

# Year 8 'Fawly Towers' Case Study

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Vicky Gibson, Castle Donington

## 1

# Background

Three week unit on non – fiction writing

This unit of work covers three weeks and is based on a study of an episode from the television series 'Fawly Towers'. This is of particular appeal for Year 8 pupils and they are engaged and involved in the work.

The case study that follows provides a medium term plan for three weeks. This gives the main teaching points as well as the objectives to be covered and the outcomes for each week. The concentration of the teaching notes and the student work is from the third week of the unit.

This unit has plenty of opportunities to develop the use of ICT in the design of posters, brochures and possibly even websites, as well as the word processing and presentational work that can be done in the writing of the letter.

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## 2. The plan

Medium term plan

### Medium-term Plan

<b>Title of Unit: Fawlty Towers</b>	
<b>Year: 8</b>	<b>Duration: 3 weeks</b>
<b>Objectives:</b>	
<b>Word</b> W 10 Prepositions and connectives W 11 Figurative vocabulary W 12 Formality and word choice W 13 Ironic use of words	<b>Sentence</b> S 2 Variety of sentence structure S 7 Cohesion and coherence S 12 Degrees of formality
<b>Reading</b> R3 Notemaking formats R6 Bias and objectivity R10 Development of key ideas	<b>Writing</b> Wr 1 Effective planning Wr 2 Anticipate reader reaction Wr 7 Establish the tone Wr 10 Effective information Wr 13 Present a case persuasively
<b>Speaking and Listening</b> Sp&L 7 Listen for a specific purpose Sp&L 8 Hidden messages Sp&L 10 Hypothesis and speculation	
<b>Teaching sequence including outcomes:</b>	
<b>Week 1</b> Watch the 'Fawlty Towers' video clip – focused listening activity Hotel advertisements and 'Which Hotel?' question sheet Design advert for 'Fawlty Towers'	
<b>Week 2</b> Study examples of hotel brochures, either hard copies or websites leading to designing own hotel brochure	
<b>Week 3</b> Read and study the letter of complaint Pair work to pick out key points in the letter Outcome to write a reply to the letter of complaint	

## 3 Teaching week 3

### Preparing to write the letter

A model letter was written from Mr I.M.A Moaner that can be used with the class in a variety of ways:



**Modelling** – using the OHP the teacher can use a version of the text to show how to layout a formal letter



**Shared reading** – using the OHP, a copy of the letter can be shown and the teacher asks questions to the whole class to delve into the letter and how it has been written, looking at word, sentence and text level.



**Shared writing** – having modelled the opening of the letter, the whole class work on a shared version together to write the next paragraph. This can then be extended into independent writing where pupils continue the letter individually.



**Guided reading** – while the whole class are working on a task related to the reading of the letter, a guided group of approx 6 pupils are working with the teacher to develop their reading strategies. This group will have been identified as having a common need or focus, e.g. struggling readers.

# The Model Letter

73, Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

Mr Basil Fawlty  
The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
22TQ 4PO

15<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Dear Mr Fawlty,

I am writing to complain about the recent holiday that my wife and I had the misfortune to experience at your hotel.

From beginning to end it was a complete disaster. Upon arrival on Friday evening we found your small car park full and had to park our new car on the busy main road, despite the assurance in your brochure that there is an 'ample' car park at the hotel.

After registering, we were shown to our room which, to say the least, was far from satisfactory. The room was small, poorly furnished and instead of the sea view we had been led to expect, we enjoyed a view of your dustbins.

Foolishly believing that things could only improve, we ventured into the dining room where we attempted to eat an undercooked meal served by a waiter who appeared not to speak a word of English. Other diners crowded the dining room, all of whom appeared to be accompanied by dozens of screaming and totally obnoxious children. What happened to the 'superlative traditional cuisine and tranquil surroundings' boasted of in your brochure?

As if this wasn't bad enough, it was just our luck to pick a weekend when there was an undercover operation in your hotel by the local police. As a result of this we spent much of the weekend in the local police station being questioned about a major drug smuggling racket.

Finally, when our innocence was established and we were permitted to return to the hotel, we were presented with a substantial bill for a hotel room we had spent little time in and discovered that our car had been vandalised.

In the circumstances I am sure you will agree that not only do we deserve a refund of the £100 we paid for this weekend but that we should also receive a considerable sum to compensate us for this horrendous experience. I look forward to hearing from you by return of post.

