

Lecture 19

Letter writing

According to Oxford Dictionary, **“A letter is a message that is written down or printed on paper and usually put in an envelope and sent to somebody.”** Letters were first used as a form of communication. With technology improvements, however, it has become a less popular way for people to communicate.



Letter is the mode of communication through which people interact at distance and discuss matter of common concern which may be a query, some confusion or other subject matter. Letter is also used to maintain good relations. Many times, you might want to send a letter to a friend to lift their spirits or to thank them for some kindness they have extended to you. Letter state things permanently for the record.

19.1. Purpose of a Letter

Letter is used to

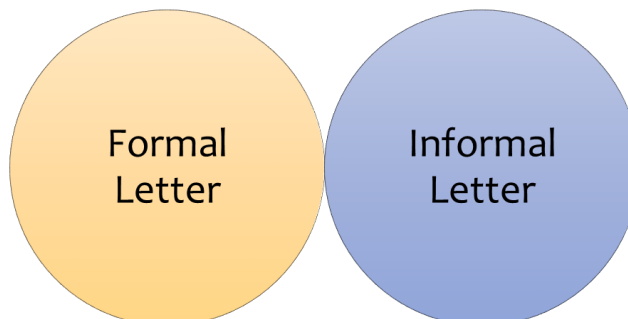
- **Keep in touch** with people through, e.g., personal letters (sent between family members, friends, or acquaintances) and business letters (formal exchanges with businesses or government organizations).
- **Job application:** You also need to write a letter (C.V, i.e. cover letter) if you are a job applicant.
- **Enquiries:** Letters of enquiry describe what the writer wants and why. The more unusual the request, the more convincing the reason needs to be.
- **Convey information:** letters are the most economic and convenient means of exchanging information. With the help of letters, executives, family members and friends can easily exchange information.
- **Complaints:** A problem related to a business or a personal problem may be resolved by speaking directly or by writing a complaint letter.
- **Business Transactions:** Commercial letters have paramount importance in setting business transaction. For example, by writing claim letter, buyer can raise his claims to the seller by writing collection letters; seller can collect dues from the customers, etc.

19.2. Advantages of letter

- Nothing needed to receive a letter
- Permanent physical record of communication
- Difficult to falsify because of an individual's signature or the notepaper of a workplace
- Hand-written letter becomes more interactive and personal
- Enclosure of small objects
- Free from all malwares and viruses
- Improvement of writing skills

19.3. Types of Letter

There are two types of letters:



19.3.1. Informal Letter

An informal letter is a letter that is written in a personal fashion and, thus, is also called personal letter. You can write them to relatives or friends, but also really to anyone with whom you have a non-professional relationship with, although this doesn't exclude business partners or workers with whom you're friendly with, either.

19.3.1.1 Format of Informal Letter

Informal letter has the following divisions:

Heading: consists of two parts viz. address of the writer and date on which the letter was written. Heading can be written on the top right-hand corner of the letter, in the middle or to the left. This varies from organization to organization, taste to taste. The more acceptable version in Pakistan is placing the heading to the right.

Examples:

63, Afzal Colony Rawalpindi, 100633 June 12, 2017	Examination Hall A.B.C. November 23, 2017
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Salutation: Usually starts out with Dear followed by a name, surname or a title. Sometimes, a simple "Hi" or "Hello", suffices. In practice, there is a comma after the end of the salutation. For example, "Dear Ali," "Beloved Mum," or "Dearest Anum,". However, this practice is gradually being phased out. The purpose of the comma is to mention that the line that follows is linked with the preceding line. This can be taken care of by proper paragraphing or spacing.

Body: may consist of one or more paragraphs, dealing with personal topics. The contents or opening sentence of your letter should be written in a personal and friendly tone, e.g., *"I am writing to you after a long time, lovely to hear from you."* The main part of your letter will focus on your purpose. When writing the letter, be concise.

