

Wordiness

Some people like using unnecessary or too many words in writing just because they sound beautiful and impressive, or they find it difficult to write briefly.

Wordy sentences have too many unnecessary words that can clutter your writing. Good writing is simple and direct; it uses the simplest words possible that convey the same meaning. Thus, **Wordiness** reduces the clarity of your writing.

Let's take a look at the following example.

For all intents and purposes, the reason why Mr Tandon arrived late for work owing to the fact that he stopped at very many traffic lights that were red in colour.

Wordy: 31 words

Mr Tandon arrived late for work because he stopped at many red lights.

Less wordy and clear: 13 words

Try to **reduce words** from your **sentences**. If you can remove a word and still retain the meaning of the sentence, then the sentence becomes less wordy. A sentence should have only the **required number of words**; not more, not less.

Keep a word if it satisfies the following conditions:

1. It is necessary for the grammar of the sentence.
2. It is a key idea, fact, feeling or description.

Ways to Reduce Wordiness in Your Writing

1. Eliminating repetition: You can use the **alternatives** given in the following table to **eliminate repetition and reduce wordiness** in your writing.

As to whether	whether
each separate incident	each incident

tall skyscraper	tall
many different ways	many ways
advance notice	notice
as to whether redundant	Better
each separate incident	each incident
blue in colour	blue
free gift	gift
dash quickly	dash
completely finished	finished
appear to be	appear
He is someone who is	He is
the reason . . . is because	because

2. Delete empty words and phrases: You can **omit empty words and phrases** as shown in the following table to **reduce wordiness**.

generally	tend to	really
apparently	in my opinion	very
basically	I think that	various
essentially	I feel	in some ways
virtually	I believe	for all intents and purposes

3. Avoid expressions: You can **avoid using expressions** that can be written clearly in **different words to reduce wordiness**.

with the possible exception of	except
at this point in time	at this time / now
in the neighbourhood of	of about
had an effect on	influenced

due to the fact that	because
in order to	to
for the purpose of	for
it is important that	must
until such time as	until
at the same time as	while

4. Delete the following phrases and variations:

1. 'there is... that'
2. 'it is... that'

Example:

There are many students who like reading.	Many students like to read.
It is the desk that is uncomfortable.	The desk is uncomfortable.

5. Avoid writing in the passive voice: It often requires you to use more words than the active voice.

6. Try to replace unnecessary and extra words with shorter and fewer words.

Example: Never use 'find out' when you can use 'discover'.

Academic Wordiness

Read the text given below.

'There is currently a lively, ongoing controversy among many sociologists and other professionals who study human nature: theories are being spun, and arguments are ongoing among them regarding the meaning of the fact that numerous young people—and older people, for that matter—living in our society today are extremely interested in stories about zombies.'

The edited version of text is given below, which is more direct, clear and understandable.

A lively societal debate rages among the human sciences. The contentious issue is ‘why are so many people fascinated by zombie fiction?’.

Using too many adverbs can make your writing verbose. Writing excessively in the passive voice does the same.

Example:

Passive Voice: A refund will be given to you.

Active Voice: Our company will give you a refund.

Examples to Reduce Wordiness

1. Replace appositives (words that mean the same as the word to which they refer) in clauses beginning with ‘who’ or ‘which’.

Incorrect: Mr. Ram Iyer, who was my former neighbour, won his court case.

Correct: Mr. Ram Iyer, my former neighbour, won his court case.

2. Remove expletives (words such as ‘it is’, ‘here is’, and ‘there is’, which are added to a sentence even when they do not add to the meaning of the sentence).

Incorrect: There is a website called Learning Hall, that encourages students to talk to one another about college courses.

Correct: A website, Learning Hall, encourages students to talk to one another about college courses.

3. Use modifiers instead of prepositional and verbal phrases.

Incorrect: Saxena carries a briefcase made out of leather.

Correct: Saxena carries a leather briefcase.

4. Drop unnecessary words and choose simple one-word expressions rather than long phrases.

Incorrect: The company is accepting applications at this point in time.

Correct: The company is accepting applications now.

Ambiguity in Sentences

Well-written sentences are not only short and direct but also **crisp and clear**. Readers have no confusion about the intended meaning of such sentences. They cannot be mistaken or seen and interpreted in other ways.

The following examples have connotative meanings.

