

OET Case Notes

Medicine · Intermediate · Referral letter · to Gastroenterologist

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Medicine — Referral to Gastroenterology

THE CASE NOTES

Patient: Mr Colin Hartley, 62 years old, retired teacher

Presenting complaint: 8-week history of fresh rectal bleeding mixed with stool; looser, more frequent motions

Associated: Unintentional weight loss 6 kg over 3 months; fatigue

Examination: Pale conjunctivae; soft abdomen, no mass; PR: no haemorrhoids, trace fresh blood

Investigations: Hb 9.8 g/dL (microcytic); ferritin low; faecal immunochemical test positive

Medical history: Type 2 diabetes (diet-controlled), osteoarthritis (knees)

Family history: Father — bowel cancer, diagnosed age 70

Medication: Paracetamol PRN; no anticoagulants

Social: Ex-smoker (quit 10 years ago), lives with wife, gardens daily

Task: Write a referral letter to Dr Anita Rao, Gastroenterologist, requesting urgent assessment and colonoscopy for suspected colorectal malignancy.

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WHAT TO INCLUDE

- + **Suspected colorectal cancer, stated up front**
Purpose is graded first. The recipient must know in the opening sentence why this referral is urgent.
- + **Red-flag triad: rectal bleeding, weight loss, iron-deficiency anaemia**
These are the findings that justify an urgent (not routine) referral. Content marks reward clinically decisive selection.
- + **Positive FIT and the low Hb / ferritin**
Objective evidence that moves the recipient to act; far more relevant than the examination of the knees.
- + **Father's bowel cancer at 70**
Family history changes pre-test probability — a genuine reason to escalate, so it earns its place.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

- **Osteoarthritis and paracetamol use**
No bearing on the colorectal referral. Including it dilutes the purpose and costs Conciseness & Clarity marks.
- **Occupation, gardening, ex-smoker status**
Background colour, not decision-relevant. The single biggest Grade B blocker is over-inclusion of this kind of detail.

CRITERION IN FOCUS · PURPOSE

Under the 2026 stricter scoring, a referral that buries the suspected diagnosis below background history loses Purpose marks even when every fact is present. Lead with why you are writing.

Write this letter, then get it marked at writingcorrectionservice.com/oet-writing-services