Closing sentences like "Please give my regards to", "I am looking forward to hearing from you" express regards and hopes of a writer

Starting	Endings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I got your letter yesterday.• I am in receipt of your letter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With Kind regards,• With best wishes,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am glad to receive your letter. • It gives me pleasure to inform you. • It is long since I heard from you. • I cannot understand your long silence. • It has made me very anxious. • I am sorry I could not write to you earlier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey my best regard to your dear parents, • With love to your brother and sister, • Well, good bye for now, • Hoping to hear from you very soon, • With love from all of us. • With sincere sympathy in your distress • Wishing you still better luck.
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Subscription: The subscription of the letter, i.e., the end should be according to the starting of the letter. This thus varies, depending on the nature and relation with the addressee. A letter must not end abruptly as this would look rude. So, certain forms of polite leave taking are prescribed which may be written after the last words of the letter. Preferably, this may be written to a side opposite to the heading but may be flushed to the left, right after the lines of the body. The main aim is to give the letter a better organization. At any rate, the subscription should start with a Capital letter. If the header has a comma after each phrase in the end, then the subscription should, too. Some examples of the subscript on of the letter of various kinds are as follows:

- To blood relations: Yours affectionately.
- To friends: Yours sincerely,
- To strangers: Yours truly,

Note: Never use an apostrophe (') with yours in the subscription!

Signature: The signature of the writer of the letter should be below the subscription.

Post Script: If you want to add anything additional to the letter you write a P.S., which stands for post script and the message after that.

R.S.V.P.: To extend invitation which requires a response. This is from the French word “Répondez s'il vous plait” which literally means, “Please reply”.

19.3.2. Formal Letter

A formal letter is a letter written to a business, a colleague, or any other professional who are not considered friends or family. Thus, formal letters are also known as official or business letters. Any kind of communication that is official can be carried out by sending a formal letter. There are many types of letters that fulfil the formal purpose of recommendation letter, job application letter, invitation letter, complaint letter etc.

19.3.2.1. Format of Formal Letter

Heading should include sender's complete address followed by the name

Inside address: Details of the person being addressed alongside name of the company/organization

Salutations/Greetings: Varies depending upon the acquaintance, e.g., if the addressee is new to you then, “Dear Sir/Madam”, “Sir/Madam”, etc. If the addressee is someone known to you then, “Dear Mr. Naeem”, “Dear Ms. Minhas”, “Dear Mrs. Kashif”, etc.

Subject: Adding a subject line makes it easier for the recipient to find out what the letter is about. Thus, the subject line should concisely explain the purpose of your letter. For example, it might read, "Subject: Congratulations on Promotion."

Body of a letter includes an introduction, the main message and a conclusion.

To begin your letter, include a brief introduction. This might include a brief, "I hope you are well," or some other friendly introductory phrase. Then, dive right into explaining why you are writing. The main part of your letter will focus on your purpose. When writing the letter, be concise. Two or three paragraphs are plenty. Your letter shouldn't be longer than one page. Once the main message is conveyed, then conclude your letter.

Complimentary closing/subsription depends on salutation used. For example, in case of an addressee not known to you, it will be "Yours faithfully,". In case of an addressee unknown to you then, "Yours sincerely," will suffice. Note that only the first word in the closing is capitalized. The comma has been added here only for convenience.

Signature is usually placed below complimentary close and in black or blue ink, above typed name of writer. Titles are excluded in the signature, only after your typed name below the signature:

Ali Husnain

Dr. Ali Husnain

Sales Manager

Supporting Material: If letter contains document other than the letter itself, your letter will include the word "enclosure." This is abbreviated as "encl." The word "Annexure" is sometimes used, as well. If there is more than supporting material, use the plural "Enclosures (#)" or "Annexures (#)" with the # being the number of other documents enclosed, not including the letter itself.

Carbon copy (CC): Includes the name of all the individuals receiving a copy of letter. This is written as CC (name) written after Enclosure. If there are more than 1 individuals, you may number them, as in a list.