1. 'Call me a taxi please.'
2. 'Mother got the food ready for her daughter wearing a red sari.'
3. 'Well, I have certainly never heard this song sung that way before.'
4. 'He saw a monkey on the tree with a viewfinder.'

Forms of Ambiguity

The word 'ambiguity' comes from the Latin word that means 'wandering about'. A common aspect of ambiguity is **uncertainty**. Ambiguity in speech or writing expresses **two or more ideas** that are not intended by the speaker or the writer.

Ambiguity can be of the following two types:

1. Lexical ambiguity
2. Syntactic ambiguity

Lexical Ambiguity

This occurs when the same word has **two or more meanings**. It is seen in jokes, puns and other types of play with words.

Example:

'Do you believe in **clubs** for young people?', someone asked W.C. Fields. 'Only when kindness fails,' he replied (*The Linguistic Analysis of Jokes*, 2004).

Syntactic Ambiguity

This occurs when **structural ambiguity presents multiple meanings**. Contextual clues in

writing will help you find the true and intended meaning.

Example:

I shot an elephant in my pajamas.

Naturally, such vagueness is considered fun. However, in formal writing, this could affect the flow and clarity of your writing, and as a result the conveyance of the message could be hampered.

The Paragraph

A **paragraph** is certainly more than a few sentences strung together on a specific theme. Most Indian students make the mistake of writing paragraphs right after they understand the theme of the topic.

A paragraph is a **key part** of making your writing (a **letter**, an **essay** or a **report**) **effective**.

Read the sample paragraph given below.

Gandhiji was born in 1869 in Gujarat. Gandhiji was a good student, and he studied law in London. He was a great soul. People looked at him as if he was God Himself. Gandhiji married Kasturba. He came from a middle class family. He was known as 'Mahatma' for his great deeds. He started 'Satyagraha', a technique where people show their anger or protest peacefully, without any violence. From olden times, India is a land of peace. Gandhi returned to India and took part in the Freedom Movement. He became the main leader of the freedom struggle and brought all Indians together. Gandhiji was called Bapu. He loved animals and pastoral life on farms. His ashram in Sabarmati is visited by many. Gandhi led the Quit India Movement. Freedom came in 1947. He was killed in 1948 by a Hindu called Godse. Gandhi is a great man.

This is a **well-written paragraph**. Although the paragraph is about Gandhi, it lacks focus, unity and a smooth flow of ideas.

Now, read the following edited version of the sample paragraph:

Gandhiji is one of the great leaders of this century. He studied law in London and worked in South Africa, where racial discrimination made him both sad and angry. On his return to India in 1916, he saw the freedom struggle gain momentum. However, there was no unity or focus to the struggle. He united all the freedom lovers and implemented 'Satyagraha', a non-violent form of protest. He made Indians proud of their country and led them from the front. The Bardoli Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement are two of the most important stages in India's long-drawn freedom struggle. Finally, he succeeded in compelling the British to leave the country. Thus, Gandhiji's name came to stand for leadership and freedom.

The above paragraph reads much better. It covers the following aspects:

- It sticks to the single theme/ idea of Gandhi as the leader.
- It includes many sides of Gandhi's personality.
- It also covers some of Gandhi's personal details.
- It also refers to Gandhi's love for animals in the middle part of the paragraph.

Qualities of a Good Paragraph

A good paragraph is built around one single and central idea. If the writer wants to introduce another idea, he has to start a new paragraph. Two or three ideas disturb the unity of a single paragraph. Maintaining the theme of a paragraph is called **unity of theme**. This means that if a writer wants to write about Gandhi's greatness, he should not write about his political ideologies, personal life or religious beliefs. Similarly, there can be another paragraph showing Gandhi as a good husband, lover of animals or about his ideas to develop the village economy. However, mixing up these different ideas or packing them into one single paragraph results in bad writing. When this is done, readers fail to understand the purpose of the writer or what they convey through the paragraph.

Another quality of a good paragraph is its **structure**. The paragraph should be written concisely, without extra words and must follow a structure. The simplest and popular formula is to **divide the paragraph into three parts**: the beginning, the middle and the end. This is a simple and effective method.

A **paragraph** begins with a **topic sentence**. The main idea of the paragraph should be made clear in the beginning itself. If the paragraph is about computers and their value and applications, it should be written in a single sentence as the first sentence of the first paragraph. For example, the first sentence can be "Computers are the most wonderful and valuable invention of the modern times". The paragraph can then list and describe the many uses of computers. **This is called a topic sentence**. A paragraph lacking a clear topic sentence will be vague, and the reader would wonder what the paragraph is all about. Once the topic sentence declares the theme of the paragraph, the remaining sentences should develop that idea, with details in two or three sentences, and then close it with a concluding sentence.