Yours sincerely,  
*I.M.A.Moaner*  
I.M.A.Moaner

# Modelling – the layout of a letter using OHP

Mr Basil Fawlty  
The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
22TQ 4PO

Name, job title  
and address of  
the person  
receiving the  
letter

Address of  
the person  
writing the  
letter

73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

Date

15<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Dear Mr Fawlty,

Use of the  
person's  
name

I am writing to complain about the recent holiday that my wife and I had the misfortune to experience at your hotel.

Introductory paragraph

From beginning to end it was a complete disaster. Upon arrival on Friday evening we found your small car park full and had to park our new car on the busy main road, despite the assurance in your brochure that there is an 'ample' car park at the hotel.

After registering, the room which, to say the least, was far from satisfactory. The room was small, poorly furnished and the view of the sea view we had been led to expect, we enjoyed a view of your dusty

New point in  
each  
paragraph

Foolishly believing that things could only improve, we ventured into the dining room where we attempted to eat an undercooked meal served by a waiter who appeared not to speak a word of English. Other diners crowded the dining room, all of whom appeared to be accompanied by dozens of screaming and totally obnoxious children. What happened to the 'superlative traditional cuisine and tranquil surroundings' boasted of in your brochure?

As if this wasn't bad enough, it was just our luck to pick a weekend when there was an undercover operation in your hotel by the local police. As a result of this we spent much of the weekend in the local police station being questioned about a major drug smuggling racket.

Finally, when our innocence was established and we were permitted to return to the hotel, we were presented with a substantial bill for a hotel room we had spent little time in and discovered that our car had been vandalised.

In the circumstances I am sure you will agree that not only do we deserve a refund of the £100 we paid for this weekend but that we should also receive a considerable sum to compensate us for this horrendous experience. I look forward to hearing from you by return of post.

Yours sincerely,  
*I.M.A. Moaner*  
I.M.A. Moaner

Ending the letter  
appropriately.

There are opportunities here to  
consider the differences between  
handwritten and typed letters and  
their layout

# Modelling the writing of a formal letter on OHP leading to shared writing

Mr Basil Fawltz  
The Proprietor  
Fawltz Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
22TQ 4PO

Edger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

"Right, I have to put in my address in the top right hand corner of my letter."

"Then below that address on the left hand side now, I have to put the address of the person I am writing to. If I know their name I should include that and if I know what their job title is I should include that too."

"Must remember to include the date. That's the thing that is most often left out."

15<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Dear Mr Fawltz,

I am writing to complain about the recent holiday that my wife and I had the misfortune to experience at your hotel.

"I need to introduce my reason for writing, to set the scene and also the tone of my letter."

"Who am I writing to? I have to put in his formal name, not Dear Basil, followed by a comma."

From beginning to end it was a complete disaster. Upon arrival on Friday evening we found your small car park full and had to park our new car on the busy main road, despite the assurance in your brochure that there is an 'ample' car park at the hotel.

"I'm going to use an adverb here for sentence variety."

"Need to improve this vocabulary."

*Foolishly*

*improve*

*ventured*

*^ Believing that things could only get better we went into the dining room where we tried to eat an undercooked meal served by a waiter*

*attempted*

*Other diners crowded the dining room,*

*who appeared not to speak a word of English. The dining room was full*

*all of whom appeared to be accompanied by dozens of screaming and totally obnoxious children of people and their screaming children. What happened to the*

