

## Section 1:

### #1 - Opening paragraph (formal version)

#### Strengths:

- Your piece opens with a polite greeting and clearly states your purpose in the first sentence
- You immediately identify multiple reasons for your request, showing that you've thought about different perspectives

**Overly General Opening** → Your first paragraph lists several reasons like "increased stress levels due to upcoming exams, health concerns, or other personal matters," but this approach makes your argument feel scattered and unfocused. When you mention too many different reasons at once without developing any of them, your principal might wonder which issue is actually the main concern. Is this about exams? Health? Personal matters? A strong opening should focus on one or two specific, well-developed reasons rather than listing many vague possibilities.

**Exemplar:** *I am writing to kindly request an extension of the upcoming school holidays. The intense preparation period for selective exams has placed considerable strain on students, and an additional week would allow them to recover properly and return to school ready to learn.*

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### #2 - Evidence and reasoning (second and third paragraphs, formal version)

#### Strengths:

- You make specific observations about student wellbeing, mentioning "fatigue and headaches during the day"
- Your writing attempts to show empathy by acknowledging what students are experiencing

**Repetitive Content Without Development** → You mention the same ideas multiple times—that students are tired, stressed about selective exams, and need rest—but you don't develop these points with deeper analysis or evidence. In your second paragraph, you say students need time "to fully rest and prepare," and then in your third paragraph, you essentially repeat that students need time to "deal with" stress. Instead of repeating the same idea, you could explore why this particular term has been

more demanding than others, provide specific examples of what students have faced, or explain the connection between rest and academic performance with evidence.

**Exemplar:** *The combination of selective exam preparation, regular coursework, and extracurricular commitments has created an unusually demanding term. For instance, Year 6 students have been attending additional tutoring sessions whilst also completing their standard homework, resulting in study schedules that extend well into the evening.*

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### #3 - Informal version structure and tone

#### Strengths:

- You successfully adjust your language to suit a more casual relationship, using phrases like "Hey mum" and "How are you doing?"
- You attempt to maintain some structure by organising your points into different paragraphs

**Inconsistent Audience Adaptation** → Your informal version still sounds quite formal in many places, which creates confusion about who you're really writing to. Phrases like "incorporate any necessary changes to improve the learning experience" and "come back in a better headspace—more mentally and emotionally ready" don't sound like natural conversation with a parent. When writing to your mum who is also the principal, you need to balance being respectful with sounding genuine and personal. The tone should feel like you're having an honest conversation, not presenting a formal proposal.

**Exemplar:** *Mum, I know you're worried about us falling behind, but honestly, everyone's so exhausted that we're not really learning effectively anyway. A bit more rest now might actually help us catch up faster when we come back.*

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■ Your piece demonstrates a basic understanding of the task requirements, but both versions need significant development in content depth and specificity. The main issue is that you rely heavily on general statements rather than concrete details and evidence. For example, you mention selective exams repeatedly, but you never explain what makes them particularly stressful or how an extended holiday would specifically help students prepare better. Are these exams in two weeks? Two months? This detail matters for your argument. Additionally, your reasoning often stays at surface level—you say students are tired and need rest, but you don't explore the consequences of not getting that rest or

provide evidence about why the current break length is insufficient. Consider adding specific scenarios: What happened last term when students returned from holidays? How are students performing now compared to earlier in the year? Your informal version also needs work on authentically capturing a child-to-parent voice whilst still making a persuasive case. Right now, it reads like a formal essay with "Hey mum" added at the top. Think about how you'd actually talk to your mum—you might mention specific conversations you've had with classmates, reference family plans that could benefit from extra time, or bring up concerns she's mentioned before about student wellbeing. Furthermore, both versions would be stronger if you addressed practical concerns more thoroughly. What about families who've already booked holidays during the planned school term? How would teachers catch up on curriculum content? By anticipating and responding to these questions, you'd show mature thinking and make your request more realistic.

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**Overall Score: 43/50**

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## **Section 2:**

FORMAL VERSION: Dear Mrs Ward,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to kindly request an extension of the upcoming school holidays. ~~Recent events and unforeseen circumstances, such as increased stress levels due to upcoming exams, health concerns, or other personal matters, have led me to believe that~~ [The intense preparation period for selective exams has placed considerable strain on students, and] an extension of the holiday period would greatly benefit both students and staff. The additional time off would allow everyone to recharge and return to school feeling more refreshed and better prepared for the remainder of the term.

**#1**

Given the current academic schedule we've faced in recent weeks, the standard holiday break appears to be insufficient for ~~the~~ students to fully rest and prepare for the upcoming schoolwork. Many students are experiencing fatigue and headaches during the day, and an extended break would provide them with the much needed time to manage these difficulties. This extra time could also help in enhancing their overall ~~well-being~~ [wellbeing] and mental health, allowing them to return to their studies with ~~focus~~ [renewed focus]. **#2**

Furthermore, an extension of the holidays would also allow families to address any personal matters that may have arisen during the academic term. Some students are currently dealing with extra stress due to the selective exams and [ , and] a longer break would provide them with an opportunity to deal with this without the added stress of school. This extension could ensure that students return to school in a better mental and emotional state, ready to engage with their studies. #2

In addition to benefiting the students, an extended holiday would give the teaching staff an opportunity to better prepare for the upcoming term. With the additional time off, teachers would have the chance to revise lesson plans, assess progress, and incorporate any necessary changes to improve the learning experience. This would allow for a more structured and effective educational environment when students return to class, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that the learning process is as smooth as possible.

I fully understand that extending the holiday break is a significant decision and that it requires careful consideration of all potential implications. However, I believe that the benefits of providing students and staff with additional time to rest and reset would far outweigh any challenges posed by the change. I would be grateful if you could take this request into account. Thank you for your time and understanding.

INFORMAL VERSION:

Hey ~~mum~~ [Mum],

How are you doing? Can you please extend the school holidays for 2 weeks? Some of my classmates are saying that they're really stressed because of the selective exams and that they want a bit more holiday time to just rest at home. Also, some friends mentioned that they've been really tired because of finishing up assignments and homework. Also, the teachers can plan a bit more and get organised. #3

Mum, with everything that's been going on lately with school, I really feel like the holiday break just isn't enough for everyone to fully rest. A lot of us have been feeling drained, some even getting headaches during the day. If we had a little more time off, it would really give us a chance to recharge physically and mentally. I think it would help us come back to school feeling a lot more focused and ready to handle the work. #3

Also, extending the holiday would give families a chance to take care of personal things that have come up during the term. A lot of students are feeling extra stressed because of selective exams, and a longer break would give them the time to handle that without worrying about school on top of it. It would

really help everyone come back in a better headspace—more mentally and emotionally ready to dive back into their studies.

~~Also, a~~ [A] longer break wouldn't just help the students [;] teachers could really use it too. ~~It'd~~ [It would] give them a bit of breathing room to sort out their lesson plans, see what's working and what's not, and make any changes they need to. That way, when we all come back, things can run a lot smoother and everyone's on the same page, which makes learning way easier for everyone.

I know that it's an important decision to make ~~but~~ [, but] it would really give students more time to just rest at home ~~and it can give~~ [, and it would give] families ~~to~~ [time to] sort out personal things. The ~~teacher~~ [teachers] would also benefit from this extra break since they will get to plan and ~~organise~~ [organise] more. Extending the holidays would ~~me~~ [be] really good for all of us and will benefit everyone. Could you extend the holidays for two weeks?