Every topic sentence must have a **topic** and a **controlling idea**. The controlling idea indicates how the paragraph will progress.

Example:

- Topic sentence: There are many reasons why sound pollution in our capital city is the worst in the country.
- Here, the topic is 'sound pollution in our capital city is the worst' and the controlling idea is 'many reasons'.

Examples of Good Paragraphs

There are three reasons why India is one of the best nations in the world. **(Topic sentence)** First, India is a peace-loving country. Most Indians follow non-violence as a way of life. **(Supporting sentence 1)** **Secondly**, our education system is standard. From Vedic times, traditional sciences and calculations have been the foundation of our success. **(Supporting sentences 2 and 3)** **Finally**, India's epics such as *the Ramayana* have made the nation popular and respected, setting high standards of familial and spiritual values. **(Supporting sentence 4)** **Hence**, India commands a high place among the countries of the world, but it is still considered as a developing country. **(Concluding sentence)**.

The above paragraph has a good structure: a topic sentence that is clear, supporting details and a logical concluding sentence.

Let's take a look at another example.

- Topic sentence: 'To be an effective leader, one requires certain good qualities'.
- The topic is 'To be an effective leader', and the controlling idea is 'certain good qualities'.
- Supporting sentences **support** the topic sentence.
- Concluding sentences appear at the **end of the paragraphs** and are introduced by the following words or phrases:
 - In conclusion
 - Therefore
 - As expressed
 - Overall

- As a result
- Thus
- Finally
- Lastly
- For this reason
- In general
- Effective concluding sentences serve the following purposes:
 - Review the main points mentioned in a paragraph
 - Restate the topic sentence
 - Do not introduce new ideas or topics

Coherence

Example 1:

For me, wearing the school uniform was the worst thing in my younger days. All the students were forced to wear a red-coloured shirt. The shirts were made of cotton. They developed wrinkles quickly. When my cousins from the city visited, I felt ashamed. Now, I am on my own, working in an office.

Example 2:

For me, the worst thing in my younger days was wearing the school uniform. In my high school, all the students had to wear an ugly red shirt with black stripes. It went with yellow pants or frocks, and it was so dressy!

Here, the flow of ideas and language is smooth. This is known as **coherence**.

The first paragraph is too short and provides information in a disconnected and abrupt manner. There is no flow, and there are phrases such as 'develop wrinkles quickly'. The connection between the cousins' visit and the author feeling ashamed is not made clear.

In the second paragraph, there is **completeness, clarity and flow**. Details are provided and they are connected. You also notice the connector 'and' being used.

Example 3:

I like writing stories because they are interesting and moving. Moreover, they inspire me sometimes. Stories about good and bad people, and the bright and dark sides of life help me separate the right from the wrong and also understand people and life in general. As a result, I also become wise.

This paragraph has a **flow of ideas**, with one leading to the other and connecting them with connectors such as 'and', 'moreover', and 'as a result'.

Linking Devices

Let's take a look at the following sentences:

- **Incorrect:** There was heavy rainfall. The dam was full.
Correct: The dam was full **because** of heavy rainfall.
- **Incorrect:** He studied well. He failed the test.
Correct: He studied well, **but** he failed the test.

The flow of sentences and connection between the ideas can be improved using the following elements:

1. Pronouns: In the paragraph on Gandhiji which lacked unity, the proper noun 'Gandhiji' was repeated. Instead, a pronoun 'He' will improve the flow by avoiding repetition.
2. Synonyms
3. Linking conjunctions: These are also called transition words because they **indicate change**. Some of the examples include 'and', 'but yet', 'not only..but also', 'further' and 'hence'.
4. Serial markers: These include words such as 'firstly', 'secondly' and phrases such as 'in the beginning', 'finally', 'In the final analysis', 'in short' and 'to conclude'.
5. Numbering: These include indicators such as '(i)' and '(ii)'.