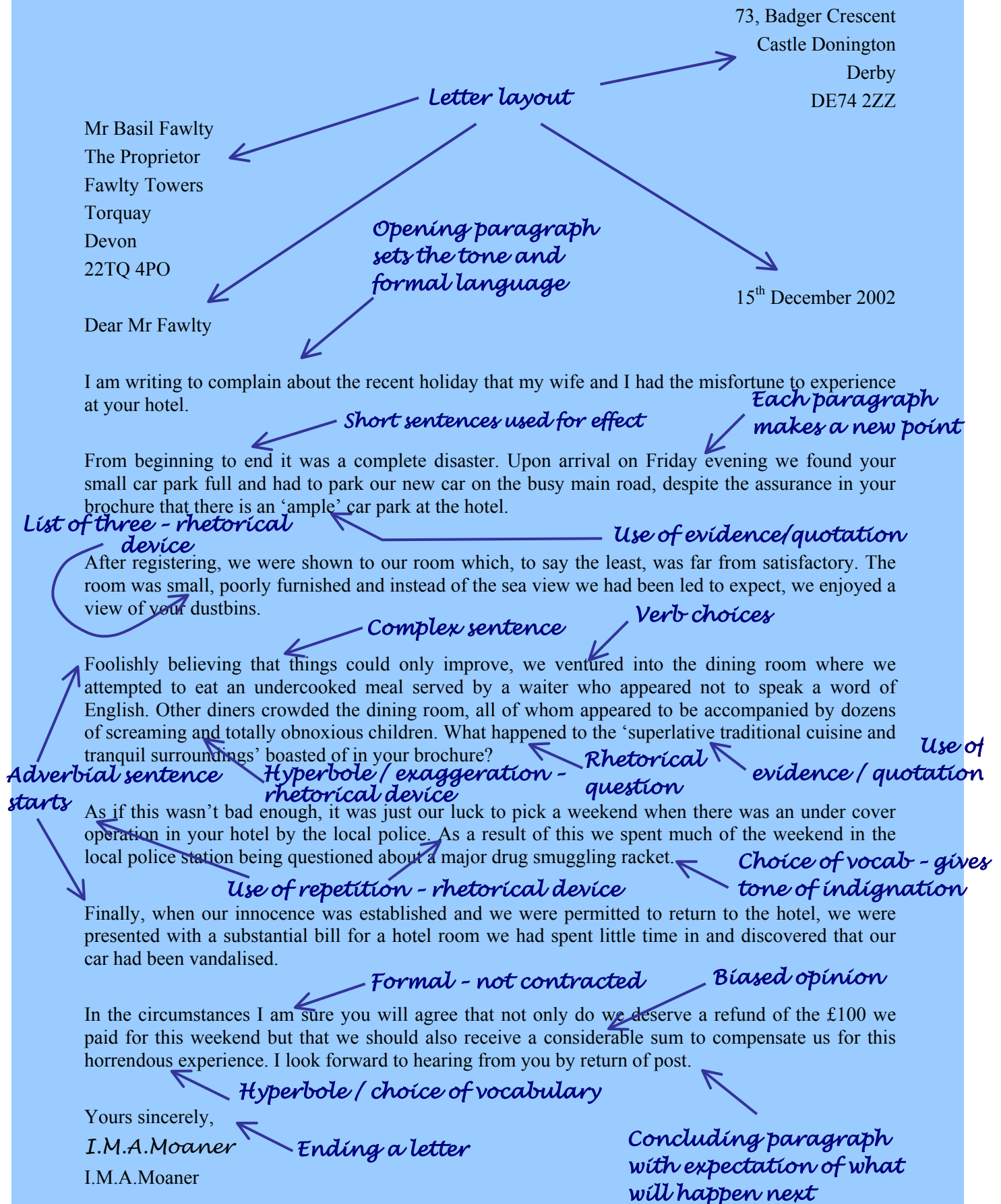
*'superlative traditional cuisine and tranquil surroundings' boasted of*

*in your brochure?*

"I'm going to include a quote from the brochure I wrote last week using exaggerated language, hyperbole. It's a rhetorical question as well!"

"I don't want to start all my sentences with 'the' so I need to work on this sentence."

# Annotating the text during shared reading



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## 4. Paired work

Speaking and Listening as preparation for writing

Mr Moaner's complaints	How Basil could respond
No room to park in the car park	
Room too small	
Room badly furnished	

In pairs, pupils work on listing the complaints and then how Basil might respond to these. This provides speaking and listening opportunities to prepare for the written work. This speaking and listening will support the learning and help the students to internalise their ideas before they commit them to paper. They will have had the chance to imagine themselves into the role of Basil Fawly and try out the tone of their responses.

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*Vicky Gibson, Castle Donington*

## **5.** Students' work

The reply to the letter of complaint

Three pieces of student work are reproduced below. There are two versions of each letter. The first is the marked piece of finished work and the second is an annotated version showing where the learning has taken place.

## Example 1: Marked Piece

The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO

Mr I.M.A. Moaner  
73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

8<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in reply to your letter of complaint about your stay in our hotel.

I am afraid, I can't stop the car park being full, as it happens you came on a very busy weekend. Our car park normally has enough spaces.

All our rooms are regular size and have antique furniture. If you had specifically wanted a sea view and had asked for one we would have been more than happy to oblige. As for the view of the dustbins, ~~they're~~<sup>their</sup> usual spot was under maintenance and that was the only other available space.

