	Casual and relaxed, depending on writer's relationship with recipient.
Language Use	▪ Tense depends on the content of the letter. If the letter refers to past events (e.g. an incident that upset you), it should be written in past tense. If the letter is to suggest/propose something which can be done, use present/future tense. ▪ Use of adverbs and adjectives to make details more vivid. ▪ Use of connectors to show sequence, reason, contrast or consequences. ▪ No dialogues. ▪ No contractions (e.g. can't) ▪ No short forms or abbreviations e.g. CCA. ▪ Use of modals to show formality and politeness e.g. Perhaps, you <i>would</i> like to.../ it <i>would</i> be good if you could.../Perhaps you <i>could</i> consider...	▪ Tense depends on the content of the letter. If the letter shares about your past experiences, it should be written in past tense. If the letter provides reasons for a particular decision/choice, use present/future tense. ▪ Use of adverbs and adjectives to make details more vivid. ▪ Use of connectors to show sequence, reason, contrast or consequences. ▪ No dialogues. ▪ Contractions allowed e.g. I won't. ▪ Use of conversational markers allowed e.g. By the way.../Before I forget. ▪ No dialogues ▪ No short forms or abbreviations e.g. CCA because examiners may not know what these are. ▪ NO Singlish allowed. No slang e.g. Hey dude!

Format	Refer to sample	Refer to sample

FORMAL LETTER

[Your Name, Title, Address]

Jeffrey Yeo Soon Lai
Director
Youth in Action
28 Sunshine Road
Singapore 395028

Add title of writer if you are representing an organisation. If not Name and Address would do.

[Date]

20 July 2007

Date is mandatory.

[Recipient's Name, Title & Address]

Name of Recipient
Publicity/Public Relations Manager/Officer
Mega Computer Pte Ltd
52 Hill Street
Singapore 127852

Add name of recipient if your know

[Salutation]

Dear Mr Muhd Imran

Write *name of recipient* if you know. If not: **Dear Sir/Madam**

Subject Line

Introduction paragraph to highlight purpose of letter.

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Each paragraph to address one point. Elaborate!

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Each paragraph to address one point. Elaborate!

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Concluding paragraph to thank recipient/seek action etc.

Content of the letter. You may want to indent the start of each paragraph, if not, LEAVE **TWO LINES** between paragraphs

Thank you. *[it is only polite to add this even if it is a complaint letter]*

Yours sincerely



Use the valediction/complimentary "**Yours sincerely**" if you know the name of the recipient.
If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use "Yours faithfully"

[Your signature]

Jeffrey Lim Soon Lai

[Full name of writer]

INFORMAL LETTER

[Your Address]

28 Sunshine Road
Singapore 395028

[Date]

20 July 2007

← Date is mandatory.

[Salutation]

Dearest Penny

← Usually affectionate salutation
e.g. Dearest

Introduction paragraph to enquire how the person is doing etc.

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Each paragraph to address one point. Elaborate!

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Each paragraph to address one point. Elaborate!

LEAVE **TWO LINES** SPACING BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

Concluding paragraph to tell the recipient how much you look forward to hearing/seeing him/her soon etc..

Content of the letter.
You may want to indent the start of each paragraph, if not, LEAVE **TWO LINES** between paragraphs

Thank you. ← [it is only polite to add this even if it is a complaint letter]

Yours truly
Jeff

← Be friendly or affectionate e.g. Yours lovingly, Your loving son etc..
DO NOT use "Yours faithfully"

←
[Your name]

Jeffrey Yeo Soon Lai
28 Sunshine Road
#12-222
Singapore 395028

16 July 2007

Service Manager
Mark's Pizza
90 West Walk Avenue

Dear Sir/Madam

Complaint about Poor Service of Restaurant Staff

On 15 July, I visited your restaurant for lunch with two of my friends. Your restaurant was highly recommended by a colleague for the scrumptious pizzas and fine service. However, on the afternoon of my visit, the poor of service one of your waiters, Mr. Larry Liew, left my friends and me feeling upset and dissatisfied. [reason for writing in]

During my visit, your waiter, Mr. Liew, attended to us grudgingly with a sullen look. He gave us the menu and walked away without saying a word. Less than 5 minutes later, he appeared again to ask for our orders impatiently. We replied that we were not yet ready to order. He stomped off, leaving us shocked by his behaviour. [poor service when entering the place]

When we were finally ready to have our orders taken, he sauntered arrogantly to our table and rudely asked what we wanted. I placed my order for a large Hawaiian pizza and a medium Mediterranean pizza. However, he did not appear to be listening and again walked off without repeating our orders. [poor service when ordering]

When our pizzas were served some half an hour later, to our dismay, they were not what we had ordered. Immediately, I highlighted the matter to Mr. Liew. However, instead of apologising for the wrong pizzas served, he raised his voice and insisted that the pizzas were exactly what we had ordered. We tried to explain to him that he had made a mistake in our order. What he did next totally dumbfounded us. He hurled expletives at us for being difficult and told us to leave if we were not happy. When one of my female friends commented that the service in the restaurant was shocking, he even challenged her to a fight. Luckily, another of your staff quickly came to our table to restrain him. Stunned by his unbecoming behaviour, we left the restaurant immediately. [violence + wrong orders]