Applying the above elements to the paragraph on 'Gandhiji' results in the following paragraph: Gandhiji is one of the great leaders of this century. **He** studied law in London **and** worked in South Africa, where racial discrimination made him both sad and angry. On his return to India in 1916, **Bapu** saw the freedom struggle gain momentum. However, there was no unity or focus to the struggle. **So**, he united all the freedom lovers and implemented 'Satyagraha', a non-violent form of protest. **Next**, he made Indians proud of their country and led them from the front. The

Bardoli Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement are two of the most important stages in India's long-drawn freedom struggle. **Finally**, he succeeded in compelling the British to leave the country. Thus, Gandhi's name came to stand for leadership and freedom.

Note: The linkers that improve coherence are underlined and highlighted above in bold.

Some of these linkers in the above paragraph are as follows: the pronoun '*he*', which is used in place of the proper noun 'Gandhiji'; the synonym 'Bapu', which is used in the place of 'Gandhiji'; conjunctions such as 'and'; and the serial marker 'finally'. These linkers make the paragraph **coherent**.

Linkers and their Purpose

Some of the linkers and their purposes are as follows:

- Cause and effect: Consequently, therefore, accordingly, as a result, because, for this reason, hence and thus
- Addition: and, moreover, and then, besides, in addition, first, second, next, also and too
- Sequence: Furthermore, in addition, moreover, first, second, third, finally, again, also, and, besides, further, in the first place, last, likewise, next, then and too
- Comparison or contrast: Similarly, also, in the same way, likewise, although, at the same time, but, conversely, even so, however, in contrast, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, otherwise, still and yet
- Example: Namely, in short, specifically, for example, for instance, in fact, indeed, of course, specifically, that is and to illustrate
- Purpose: For this purpose, for this reason, to this end and with this object
- Time or location: After a while, nearby, above, adjacent to, below, beyond, farther on, here, opposite to, there, to the south, before, after, later, afterward, immediately, in the meantime and meanwhile

Patterns of Paragraph Development

One last point about paragraphs is the way they are structured in a certain pattern. Pattern brings order to writing.

The different patterns to develop paragraphs are as follows: Development by detail, compare and contrast, narration, description, and cause and effect.

Development by Detail

'I was very young when I first observed the remains of what was a huge and grand mansion once. Ruined and silent, its orderly paths were full of weeds, and its flower beds had turned into a jungle of thorns. The two-storeyed mansion faced a large tank. Its walls were full of cobwebs, and the window panes were broken. A big old tree in a corner with broken branches made creaking sounds. Now, standing alone, it looked mysterious and was said to be a home for ghosts.'

Insights:

1. The paragraph describes the **topic sentence**.
2. The next few sentences provide the **supporting details**.
3. The paragraph ends with a **concluding sentence**.

Development by Comparison and Contrast

'Although Hyderabad and Warangal are both big cities, they are different from each other in some ways. To begin with, Hyderabad is a busy, hectic place full of factories and offices and roads full of people for most of the day. You have to invest a lot of time in travelling in order to reach any corner of this big city. Further, Hyderabad has become a city where people always appear to be in a hurry; it pulsates with life into late hours. Also, in Hyderabad, you can buy a variety of things in crowded street-side shops and eat at roadside cafes. On the other hand, Warangal, in spite of experiencing recent growth, still appears to be a small town where people know most of the other residents. Moreover, Warangal is a calm city; people walk around and take their own time to do things. In addition, there are still many tea shops dotting Warangal,

where one can get a cup of tea, and they can walk over to historical sites such as the Thousand Pillar temple, which is located in the heart of the city. To conclude, although these two cities seem similar, they are quite different from each other.'

Insights:

1. A **comparison** is made in the paragraph.
2. An **objective and a purpose** add details to the paragraph.

Cause and Effect

'Severe and frequent headaches can have many causes. **One very common cause** that affects many people today is stress. On any given day, people face many stressors, whether in their office or while travelling or at home. **Another cause** that affects people is related to their food and eating habits. Too much caffeine in the form of many cups of coffee can induce headache instead of reducing it. **Other causes** include muscle tension, allergy to certain food items and so on. Even harsh weather conditions can cause headaches in some people. Sometimes, fresh paint or a body spray can cause a headache. **But there are certain methods** to control headaches. Lowering stress, eating the right food at the right time and avoiding allergens can help in relieving headaches.'

Insights:

1. The **causes** of headaches are mentioned in the paragraph.
2. Certain methods are included in the paragraph to show how to control the causes of headaches.