Our meals are only undercooked so our customers can receive the most nutrients from them. If you are referring to the meat then we leave the option of how it's cooked to individual tastes. As for your comments about our waiter, he is generally well liked by the rest of our customers and adds a continental feel to the restaurant. I'm sorry that you found our restaurant crowded, but I always feel more comfortable in a crowded restaurant when I go out to eat. Unfortunately I cannot do more about the obnoxious children than continually ask the parents to keep their children under control.

The undercover police investigation in our hotel I could not do anything about, as I obviously hadn't known anything about it until now – as it was undercover. I can't help the fact that the police found your face suspicious enough to take you down to the police station and question you for most of the weekend.

If you had reserved a parking space in our car park before you came then you wouldn't have had to park in the street and your car would not have been vandalised.

As a final note, I cannot give you your £100 back, but I can offer you 10% off<sup>f</sup> the price when you next come to stay to compensate for your 'horrendous experience'.

Yours sincerely,

*B Fawlty*

*A very well written  
letter, Emily*

## Example 1: Annotated Version

**The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO**

**Mr I.M.A. Moaner  
73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ**

*Appropriate letter layout*

*Introductory paragraph*

**8<sup>th</sup> January 2003**

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in reply to your letter of complaint about your stay in our hotel.

*Vocabulary choices*

I am afraid, I can't stop the car park being full, as it happens you came on a very busy weekend. Our car park normally has enough spaces.

*Short sentence for effect*

All our rooms are regular size and have antique furniture. If you had specifically wanted a sea view and had asked for one we would have been more than happy to oblige. As for the view of the dustbins, they're usual spot was under maintenance and that was the only other available space.

*New point made in each paragraph*

Our meals are only undercooked so our customers can receive the most nutrients from them. If you are referring to the meat then we leave the option of how it's cooked to individual tastes. As for your comments about our waiter, he is generally well liked by the rest of our customers and adds a continental feel to the restaurant. I'm sorry that you found our restaurant crowded, but I always feel more comfortable in a crowded restaurant when I go out to eat.

Unfortunately I cannot do more about the obnoxious children than continually ask the parents to keep their children under control.

*Emphasis from personal experience - rhetorical*

The undercover police investigation in our hotel I could not do anything about, as I obviously hadn't known anything about it until now – as it was undercover. I can't help the fact that the police found your face suspicious enough to take you down to the police station and question you for most of the weekend.

If you had reserved a parking space in our car park before you came then you wouldn't have had to park in the street and your car would not have been vandalised.

As a final note, I cannot give you your £100 back, but I can offer you 10% of the price when you next come to stay to compensate for your 'horrendous experience'.

Yours sincerely,

*B Fawlty*

*Not contracting, for formal tone*

*Concluding paragraph*

## Example 2: Marked Piece

Mr Basil Fawly  
The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO

73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

*date*

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in response to your complaint about our hotel, Fawlty Towers.

First of all you complained about no room in our car park. <sup>M</sup>my response <sup>to</sup>for this circumstance would be “of course the car park was full, it was a bank holiday”.

The room was next on the agenda. You complained that the room was too small but when you registered you didn't specifically ask for a big room. The room was not poorly furnished it was a Victorian style room and Victorian furniture. You were able to ~~to~~ see the sea out of your bedroom window but unfortunately for you it was raining and foggy all weekend.

Once again you complained, this time about an undercooked meal. In future if I were you, I'd ask for a meal to be cooked rare, medium or well done and the waiter was a waiter in training. The dining room was so crowded because we are so popular. It is certainly not our fault if the parents were not able to control their children.

I was really amazed when you blamed us for the police undercover operation which was not our fault. How were we supposed to know that the police were coming in and that you look suspicious?

Your car being vandalised is not our problem and you still have to pay the bill. I disagree with you last paragraph about compensation and a full refund.

Yours sincerely,

*Bfawly*

Mr Fawly

*A good letter, but your ending is a little abrupt - try to let your customer down more gently*

## Example 2: Annotated Version

Mr Basil Fawlty  
The Proprietor  
Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO

73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

*Letter layout,  
although no date*

*Introductory  
paragraph*

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in response to your complaint about our hotel, Fawlty Towers.

*Textual  
cohesion  
connectives*

*Short sentences  
for effect*

First of all you complained about no room in our car park..my response for this circumstance would be “of course the car park was full, it was a bank holiday”.

The room was next on the agenda. You complained that the room was too small but when you registered you didn't specifically ask for a big room. The room was not poorly furnished it was a Victorian style room and Victorian furniture. You were able too see the sea out of your bedroom window but unfortunately for you it was raining and foggy all weekend.

