

Section 1

#1: Opening paragraph (rhetorical questions and scene-setting)

Strengths:

- Your opening uses vivid examples ("plastic bottles, food wrappers, and even old tires") that help readers picture the problem clearly
- The rhetorical questions draw readers in and make them think about the issue personally

Vague purpose statement → Your second paragraph states "I strongly believe we should organise a River Clean-Up Day" but doesn't clearly explain what specific outcomes you want from the council. Are you asking them to fund the event, provide equipment, promote it, or officially approve it? When writing to decision-makers, you need to be crystal clear about what action you want them to take. Notice how you mention "with your support in organising, providing materials, and spreading the word" much later in your letter, but these important details should appear earlier so the council knows from the start what you're asking of them.

Exemplar: *I am writing to request the council's official support and resources to organise a River Clean-Up Day on Saturday, 9 November, where we can work together to restore our river's health.*

#2: Body paragraphs (environmental impact, community participation, awareness)

Strengths:

- You've organised your arguments into clear sections with different reasons supporting your main idea
- The phrase "ripples in water" connects nicely to the river theme

Underdeveloped arguments → Whilst you mention three benefits (environmental impact, community participation, and awareness), each paragraph only scratches the surface of these ideas. For example, in your environmental paragraph, you mention saving wildlife but don't explain how the clean-up connects to the bigger picture of river health in your specific town. Does your river flow into a particular bay or reserve? Are there specific animals that live there? In the community participation

paragraph, you mention "pupils earning service credits" and "grandparents passing on values," but you don't explain how this event would actually work to bring these different groups together. What activities would happen? How would you make sure everyone feels included?

Exemplar: *A clean river means healthier water that flows into Henderson Bay, where local ducks and platypuses make their homes. By removing rubbish now, we protect the entire ecosystem that depends on this waterway, from the tiny insects that fish eat to the larger birds that nest along the banks.*

#3: Conclusion and call to action

Strengths:

- You include specific details (date, number of volunteers, equipment needed) that show you've thought through the practical side
- Your final question creates a sense of urgency

Lack of follow-through information → Your letter asks a powerful final question but then ends abruptly without telling the council how to respond or what the next steps are. Should they contact you? Is there a deadline for their decision? Who should they speak to if they have questions? When you're trying to persuade someone to take action, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to say yes. Right now, a council member reading your letter might think "This sounds good, but what do I actually do now?" You've also listed what you need (litter pickers, gloves, bin bags) but haven't explained whether you expect the council to provide all of these or just some of them.

Exemplar: *Please contact me at [email/phone] by 25 October so we have time to finalise arrangements. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you and answer any questions about how the council can support this important community initiative.*

■ Your letter shows good basic structure with a clear introduction, organised body paragraphs, and a conclusion. However, the piece would be much stronger if you developed your ideas more deeply. Right now, your arguments feel a bit thin—you state ideas but don't fully explore them. For instance, when you mention that plastic takes 500 years to break down, you could connect this fact more clearly to why a clean-up day matters for your specific river. Think about adding one or two more sentences to each paragraph that dig deeper into your reasons. Additionally, your letter needs more practical

information throughout. You've included some good details at the end, but readers shouldn't have to wait until the final paragraph to understand exactly what you're proposing. Try weaving specific information about costs, timing, and responsibilities throughout your letter so the council can picture how this event would actually work. Also, consider addressing potential concerns the council might have—will there be insurance? Who supervises the volunteers? Where will the rubbish go after collection? By thinking through these details and including them, you show the council that you're serious and organised. Finally, strengthen your connection to the local community by including specific details about your river and town rather than general statements that could apply anywhere.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2

#1 Dear Local Council

Have you ever walked along our local river and noticed the plastic bottles, food wrappers, and even old ~~tires~~ [tyres] floating in the water? Isn't it heartbreaking to think that the very place where our children play, where wildlife should thrive, has turned into a dumping ground?

#2 Our river is more than just water flowing through our town. It is the lifeblood of our community. Unfortunately, research shows that 80% of ocean pollution begins in rivers and that plastic can take up to 500 years to break down. If we do not act now, the problem will only grow worse. ~~That is why I strongly believe we should organise a River Clean-Up Day to restore the beauty and health of our local environment.~~ [I am writing to request the council's official support and resources to organise a River Clean-Up Day on Saturday, 9 November, which will restore the beauty and health of our local environment whilst bringing our community together.]

First of all, cleaning the river will have a powerful environmental impact. Every piece of rubbish removed saves fish, birds, and other wildlife from choking or becoming trapped. A clean river means cleaner water and a safer, healthier habitat for all living things. Imagine the pride of seeing clear water flowing freely, knowing our own hands made the difference.

Moreover, such an event would bring community participation. Isn't this exactly the kind of project that unites people across all ages and backgrounds? From pupils earning service credits to grandparents passing on values of care and responsibility, everyone has a role to play. Working together not only cleans the river but strengthens the bonds that hold our community together.

Lastly, a ~~clean-up~~ [clean-up] will raise awareness. Many people do not ~~realize~~ [realise] how harmful even a single plastic bag can be. By coming together visibly, we send a message that our community cares about the environment and is willing to act. That awareness can spread like ripples in water, inspiring even more people to protect our natural resources.

#3 Therefore, I recommend that we hold the River Clean-Up Day on Saturday, 9 November. To make this successful, we will need at least 50 volunteers, along with 20 litter pickers, 50 pairs of gloves, and 30 large bin bags. With your support in ~~organising~~ [organising], providing materials, and spreading the word, I am confident we can transform our river into the clean, thriving place it deserves to be. ~~So, I ask you: will we sit back and watch our river drown in waste, or will we rise together to save it? The choice is ours, but the time to act is now.~~ [I ask you: will we sit back and watch our river drown in waste, or will we rise together to save it? Please contact me by 25 October to discuss how the council can support this initiative. I look forward to working with you to make this event a success for our entire community.]