Narration

'It was a bad day for me! First, I forgot my wallet. When I reached college, I saw that I had left my mobile phone at home. I was late to class and my favourite window seat was taken! At the canteen, the cashier had no change. And, worst of all, my best friend was absent that day...'

Insights:

1. The goal here is to narrate the entire situation.
2. You should try to add certain elements such as concrete terms, abstract terms etc. that can create a storyline without missing the essence of narration.

Classification

Generally, students are of three types. In the first group, we have the best students, who study regularly and still go to the movies and enjoy themselves throughout the year. Exams do not frighten them. In the second group, we have the good students, who study before exams and achieve good scores. Finally, we have the average students, who neglect their studies and pull all nighters right before exams. Their results, of course, are a matter of luck.

Insights:

1. Try to create a classification.
2. While classifying elements, remember to show segregation in your writing.

Process

Printing a newspaper involves many steps. The first step is to gather news. Once the news is collated, the next step is to edit the collated news. The news is then ordered by priority. The next step is to attach pictures wherever necessary; headlines get the most attention. Next, proofreading of the articles is done. Then begins creating the rough copy and checking the news again carefully. Finally, the strike order is issued and the presses start rolling, and the papers start streaming out one after another in quick succession at great speed.

Insight:

1. While trying to document something, you should be able to visualise the entire process while reading the content.

Written letters are valuable and relevant in many ways. They are of two types: personal and business.

Personal Letters

Personal Letter Format: Basic Structure

Personal letters are **informal** in nature.

- Full name and address of the sender
- Date
- Full name and address of the recipient
- Salutation
- No subject line
- Body of the letter
 - Introductory paragraph
 - One, two or more paragraphs
 - Request for something, which will often get a reply from the receiver (in the last paragraph)
- Signing-off note
- First or full name of the sender

Language and Tone

- There is a certain level of informality in a personal letter.
- Short forms such as 'can't' and 'won't' are allowed.

- Some short forms of names, example, addressing Krishnamurthy as Krishna is allowed.
- References to personal events are made.
- Memories are shared.
- The tone is less formal and changes according to the situation being described.

Types of Personal Letters

- Person-to-person letters: These letters are written by an **individual to another individual** for personal reasons. They can be farewell letters from a student to a teacher appreciating the latter, recommendation letters from an employee recommending a friend for a job, a letter thanking someone for their help or a letter of love to a family member.
- Person-to-business letters: These letters are written by an **individual to business houses or specific persons in business**. They may be written to apply for a job, accept a job offer, introduce or recommend someone to an important person, request someone for information and so on.

Business Letters

Qualities of Good Business Letters

1. Brevity: In business letters, there is no beating about the bush. The customer's time is considered important. Therefore, all business letters are **brief and direct**.
2. Precision: All data should be **complete and correct** to the last detail.
3. The 'you' factor: Customers should be made to feel **involved and respected**.
4. Courtesy: The clients must be made to feel important with proper **respect and courtesy**. Harsh language is not suitable because it will drive the customers away. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him".
5. Attractive layout: The letter must be made as **attractive** as possible. There should be a lot of white space with good design and coloured headings. Even the envelope must be neat.

6. Creativity: The letter must follow a good strategy, and suitable language should be used. If the aim is to win a contract through a letter, a lot of care must be put into it.
7. Objectivity: All personal touch must be avoided. Data must be **impartially presented** and analysed effectively.
8. Mixing formal and informal styles: Never mix these up in business letters; it may **confuse or offend** the reader.
9. Maintaining a uniform tone: This can be done by sticking to the right degree of formality and using **clear and courteous language**.
10. Humour: Jokes or satirical remarks have **no place** in business letters.

The differences between business letters and personal letters are summarised in the following table.

No.	Measure	Business Letter	Personal letter
1	Type	Impersonal and universal	Personal and specific
2	Structure	Rigid	Flexible
3	Language	Formal	Informal
4	Data	Accurate	Approximate
5	Category	Several	Only one
6	Length	Brief	No restriction
7	Copy	Often preserved	Not essential
8	Approach	Persuasive, strategy-based	Direct, emotional

Business Letter Format

For business letters, a universally accepted format is followed. Usually, a business letter is written or computer-typed on an A4 size bond paper. It has the following components:

- Who wrote it?
- When and where?
- To whom is it written?
- Greeting
- What about?
- Referring to what?
- Three paragraphs

- Introduction
- Details of context/problem/occasion
- Taking leave
- Signature of the sender

The Three-Part Business Letter

[Sender's Name]

[Sender's Company Name]

[Sender's Street Address]

[Sender's City, State/Province and Zip/Postal Code]

[Sender's Phone Number and/or Email Address]

[Date]

[Recipient's Name]

[Recipient's Company Name]

[Recipient's Street Address]

[Recipient's City, State/Province and Zip/Postal Code]

[Recipient's Phone Number and/or Email Address]

[Subject]

[Dear Name],

[First Part: Introduction: This is where you explain the purpose of the letter, your expectation, your invitation or complaint, etc.]

