

## OET Nursing Writing Week

### Carl Brown

The task is: *Write a letter to a healthcare professional requesting continuation of care for a patient.*

#### Planning

10 - 15 minutes:

- Find the **purpose**
- Identify the **content** you will use
- Organise the case notes into **logical paragraphs**

What is the situation after the above steps?

*You're in a perfect position to do your best writing.*

#### General Paragraph Purposes

Introduction	<b>Patient name:</b> <b>General Medical Context:</b> <b>General Request:</b>
Timeline 1	Beginning of this medical context up to the present
Timeline 2	Current situation
Background – medical	Medical information that is not directly related to this context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• family history</li> <li>• current medications</li> <li>• current illnesses</li> <li>• weight / height</li> </ul>
Background – social	Lifestyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diet / smoke / drink</li> <li>• living arrangements</li> <li>• relationships</li> <li>• job</li> </ul>
Request	Expand the general request – provide details of tasks

---

### Identifying Purpose & Choosing Case Notes:

Ask yourself these questions about Carl Brown case notes:

1. Who is the reader?	Occupational Therapist
2. What is the reader's task?	Workplace assessment
3. Does the reader know the patient?	No
4. Does the writer have any tasks?	No
5. Why am I writing <u>today</u> ?	Pt improved – wants to return to work
6. Is it urgent?	No

## Test 3 Writing (45 minutes)

TIME ALLOWED: READING TIME: 5 MINUTES  
WRITING TIME: 40 MINUTES

Read the case notes and complete the writing task which follows.

### Notes:

Assume that today's date is 25 January 2020

You are a nurse in a family medical practice and you see a patient about his back pain.

#### PATIENT DETAILS:

**Name:** Carl Brown (Mr)

**DOB:** 31 October 1977 (43 y.o.)

**Address:** 32 Green Avenue, Oldtown

**Social background:** Self-employed graphic designer, works mainly from home (8 hrs/day on computer)  
Divorced (2019), joint custody of daughter (7 y.o.)  
Lives alone – 2-bedroom house w home office  
Interests: reading, TV sports

**Family history:** Father: 75 y.o. – degenerative spondylosis  
Mother: 72 y.o. – osteopenia

**Past medical history:** 1983: Nasal fracture (bicycle accident)  
1985: Chickenpox  
1993: Fractured L arm (motorcycle accident)  
2015: L4/L5 disc herniation (lifting weights) – successful treatment w NSAIDs, physiotherapy  
Allergies: none

#### Treatment record

Appt. with family doctor: 15 January 2020

#### Presenting complaint:

##### Subjective:

Lower back pain 2–3 wks (pain = 4/10)

##### Objective:

Localised pain w spasms, tenderness  
Poor posture – forward head tilt evident

**Diagnosis:** Grade 2 muscle sprain lower back (no nerve root compromise)  
?aggravated by prolonged sitting (3-hr continuous blocks) & poor posture

**Treatment:** Ibuprofen 400 mg 3×/day  
Omeprazole 20 mg 1×/day (4 wks)  
No sitting at desk > 3 hrs/day (6 wks)  
Regular planned breaks advised (1×/60–90 mins)  
Physiotherapy 1×/wk (4 wks) - prescribed exercises 2×/day  
Follow-up w practice nurse (25 January)  
Pt. requests workplace assessment - nurse to arrange w OT

**Appt w practice nurse: 25 January 2020**

Subjective:

Physio 'helping' (pain = 2/10)

Some non-compliance w medication & postural advice (works at desk total 4–5 hrs/day, 'I often forget about breaks and taking the tablets')

Anxious to resume pre-injury routine (important project deadline mid-Feb)

Objective:

BP 123/80, PR: 86/min, Temp: 37°C (normal)

No spasms, tenderness

Discussion w pt:

Continue physio

OT referral (pt consent given):

- workplace assessment (?unsuitable seating: Pt reports using immovable folding wooden chair → ?replace w height-adjustable ergonomic chair plus wristrest & footrest)
- assess requirement for lumbar support
- graded return-to-work plan
- check compliance w advice re prolonged sitting (still working >3 hrs without breaks)
- advise correct sitting position/posture

**Plan:** Write to OT

**Writing Task:**

Using the information in the case notes, write a letter of referral to Mr Sanders, the Occupational Therapist, outlining your concerns about the patient, requesting a workplace assessment and summarising your suggestions. Address the letter to Mr John Sanders, Occupational Therapist, Oldtown Clinic, 34 Newbury Street, Oldtown.

