

Linguaskill Business Lesson Plans

Writing Lesson 3

Description

This lesson prepares learners for writing responses to a Writing Part 2 task. Learners are introduced to useful words and expressions for business letters, a common task type for Part 2 writing, and are given structured practice in a sample task. The topic of the lesson is advertising.

Teacher's Notes

Aims of the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to introduce vocabulary and practise talking about advertising to raise awareness of the format and requirements of the Part 2 Writing task to practise using common words and expressions for business letters
Time required	45 - 60 minutes
Level	Suitable for B1 and B2 level
Materials required	Student's Worksheets 1, 2, 3 and 4

Procedure

1. Explain that the lesson will be on the topic of advertising and will focus on language and skills which will help learners prepare for the Part 2 writing task in the Linguaskill Business Writing test.
2. Write 'Advertising' on the board and ask students to suggest different ways of/places for advertising products and services. Create a mind-map of suggestions on the board (i.e. social media, print advertisements, billboards, TV, radio etc).
3. Ask students to work in small groups. Each group should take one of the suggestions from the mind-map and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of advertising in this way. Before they start talking, hand out **Student's Worksheet 1** and tell students they can use the table to direct their discussion and take notes. After 2-3 minutes, re-organise the groups so the new groups have a member from each of the original groups. Students share their thoughts from their original discussion.

In feedback from the discussions, identify the key issues that businesses need to consider when choosing how to advertise their products/services, i.e. cost, reaching the right customers, attracting customers' attention. Introduce the idea

of an advertising agency, which can support businesses in making the right decisions about advertising.

4. Hand out **Student's Worksheet 2**, which has a sample Part 2 writing task. Ask students to read through the task and identify how the advertising agency is linked to the task. (**Answer Key:** The advertising agency is who candidates need to write to.)

Discuss with students that when they start planning their writing, they should first identify the 'who' (who is writing and who are they writing to), 'what' (what text type they have to write and what information they need to include) and 'why' (the reason for writing) of the task. Give students a minute or two to look at the task and underline where they can find the relevant information.

Student's Worksheet 2

Answer Key

Your company is considering hiring an agency to help with updating your advertising.

Write a letter to an advertising agency to ask about the services they offer.

Write about:

- what your company does
- why you are contacting this agency
- what action you would like them to take

and any other points which you think are important.

Write at least **180** words.

Check responses. Note that for this task candidates have to write a letter, but the Part 2 writing task could also be a report. Candidates will usually have to write to a manager, staff within the company or external clients.

Ask students to look at the task questions at the bottom of the worksheet and discuss them with a partner. In feedback, check answers and discuss the additional points in the key below.

Answer Key

- a. No, so students need to use a generic opening greeting: Dear Sir/Madam. Note that the candidate can give themselves any role within their company for the purposes of this task.
- b. The three bullet points under the task description. Note that they can cover them in any order.

- c. 'any other points which you think are important'. Discuss that this gives students the opportunity to personalise and develop their response, and also to demonstrate a wider range of language. Encourage them to always include an additional point in their response to Part 2 writing tasks.
 - d. No, it must be a minimum of 180 words.
5. Look again at question a. from the previous task. Elicit a suitable closing greeting for this letter i.e. 'Yours faithfully'. Discuss with students that business letters generally have a standard format and use fixed phrases. Elicit any fixed phrases students know. Hand out **Student's Worksheet 3**, which includes some of this key language. Ask students to work alone to complete the expressions, then check with a partner. (Note that some of the words are at B2 level, but should be accessible to B1 students if presented and practised in fixed expressions like here)

Student's Worksheet 3

Answer Key

- a. enquire
- b. regarding
- c. enquire
- d. response
- e. grateful
- f. appreciate
- g. require
- h. forward
- i. sincerely
- j. regards

In feedback on the answers to this task, note the following key points:

- b. and c. are useful expressions for replying to a letter received, but they would not be suitable for this task on Student's Worksheet 2 (which is a letter asking for information).
- d. and c. - the conditional structure *I would if you could ...* is a useful structure to learn for a range of polite requests.
- f. *need* would also fit this gap.
- g. *I look forward to* can also be followed by a noun.
- h. *Yours sincerely* is the appropriate closing greeting if the letter starts Dear Mr/Mrs X.
- i. *Kind regards* is a less formal way of closing a business letter. It would usually be used when the people know each other.

6. Hand out **Student's Worksheet 4**, which has a sample response to the writing task. Students read the response and evaluate it in terms of content, format and language. Ask them to underline where the bullet points are covered and highlight any issues with formatting or language that they spot. Discuss as a whole class to identify the main points in the key below.