*List of three -  
rhetorical device*

Once again you complained, this time about an undercooked meal. In future if I were you, I'd ask for a meal to be cooked rare, medium or well done and the waiter was a waiter in training. The dining room was so crowed because we are so popular. It is certainly not our fault if the parents were not able to control their children.

I was really amazed when you blamed us for the police undercover operation which was not our fault. How were we supposed to know that the police were coming in and that you look suspicious?

*Rhetorical question*

Your car being vandalised is not our problem and you still have to pay the bill. I disagree with you last paragraph about compensation and a full refund.

Yours sincerely,  
Bfawlty  
Mr Fawlty

*Emphasis created  
by the formal  
syntax*

*Area for development  
would be variety in  
starting sentences*

### Example 3: Marked Piece

Fawlty Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO

Mr I.M.A. Moaner  
73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in response to your letter of complaint about your recent stay at Fawlty Towers. It certainly seems that you had an unfortunate experience. However, I feel that we cannot be held liable for most of your complaints.

Your first complaint was about our lack of parking space. I am very sorry about this, but in the weekend you came we had Police cars in the car park, as well as guests, and so there wasn't much space.

Secondly you mentioned the poor quality of the room, claiming that it was small, poorly furnished and had no sea view. At the moment all of our rooms are being refurbished and you were sadly unfortunate enough to get one that hasn't been decorated yet. As for the sea view, as you well know we are not a light house and can therefore not guarantee that every room ~~can see the sea.~~ *has a sea view*

You were also critical of the crowded dining room and the poor quality of food and service. We cannot help the fact that our hotel is popular with families with children and if the food and service bothered you that much, then why didn't you eat elsewhere, there are other restaurants, or tell us and we could have provided you with something else.

Finally you were unfortunate enough to be mistaken for a drug smuggler and arrested by the local police who were carrying out an undercover operation in our hotel. We are genuinely sorry about this, but there isn't really much we can do as the undercover operation was the police's doing and didn't really have much to do with us.

In conclusion, although I agree that your stay with us cannot have been enjoyable, I feel that most of your difficulties were due to circumstances somewhat beyond our control and we cannot be held liable for them. However as a gesture of goodwill, I would like to offer you a 20% reduction on any future holidays you book with us. I hope we will see you again and that you will experience a much more enjoyable stay.

Yours sincerely

*Basil Fawlty*

Basil Fawlty

*Well written, Amanda, with  
an excellent concluding  
paragraph*

### Example 3: Annotated Version

Fawltly Towers  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ22 4PO

Mr I.M.A. Moaner  
73 Badger Crescent  
Castle Donington  
Derby  
DE74 2ZZ

*Appropriate letter layout*

*Opening paragraph sets the tone*

15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Dear Mr Moaner,

I am writing in response to your letter of complaint about your recent stay at Fawltly Towers. It certainly seems that you had an unfortunate experience. However, I feel that we cannot be held liable for most of your complaints.

*Choice of vocabulary*

*Connectives for cohesion*

Your first complaint was about our lack of parking space. I am very sorry about this, but in the weekend you came we had Police cars in the car park, as well as guests, and so there wasn't much space.

*Use of complex sentences*

Secondly you mentioned the poor quality of the room, claiming that it was small, poorly furnished and had no sea view. At the moment all of our rooms are being refurbished and you were sadly unfortunate enough to get one that hasn't been decorated yet. As for the sea view, as you well know we are not a light house and can therefore not guarantee that every room can see the sea.

*Rhetorical device - list of three*

*Still a sense of Basil!*

*Formality from non contracted words*

You were also critical of the crowded dining room and the poor quality of food and service. We cannot help the fact that our hotel is popular with families with children and if the food and service bothered you that much, then why didn't you eat elsewhere, there are other restaurants, or tell us and we could have provided you with something else.

*Rhetorical device - repetition*

Finally you were unfortunate enough to be mistaken for a drug smuggler and arrested by the local police who were carrying out an undercover operation in our hotel. We are genuinely sorry about this, but there isn't really much we can do as the undercover operation was the police's doing and didn't really have much to do with us.

*Formality from non contracted words*

In conclusion, although I agree that your stay with us cannot have been enjoyable, I feel that most of your difficulties were due to circumstances somewhat beyond our control and we cannot be held liable for them. However as a gesture of goodwill, I would like to offer you a 20% reduction on any future holidays you book with us. I hope we will see you again and that you will experience a much more enjoyable stay.

*non contracted words*

Yours sincerely  
Basil Fawltly  
Basil Fawltly

*Use of complex and compound sentences*