**In your answer:**

- **Expand the relevant notes into complete sentences**
- **Do not use note form**
- **Use letter format**

**The body of the letter should be approximately 180–200 words.**

## Letter Plan

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Patient name:</b> Carl Brown</li> <li>• <b>General medical context:</b> recovering from a grade 2 muscle sprain in his lower back</li> <li>• <b>General request:</b> workplace assessment</li> </ul>
Background	<p><b>Social background:</b> <del>Self-employed</del> graphic designer, works mainly from home (8 hrs/day on computer) ✓  <del>Divorced (2019), joint custody of daughter (7 y.o.)</del>  Lives alone – <del>2-bedroom house w home office</del>  Interests: <del>reading, TV sports</del></p> <p><b>Family history:</b> Father: <del>75 y.o.</del> – degenerative spondylosis ✓  Mother: <del>72 y.o.</del> – osteopenia</p> <p><b>Past medical history:</b> <del>1983: Nasal fracture (bicycle accident)</del>  <del>1985: Chickenpox</del>  <del>1990: Fractured L arm (motorcycle accident)</del>  2015: L4/L5 disc herniation (lifting weights) – successful treatment w NSAIDs, physiotherapy ✓  <del>Allergies: none</del></p>
15 <sup>th</sup> January	<p><b>Presentation &amp; treatment:</b></p> <p><b>Treatment record</b>  <b>Appt. with family doctor: 15 January 2020</b></p> <p><b>Presenting complaint:</b></p> <p><u>Subjective:</u>  Lower back pain 2–3 wks (pain = 4/10) ✓</p> <p><u>Objective:</u>  Localised pain w spasms, tenderness ✓  Poor posture – forward head tilt evident ✓</p> <p><b>Diagnosis:</b> Grade 2 muscle sprain lower back (no nerve root compromise) ✓  ?aggravated by prolonged sitting (3-hr continuous blocks) &amp; poor posture ✓</p> <p><b>Treatment:</b> ✓ <del>Ibuprofen 400 mg 3x/day</del>  ✓ <del>Omeprazole 20 mg 1x/day (4 wks)</del>  ✓ <del>No sitting at desk &gt; 3 hrs/day (6 wks)</del>  ✓ <del>Regular planned breaks advised (1x/60–90 mins)</del>  ✓ <del>Physiotherapy 1x/wk (4 wks) - prescribed exercises 2x/day</del>  <del>Follow up w practice nurse (25 January)</del></p> <p><i>request</i> ← Pt. requests workplace assessment - nurse to arrange w OT</p>
25 <sup>th</sup> January	<p><b>Current condition:</b></p>

	<p><b>Appt w practice nurse: 25 January 2020</b></p> <p><u>Subjective:</u>          Physio 'helping' (pain = 2/10) ✓  <i>Summarise</i> ← Some non-compliance w medication &amp; postural advice (works at desk total 4-5 hrs/day, 'I often forget about breaks and taking the tablets')  <i>request</i> ← Anxious to resume pre-injury routine (important project deadline mid-Feb)</p> <p><u>Objective:</u>  <del>BP 123/86, PR: 86/min, Temp: 37°C (normal)</del>          ✓ No spasms, tenderness</p> <p><u>Discussion w pt:</u>  <i>request</i> ← Continue physio</p>
Request	<p><b>OT referral plan:</b></p> <p>OT referral (pt consent given):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workplace assessment ✓ (<del>?unsuitable seating: Pt reports using immovable folding wooden chair → ?replace w height-adjustable ergonomic chair plus wristrest &amp; footrest</del> ✓)</li> <li>assess requirement for lumbar support ✓</li> <li>graded return-to-work plan ✓</li> <li>check compliance w advice re prolonged sitting (<del>still working → 3 hrs without breaks</del>)</li> <li>advise correct sitting position/posture ✓</li> </ul>

**Homework:** Write background: send to [paul@set-english.com](mailto:paul@set-english.com)

## Introductions

- We focus on past events
- We include information from other paragraphs – too much detail
- We forget the purpose
- We get the purpose wrong

Student	Teacher
<p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, DOB: aged 43</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown, who is recovering from back pain. He is ready to go back <b>to</b> work and now requires your assessment.</p>	<p>be more specific – give the diagnosis</p> <p>Clear purpose</p>
<p>I am writing regarding Mr Carl Brown, who has been recovering from a muscle sprain in his lower back. He is being referred for a workplace assessment.</p>	<p>It's ok to put the full name 'Carl Brown' in the introduction – <u>but not in other paragraphs.</u></p>
<p>Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>25 January 2020</p> <p>Dear Mr John Sanders RE: Mr Carl Brown                      Age: 43</p> <p>I am writing regarding <del>Mr John Sanders</del> <b>Mr Carl Brown</b>, who presented to a family medical practice with a muscle sprain in the lower back. He <del>is being referred to you and</del> requires a workplace assessment.</p>	<p>Writing to John Sanders – not about! Why focus on presentation – talk about the situation now he is being referred to you - redundant</p>