Student Worksheet 4

Answer Key

Dear Advertising Agency

I am writing to ask whether you would be interested in working with our company to update our advertising. My name is Craig Atkins, and I am the marketing manager for a small furniture making company. We need to increase our sales and we think that improving our advertising may be a good way to do this. At the moment, we organise all the advertising ourselves and we only advertise on the radio and in local newspapers. Would you be able to advise us on the best ways to advertise our products? I suggest we arrange an initial meeting when we can tell you more about our company and customers and show you some of our products. Following this meeting, we would like you to write a report about what advertising you recommend, including pricing. We want to act quickly, so we would like your report by the end of next month. **Is that possible?**

Please get in touch with me if you're interested and we'll put a date for the meeting in the diary.

Yours

Craig Atkins

Marketing Director, Woodleigh Furniture

Content

- what your company does - *a small furniture making company*
- why you are contacting this agency - *ask whether you would be interested in working with our company to update our advertising/ Would you be able to advise us on the best ways to advertise our products?* - Note that the second bullet point in the task is addressed before the first one. Remind students that changing the order of the bullet points is fine.
- what action you would like them to take - *an initial meeting when we can tell you more about our company and customers and show you some of our products. Following this meeting, we would like you to write a report about what advertising you recommend, including pricing*
- and any other points which you think are important. - *we would like your report by the end of next month* - the reference to timing is an extension of the third bullet point and is important information to include

Format and Language

- *Dear Advertising Agency* - better to use a name, or, if one is not given, Dear Sir/Madam
- *I am writing to ask* - this is ok, but elicit enquire (B2) as a more formal word suitable for this context

- *Is that possible?* - a little direct and informal for the context. Elicit alternatives, i.e. Do you think this is acceptable?
- *Please get in touch with me if you're interested and we'll put a date for the meeting in the diary.* - as above, a business letter requires more formal language. Elicit alternatives, i.e. I would be grateful if you could contact us to confirm whether you are interested in this proposal and suggest any suitable dates for our meeting. (see **Student's Worksheet 3** for an example of this conditional structure).
- *Yours* - refer students to **Student's Worksheet 3** to identify suitable alternatives i.e. *Yours faithfully* or *Regards*.

Additional points - note the use of full forms, rather than contractions, to fit the neutral-formal register.

7. Ask students to look again at the task on **Student's Worksheet 2**. Give them three minutes to make some notes for each of the bullet points, including 'any other information'. Remind them they can use ideas discussed earlier (what to consider when planning advertising/what makes good advertising). Ask students to compare their notes with a partner. They can extend their notes with ideas from their partner if they like. In feedback, ask students to say what 'other important points' they included and write a list of these ideas on the board.

Check that students realise that the brainstorming, underlining and note writing they have worked on so far in this lesson are all ways of planning for writing. Discuss the advantages of planning (helps to organise the text and connect ideas) and how long they should allow for this (less than 5 minutes, bearing in mind they should only spend around 30 minutes in total on this part of the Writing test).

8. Follow up the lesson by asking students to use their notes to write a full answer to the task.

Student's Worksheet 1

Advertising - strengths and weaknesses

Type of advertising	For the customer		For the business	
	strengths	weaknesses	strengths	weaknesses

Student's Worksheet 2

Part 2 Writing Task - sample

Your company is considering hiring an agency to help with updating your advertising.

Write a letter to an advertising agency to ask about the services they offer.

Write about:

- what your company does
- why you are contacting this agency
- what action you would like them to take

and any other points which you think are important.

Write at least **180** words.

Task questions

- a. Do you know the name or role of the person you need to write to?
- b. What information must you include in your answer?
- c. What other information can you include in your answer?
- d. Can you write as many words as you like?

Student's Worksheet 3

Business letters - common expressions

require	regarding	sincerely	forward	appreciate
regards	grateful	enquire	response	

Opening greetings	<p>Dear Sir/Madam Dear Mr Smith Dear Ms/Miss/Mrs Johnson</p>
Starting the letter	<p>a. I am writing to about the services you offer. b. I am writing your recent letter. c. I am writing in to your recent letter.</p>
Requesting information or action	<p>d. I would be if you could contact me to discuss this. e. I would it if you could send me details. f. If you more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>
Ending the letter	<p>g. I look to hearing from you.</p>
Closing greetings	<p>h. Yours i. (Kind) Yours faithfully</p>

Student's Worksheet 4

Part 2 Writing Task - sample answer

Dear Advertising Agency

I am writing to ask whether you would be interested in working with our company to update our advertising. My name is Craig Atkins, and I am the marketing manager for a small furniture making company. We need to increase our sales and we think that improving our advertising may be a good way to do this. At the moment, we organise all the advertising ourselves and we only advertise on the radio and in local newspapers. Would you be able to advise us on the best ways to advertise our products? I suggest we arrange an initial meeting when we can tell you more about our company and customers and show you some of our products. Following this meeting, we would like you to write a report about what advertising you recommend, including pricing. We want to act quickly, so we would like your report by the end of next month.

Please get in touch with me if you're interested and we'll put a date for the meeting in the diary.

Yours

Craig Atkins

Marketing Director, Woodleigh Furniture

[182 words]