

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph and introduction

Strengths:

- Your piece demonstrates a clear understanding of formal email structure with an appropriate greeting and statement of purpose
- You establish your credibility early by presenting the request as sincere and well-intentioned

Lack of Specific Details → Your opening mentions "improved focus among students and much more," but the phrase "and much more" is vague and doesn't tell your principal what other benefits you're referring to. When making a request, it's important to be clear and specific from the beginning so your reader knows exactly what advantages you're proposing. Instead of leaving the reader guessing, you could name the actual benefits you'll discuss later, such as "improved mental health and stronger academic performance."

Exemplar: *I believe that this change would provide essential rest for students and contribute to improved focus, better mental health, and stronger classroom engagement.*

#2 - Research paragraph (third paragraph in formal email)

Strengths:

- You bring in evidence by mentioning that "research on students consistently shows" the importance of rest, which strengthens your argument
- Your writing connects rest to concrete outcomes like academic performance and classroom participation

Insufficient Evidence Integration → Whilst you mention that research shows rest is important, you don't provide any specific details about this research. Your principal might wonder: What research? Who conducted it? What did they actually find? Without these details, your claim feels more like an opinion than a fact. To make your argument more convincing, you could reference specific studies, statistics, or expert opinions that your principal could verify.

Exemplar: *According to a 2023 study by the Australian Council for Educational Research, students who had adequate rest periods showed 15% higher engagement levels and reported significantly lower stress.*

#3 - Conclusion paragraph (formal email)

Strengths:

- You acknowledge potential challenges by stating "I completely understand that adjustments to the school calendar require careful consideration," which shows respect for your principal's position
- Your closing maintains a polite and professional tone throughout

Weak Call to Action → Your conclusion asks the principal to give "thoughtful consideration," but it doesn't specify what you'd like to happen next. Should the principal respond to your email? Will there be a meeting? Would you like a decision by a certain date? Without a clear next step, your principal might read your email and then simply move on to other tasks. A strong conclusion should guide your reader toward a specific action.

Exemplar: *I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you in person, or to hear your thoughts via email within the coming week.*

■ Your piece demonstrates a solid understanding of formal email conventions and audience awareness, particularly in how you adjust your tone between the formal principal version and the casual parent version. However, both versions would benefit from deeper content development. The main issue is that whilst you state your ideas clearly, you don't develop them with enough specific evidence or examples. For instance, when you mention "significant levels of boredom" or reference research, you need to provide concrete details that your reader can visualise or verify. Additionally, your argument would be stronger if you addressed potential objections more thoroughly. What would you say to a principal who worries about falling behind in the curriculum? How would you respond to concerns about disrupting already-planned events? By anticipating these questions and providing thoughtful answers, you'd make your case much more persuasive. Also, consider adding more specific examples from your own school experience—perhaps mention a particular assessment period that was especially demanding, or describe how students behaved after the last holiday break compared to now. These personal observations would make your argument feel more grounded in reality rather than just

theoretical benefits. Finally, both versions could strengthen their conclusions by including a clear, specific request for action rather than just hoping for consideration.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

IF THE PRINCIPAL WAS YOUR PRINCIPAL

Dear Principal, I am writing to you very sincerely to discuss the issue of an extended school holiday. I believe that this change would not only provide ~~a longer~~ [much-needed] relief for students, but ~~can~~ [could also] contribute to improved focus among students ~~and much more~~ [, better mental health, and stronger classroom engagement]. #1

The intention behind this request is not simply to seek more relaxing time, but to ensure that both students and staff have the adequate opportunity to rest and regenerate before returning to another term. As you are aware, the past few months have been filled with rigorous coursework, numerous assessments, and extensive co-curricular commitments. ~~While~~ [Whilst] these experiences are enriching and valuable, they have also contributed to significant levels of ~~boredom~~ [exhaustion] among many students. An additional day or two of rest could play a crucial role in restoring focus, motivation, and overall mental health: factors that directly influence academic performance and classroom engagement.

#2 Research on students consistently shows that rest and recovery are vital to sustaining motivation and productivity. When students return to school feeling refreshed, they are reported to perform better academically, engage more positively with teachers and peers, and contribute more effectively to class discussions and extracurricular activities. From a broader perspective, this small change could help strengthen the learning environment by fostering a culture that values balance as much as achievement.

In addition, extending the holiday slightly could also be seen as a gesture of ~~recognition~~ [acknowledgement] for the dedication and hard work demonstrated by both students and staff this term. Teachers, too, invest immense time and energy into lesson preparation, feedback, and student support. A brief pause could provide everyone in the school community with a well-deserved opportunity to recharge, ultimately benefiting the quality of teaching and learning upon our return.

#3 I completely understand that adjustments to the school calendar require careful consideration, and I assure you that this request comes with genuine respect for the practical constraints involved. Even a single additional day could make a meaningful difference in morale and performance across the school.

Thank you very much for your time and understanding. I appreciate your dedication to maintaining a school culture that values both hard work and holistic wellbeing. I am sure that your thoughtful consideration of this request will continue to inspire students to do their very best when the next term begins.

Warm regards, Wesley Liang

IF THE PRINCIPAL WAS YOUR DAD

Hi Dad, I know you are very busy at school, and I really respect how much effort you put into keeping everything running smoothly. I'm writing this not just as your child, but as a student who's been thinking carefully about how the recent term has gone for everyone. It's been a long, busy stretch, and I wanted to suggest something that might benefit both the students and the staff: a short extension to the upcoming school holiday.

Before you roll your eyes, hear me out! This isn't just about wanting lazy days, although I admit that would be nice. It's more about recovery and productivity. The past term has been particularly intense, filled with heavy homework, rehearsals, sports carnivals, and extracurricular events. Many students (and teachers, too) are feeling drained. A slightly longer break, maybe even just one or two extra days, could make a real difference in how refreshed and ~~motivated~~ [energised] everyone feels when we return.

Studies show that rest isn't merely wasted time; it's an investment in focus and creativity. After long stretches of sustained effort, the brain needs space to reset. I've noticed that when students come back from holidays feeling rested, they're more engaged in class, more enthusiastic about learning, and better at managing stress. Teachers, too, benefit from that same sense of renewal, and when they're ~~energized~~ [energised], the whole atmosphere of the school improves.

I know there are practical challenges to adjusting the schedule ~~like~~ [such as] curriculum requirements, term lengths, and coordination with external events. But perhaps there's room for a creative solution: adding a professional development day that doubles as a student rest day, or even shifting one of the term dates slightly. It doesn't have to be a big change to make a big difference.

I'm proud of how our school encourages balance, striving for excellence ~~while~~ [whilst] caring for wellbeing. Extending the holiday, even briefly, would send a powerful message that rest and hard work go hand in hand. It would show students that you value our health just as much as our achievements.

So that's my case, not just as your kid lobbying for more time off, but as a student who genuinely believes this could make our school community stronger. Thanks for listening, Dad. I know you'll give it fair thought (even if you laugh about it at dinner tonight).

Love, Wesley Liang