[Second Part: Middle Section: This is where you provide more details about what you outlined in the first paragraph. For example, explain the problem with a computer that you bought or provide details of an event for invitation, etc.]

[Third Part: Conclusion: This is where you provide a call for action or specify the next steps in the sequence]

[Sincerely],

[Signature]

[Name of Sender]

Sample Complaint Letter

The Body

This is with reference to the colour TV that I purchased from your store, Anil Electronics, on the Main Road in Warangal four days ago on 12 June 2020. I am writing this letter to report a problem with its functioning.

The TV set was installed by your company staff. It worked well for two days. However, the colour on the screen is not visible now, and it looks like a black-and-white TV. The sound is also not steady and blares suddenly. And, the control knob is also not effective.

I would like you to visit my residence to inspect the set and carry out the repairs. If necessary, you may take it to your store for sometime. However, if the problem is not resolved, I am going to demand a replacement. The set is within the warranty period.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

S. Ganguly

Common Formatting Guidelines

- Arial, Times New Roman, or a similar standard font
- Size 11 or 12 point
- Sentence case capitalisation
- White background
- 5" x 11" size paper

- 1” margins
- Single, 1.5, or double spacing
- Black colour font
- Use of corporate letterhead
- Single or double-sided printing
- Plain white background

Block Format

- While writing **business letters**, you must pay attention to the **format** and font being used.
- The most common layout of a business letter is known as the **block format**.
- In this format, **the entire** letter is **left-justified** and **single-spaced** except for a double space between paragraphs.

Semi-Block Format

- Semi-block is similar to the block format, except that the former is more informal in appearance.
- All the parts of the letter are **left-aligned**, except for the **beginning of each paragraph** which is **indented by five spaces**.
- Paragraphs are separated by a **double-lined space**.

Some Conventions

Salutation

After the address, the letter should include a **greeting** or **salutation**. The receiver must be **addressed properly**. The addressal depends on the following two factors:

1. The relationship between the sender and the receiver
2. The context and purpose of the letter (sharing good news or bad news)

If it is a **personal letter**, then “Dear Mr. Harish” is suitable. If the sender and the receiver are close, then “Dear Harish” or even “Dear Hari” is suitable. If it is a **formal letter**, then only “Dear Mr. Smith” is appropriate. Even punctuation is important in letters and expresses certain emotions.

Let's take a look at the following examples.

1. Dear Mr. Patel,
2. Dear Mr. Patel:
3. Dear Mr. Patel!

The first example could lead to any type of message, while the second example seems much more formal. The third example sounds inappropriate for a business setting.

Few Other Salutations

- To whom it may concern: When the contact person is unknown (especially when the letter is addressing a complaint to an organisation or a company)
- Dear Sir or Madam: This is a very formal (and, somewhat outdated) version of ‘To whom it may concern.’
- Dear hiring manager (or another professional title): This greeting is used in letters of interest when you want your message to reach a specific person but do not have a personal connection with them.
- Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss/Dr./Professor (etc.) and their last name: This greeting can be used when you have a personal and professional relationship with the recipient. The colon in this greeting makes it more formal than a friendly use of ‘Dear’.
- Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss/Dr./Professor (etc.) along with their last name: This greeting can be used when you want to be more direct with the recipient. Remove ‘Mr./Ms.’ before the name but ensure that you do not sound impolite.

Personal Letter Salutations

These salutations can be informal but should not include nicknames.

- ‘Hello Rahim’

- 'Good morning, Rahim!'
- 'Happy Monday, Rahim!'

These are all appropriate salutations to be used in personal letters.

Leave Taking

A leave-taking phrase before signing the letter will make it purposeful.

- Letters that begin with 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam' usually end with 'Yours faithfully'.
- Formal letters that begin with the person's name (e.g., 'Dear Ms. Margaret') usually end with 'Yours sincerely'.
- Informal letters may end with 'Yours', 'See you' or 'Love'. These are for letters to close relatives and loved ones (e.g., father, mother, children, sibling, uncle, aunt, etc.).