19.4. Basic Letter Formats

There are two types of letter format:

Block Format

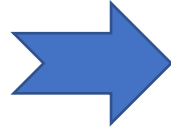
- All elements on left-hand margin
- Typed quickly

Modified Block Format

- Two exceptions only
- Date and closing on right hand side

19.4.1. Block Formats

- This is the most common layout of a business letter
- Entire letter is flushed left, justified and single spaced
- Double spacing between paragraphs only



Date: October 31, 2006

Mr. Fasihuddin
Managing Director
Lever Brothers Pakistan Limited Fatima Jinnah Road
Karachi, SINDH 75530

Phone: +92 21 5660062/21 5660069 **Fax:** +92 21 5681705 <http://www.leverlink.com>

Dear Mr. Fasihuddin:

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I am leaving my position with Lever Brothers Pakistan Limited on November 15.

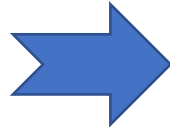
Thank you for the opportunities you have provided me during my time with the company. If I can be of any assistance during this transition, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Favaz Yasin

19.4.5. Modify Block Formats

This is same as the Block Format. The only exception is that closing and date is placed on the right side



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Managing Director
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Thank you for the opportunities you have provided me during my time with the company. If I can be of any assistance during this transition, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Favaz Yasin

19.5. Guidelines

- Like all pieces of communication, a letter demands to be supported by factual information. The other C's are just as applicable: you need to state your message with clarity. It is best to avoid the

use of slangs, unless you're writing an informal letter. However, grammatical errors are no exception and should be avoided at all costs. The Courtesy C of Communication also requires you to be respectful by using a polite tone in letter writing.

19.6. Kinds of Letter

- Inquiry Letter
- Complaint Letter
- Cover Letter
- Good News Letter
- Bad News Letter

19.6.1. Inquiry Letter



A letter of inquiry asks someone for specific information. This may be a request for promotional material. The general aim is to give the recipient a clear interest in responding to your letter. In other cases, such as a request for specific information on a product, the recipient may or may not be as motivated to respond quickly. Consequently, always make the tone of the letter friendly and make it easy for the recipient to identify and provide the information you need.

Inquiry letters ask a question or elicit information from the recipient. When composing this type of letter, keep it clear and succinct and list exactly what information you need.

As a letter of inquiry asks the recipient for specific information, it is important to clarify your intent in the introduction, specify your needs in the discussion and to conclude precisely. The following situations may be classified under Letter of Inquiry:

- Degree requirements
- Equipment costs
- Performance records

1102 West 30th
Lawrence, KS 66321
August 4, 19XX

Dr. Maria Gomez-Salinas
Director of the Diabetes Clinic
St. David's Hospital
1000 Greenberg Lane
Wichita, KS 66780

Dear Dr. Gomez-Salinas:

I am writing you in hopes of finding out more about how the new Glucoscan II blood glucose monitoring system, which a representative at Lifescan informed me that your clinic is currently using.

Originally, I saw Lifescan's advertisement of this new device in the January 19XX issue of Diabetes Forecast and became very interested in it. I wrote the company and got much useful information, but was recommended to write several current users of the system as well.

For a technical report that I am writing for a technical writing class at Johnson County Junior College, I need some help with the following questions:

How often does the Glucoscan II need to be calibrated in practical, everyday use conditions?
How accurate is the Glucoscan II compared to other similar systems that your patients have used?
What problems do your patients experience with this new device?

The Lifescan representative indicated that your clinic is one the leaders in implementing new technology for diabetics, and therefore I am eager to hear from you. In the report I will acknowledge your contributions, and I will send you a copy of the completed report if you wish.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Anita Teller
Student, Medical Technology
Johnson County Junior College

Sample inquiry letter 2. Source: <https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/sections/linguist/independent/kursmaterialien/TechComm/acchtml/inqex1.html>