<p>I am writing to refer Mr. Carl Brown who is 43-year-old self-employed graphic designer, for a workplace assessment and further advice regarding his lower back pain. Mr. Brown has been experiencing localized lower back pain, with associated spasms and tenderness, for the past 2-3 weeks. His pain is rated at 2/10 after physiotherapy, he remains anxious to resume his routine due to work deadlines.</p>	<p><b>Too much information about the patient and the situation.</b></p> <p><b>Concise - just the general information</b></p>
<p>25th January 2020 Mr John Sanders, Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, aged 43</p> <p>Dear Mr-<del>Brown</del> Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Carl Brown, who presented to our clinic for an appointment. He is <b>being</b> referred to you for a workplace assessment.</p>	<p><b>What's the medical context?</b></p> <p><b>He requires – much simpler than 'he is being referred...'</b></p>
<p>I am writing to refer Mr Brown, who is diagnosed with a grade 2 muscle sprain in his lower back and now needs your workplace assessment and grade return to work plan</p>	<p><b>who has been diagnosed with</b></p> <p><b>who is recovering from</b></p>
<p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, aged 43</p>	



<p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing to refer Mr Brown, who is recuperating from a muscle sprain in his lower back. He is returning to work, and now requires your support and assessment of his workplace.</p>	
<p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Mr John Sanders Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Dear Mr John Sanders</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, DOB: 31st October 1977</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown, who was admitted to our clinic due to a grade 2 muscle sprain in his lower back following back pain. He now requires your further care and assessment.</p>	<p>wasn't admitted didn't have the diagnosis upon presentation</p>
<p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Old Town Clinic 34 Newbury Street Old Town</p> <p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, aged 43</p> <p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Carl Brown, who was recently admitted to our hospital with a Grade 2 muscle sprain and lower back pain. He is being referred back to you for continued care and evaluation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) he wasn't in a hospital!</li> <li>2) he wasn't with the OT before the problem – he isn't returning to somebody's care</li> <li>3) Purpose is not specific enough</li> </ol>

<p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>25/01/2020</p> <p>Re: Mr. Carl Brown, aged 43</p> <p>Dear Mr John Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing to refer Mr Carl Brown, who visited our <del>clinic hospital</del> due to a muscle sprain <del>in his at the</del> lower back. He now requires a work place assessment and your further support.</p>	
<p>Mr Joh<del>an</del>s Sanders Occupational Therapist Old town clinic 34 Newbury street Old town</p> <p>Re: Mr Car<del>ol</del> Brown, DOB: 31 October 1977</p> <p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing to refer Mr Brown, who visited our clinic for a follow - up due to a grade 2 muscle sprain in his lower back . He is currently stable and has requested a workplace assessment.</p>	<p>Does this really tell the story? Better to say 'is recovering from...'</p>
<p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 24 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown , DOB: 31st October 1977</p> <p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p>	

<p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown , who reported to our hospital for review due to Grade 2 muscle sprain . He is being referred to you for further workplace assessment and support.</p>	<p>no hospital! Better to say 'is recovering from..'</p>
<p>25thJanuary 2020</p> <p>Mr Sanders Occupation Therapist Old town clinic 34 Newbury street,Old town</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown who visited our family medical practice with a complaint of lower back pain since 2-3 weeks. He is now scheduled to be referred to you for ongoing care and support.</p>	<p>'has been experiencing lower back pain for 2-3 weeks'?</p> <p>I think it's better to put in the correct diagnosis, instead of a paraphrase</p>
<p>25th January 2020</p> <p>Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, aged 43</p> <p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown, who visited our family medical practice due to a Grade 2 muscle sprain lower back. He is scheduled to be refer to you for requesting workplace assessment and further support.</p>	<p>Why discuss where he visited in the introduction? Leave that for the timeline paragraph – intro is a brief summary of the situation, not a description of what happened.</p>
<p>25th January 2020 Mr John Sanders Occupational Therapist Oldtown Clinic 34 Newbury Street Oldtown</p> <p>Re: Mr Carl Brown, 43 years old</p>	<p>The anxiety bit probably doesn't need to be included here but it's very well written!</p>

<p>Dear Mr Sanders,</p> <p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown, who has been diagnosed with a grade 2 lower back muscle sprain. Due to his anxiety about resuming his pre-injury routine, he requires your assessment <del>at</del> of his workplace.</p>	<p>Also, it is easier to say 'a workplace assessment'</p>
<p>I am writing regarding Mr Brown, who is receiving medication and physiotherapy for back pain. He is going to be returning to work and requires a workplace assessment</p>	<p>a grade 2 lower back sprain – be more helpful to the reader</p>
<p>I am writing with regards to Mr <del>carol</del> Brown, who was recently assessed on our ward for back pain. He <del>requires your urgent attention to conduct</del> a work place assessment, and your support.</p>	<p>No ward mentioned. Just give diagnosis? Additionally, this is not an urgent letter.</p>