Your restaurant, which boasts of fine food and service, is certainly a disappointment. The aggressive behaviour of your staff is certainly deplorable. I promised myself never to visit your restaurant again. The management ought to take the errant waiter to task for ruining the image of the restaurant. Perhaps, your restaurant should be more meticulous in training. [get the person to respond by being nice; gave suggestions to them]

Yours faithfully



Jeffrey Yeo Soon Lai

(368 words)

28 Sunshine Road
Singapore 395028

20 July 2007

Dearest Penny

How have you been? You said in your last letter that you were visiting Cambodia. How was the trip? Did you enjoy it and buy lots of souvenir? [say hello + ask after them]

Do you remember the restaurant Mark's Pizza which you once recommended to me before leaving for Japan? I must tell you about a horrible experience I had when my family visited the restaurant a week ago.

We went to the restaurant to celebrate my little brother's birthday. On our visit, a waiter attended to us grudgingly with a grumpy look. He gave us the menu and walked away without saying a word. In less than 5 minutes later, he appeared again to ask for our orders impatiently. We told him we weren't ready to place our order. Immediately, he stomped off. Of course, we were shocked! How could a waiter behave like that? It was appalling!

When we were finally ready to have our orders taken, he walked to our table and rudely asked what we wanted. I ordered a large Hawaiian pizza and a medium Mediterranean pizza. But, he didn't seem to be listening and walked off without repeating our orders.

When our pizzas arrived much later, to our horror, they were not the pizzas we had ordered! Immediately, I called out to Mr. Liew to tell him he had served us the wrong pizzas. Instead of apologising, he shouted at us and insisted that we had ordered those pizzas. How ridiculous! Of course we knew what we had ordered! We tried to explain to him that he had made a mistake in our order but what he did next totally shocked us. He shouted vulgarities at us and accused us of being difficult and told us to leave if we were not happy. When one of my older sisters commented that the service in the restaurant was bad, he challenged her to a fight. Luckily another waiter quickly came to our table to stop him. Stunned, we left the restaurant immediately.

Mark's Pizza is supposed to serve great pizzas and I remember you once said they had great service too. I wonder what has happened to the restaurant. Maybe the good waiters have all left the restaurant. They do should do something about the poor service. Maybe they should have a training session for the waiters or something. I think I won't visit the restaurant ever again. Hey, it's not your fault that we had such a terrible experience. I guess it was just our luck that day.

Anyway, I had better penned off now. I have loads of homework to finish! It's been very stressful. I don't know why my teachers have to give me so much work! Oh yes, you said that you might be retuning to Singapore for a short holiday. Hope to see you soon!

Your best pal
Jeff

23 Holland Drive
Singapore 562023

26 July 2007

Dearest Sue

How have you been? How's everyone at home? For myself, everything is going on quite well for me. Did Uncle John tell you that we are to take charge of organising Grandma's birthday next month? It will be held at my place.

I was thinking since it will be a very big affair, we should think about how to organise it. I understand that every relative will be invited. Now, we really have to think of a programme that will suit everyone. Perhaps for our younger cousins, we could get McDonalds to come down and plan some games and fun activities for them. For us, the

teenagers, we could play board games and magic cards in my study room. We could then listen to our favourite music and play at the same time. Our aunts and uncles could gather in another room to sing karaoke. I think it will be really quite fun for everyone.

Grandma loves to eat spicy food. Hence, we should cater a buffet spread with curry chicken, black pepper crab and not forgetting Grandma's favourite dish, chilly prawns. Since there are also younger children around, we should, of course, also have food which they can eat. Let's have chicken nuggets and apple pies for them.

Do you know that Grandma loves surprises? Mum told me that just yesterday. Let's give her a real surprise on her birthday. You know what we should do? Our Grandma's favourite son is Uncle Tom who is now in States. Shall we write him a letter to invite him to fly back to Singapore to attend Grandma's birthday celebration? I'm sure Grandma will be very happy to see Uncle Tom and his family on her birthday.

By the way, since Joe and Jerry are such accomplished violinists, we should get them to play Grandma's favourite musical piece, Everlasting Love. Auntie Lynn has many magic tricks up in her sleeves. We should also ask her to put up a magic show for everyone. I am sure Grandma will be really touched and enjoy the performances.

Sue, we should end the entire celebration on a memorable note. I've got a great idea. We should collect Grandma's photos and put them up on a video presentation showing her photos from her childhood days to now. I think that would be really memorable. I would love to see pictures of her younger days.

So, what do you think? These are just some of my suggestions. Do you have any better suggestions? We should meet up as soon as possible to plan the celebration.

Hope to hear from you soon and looking forward to meeting up with you.

Take care.

Your loving cousin
Kim