The other ways of leave-taking are as follows:

1. Letters to family:
 - a. 'Yours Loving Son,'
 - b. 'Yours Affectionate Son,'
 - c. 'Yours Loving Brother,'
 - d. 'Yours Affectionate Brother,'
 - e. 'Loving Nephew,'
 - f. 'Yours Affectionate Nephew,'
2. Letters to friends:
 - a. 'Yours Sincerely,'
 - b. 'Your Sincere Friend,'
3. Official letters:
 - a. 'Yours Faithfully,'
4. Business letters:
 - a. Yours Truly,
 - b. 'Yours Sincerely,'
 - c. 'Yours Faithfully,'

Job Application Letter

This is the first part of a **job application** in which candidates are expected to refer to the post to which they are applying for and provide facts to support their case. In short, the candidates need to sell themselves to the company that would employ them.

Resume

This is **attached to the cover letter**. In a resume, you list out all the **information** related to your education, experience and skill sets in an **organised manner**. And, you also provide references in a resume.

Cover Letter in Detail

The cover letter shows your **readiness for the job** in many ways. Cover letters help the employer gauge insights of your personality. They can be structured in the following three parts:

- Introduction: Here, you need to refer to the **specific post** to which you are applying for (the advertisements may list out many posts).
- Sales pitch: In this part, you need to **highlight your suitability** by demonstrating that your experience and qualification match the job post. Emphasise on your value for the company by focusing on what is unique about you.
- Conclusion: In this part, you need to **express your interest and commitment** in serving the company for a long time.

Successful cover letters have the following elements:

1. An interesting, memorable **introduction**
2. Specific examples of relevant **past work experience and skills**
3. Brief **conclusion** with a call to action

There is no template for cover letters. Each job has a unique description, and so, each time you apply for a job, you need to write a unique cover letter. It is advised that you research the

company for its special work, its work culture and then use the right tone in the cover letter. Informality is not encouraged. You need to present yourself in simple but suitable language and draw the attention of the employers.

A sample cover letter for the post of an engineer is given below.

Dear Sir,

I am quite eager to apply for the position of the engineer for which your reputed company, TradeMore, has advertised recently. I think this job profile suits my interests and would help me reach my goal as a practising engineering professional. Your company's cutting-edge technology fascinates me, and I am sure I will thrive in the professional atmosphere of your company.

During my previous role at River Tech, I worked in interdisciplinary teams, which included both technical and non-technical disciplines. In addition to the technical work, I played a communicator's role voluntarily and connected different teams. My knowledge of the Arabic language helped me a lot. I was able to introduce a new testing procedure that saved costs and time in the beta testing phase. I am also appearing for examinations to qualify as a Professional Engineer. I wish to grow in your company by being useful in many areas.

I am looking forward to knowing more about your company and this job role. I am sure I am a right fit for the job and will do my best to establish it if given an opportunity.

Sincerely,
Ganesan

Difference Between a Resume and a Cover Letter

There are three main differences between resumes and cover letters, which are as follows:

1. **Format:** A cover letter is a professional communication typed in complete paragraphs, whereas a resume contains different sections (with bullet points) that convey specific details such as period of employment, job duties and responsibilities.
2. **Content:** A resume is a broad view of the applicant's overall educational and professional history. It lists most or all of the required skills and professional experiences that are relevant to the present job search. A cover letter should specifically focus on the job being applied to. While some information may appear in both these documents, a cover letter usually focuses more on present and future objectives, and a resume represents previous jobs and accomplishments.
3. **Purpose:** Your resume should convey a wide range of information briefly in one or two pages.

Generally, employers review your skills quickly to gauge your qualification for a job. Your cover letter enables you to create a comprehensive view of yourself as an individual and applicant.

Resume in Detail

DOs

1. **Separate resumes** must be prepared **for different jobs**. There is no one single or common resume that suits all jobs.
2. While applying for a job, the cover letter and the resume must be **designed specially** for that particular job, keeping its requirements in mind.
3. The standard, preferred **one-page resume format** should be used. Any resume that goes beyond one page is not favoured by a lot of hiring managers. Even the software which is designed to screen resumes reject two-page resumes. If a resume has to extend beyond one page, it should fill two pages only. A one-and-a-half page resume does not look appealing. Therefore, most resumes are confined to one page. All the information that needs to be shared should neatly fit in one page.
4. Emphasise your tech skills: Technical skills are specific skills and knowledge of various processes. Special skills and expertise are required for technical jobs in the domains of science, engineering and statistics, office management or filmmaking. Some other technical skills include knowledge of web or enterprise systems.

For example, the application for the post of Chief Receptionist would require tech skills such as Excel and social media knowledge.

Your resume can present your technical skills in the following formats:

- Created MS Excel pivot tables to summarise 500+ customer preferences regarding accommodation and dinner modes, and designed a Popular Dinner Menu
- Employed social media skills to generate 1,000+ favourable Facebook posts and Tweets to promote my former company
- Improved customer relations through superior Wi-Fi skills and messaging services

The following table shows the categories of skills, action and its results.

Skills	Action	Results
MS Office	Created 500+ Excel pivot tables of customer preferences	Designed a Popular Dinner Menu

Social Media Skills	Generated 1,000+ favourable Facebook posts and Tweets	Promoted image and brand of my former company
Wi-Fi Skills	Served Wi-Fi and internet needs of customers	Improved customer relations

5. Highlight your achievements: While listing your past positions, provide **clear examples of the effect of your work** on the company's bottom line. Did they increase their sales, improve their customer base or reach their target markets? Did you receive more responsibility in your company or a certificate of appreciation?

Achievements

Awards

- Completed a major project before deadline, saving time and money for the company
- Employee of the Month, October 2018

Recognitions and Initiative

- Selected as Project Leader for suggesting innovative methods
- Elected Life Member of Society for Entrepreneurs

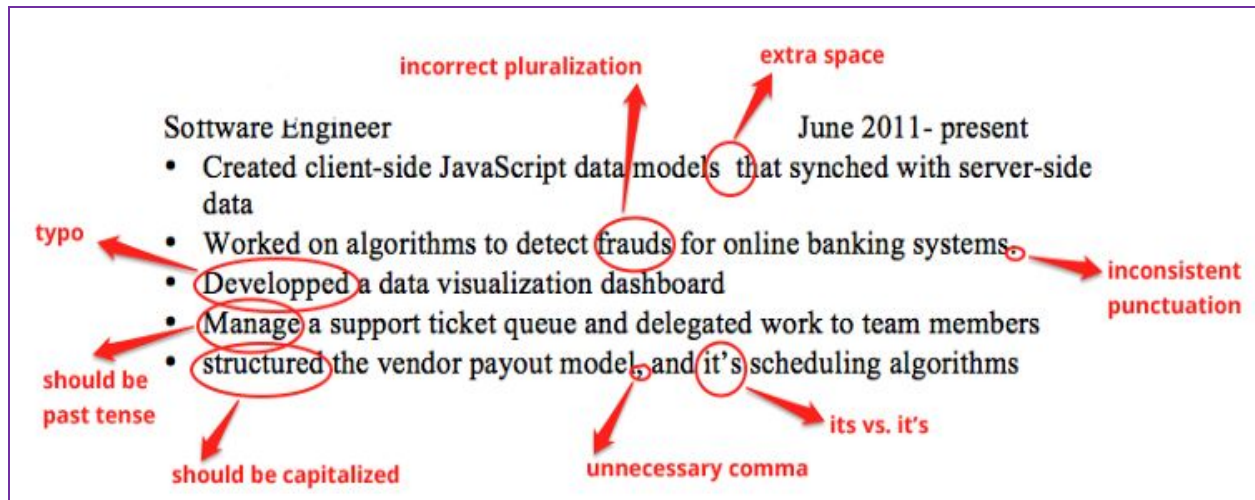
6. List your accomplishments: Accomplishments are the tasks that brought you and your company a lot of credit (e.g., medals and ranks). Generally, they are based on your special skills and your participation in major conferences, including other factors.

The following table presents the accomplishments.

My contribution Benefit gained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed a new customer-answering software ● Improved the customer base of the company
My contribution Benefit gained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implemented a new accounting system ● Reduced wastage of time and money for the company

7. Avoid typos (typographical errors): Such mistakes indicate that you are careless and not detail-oriented.

Following is an example which shows the typos that you need to avoid.



8. Keep it updated: Update your resume every time you accept a new job or complete a significant project.

DON'Ts

1. Do not falsify your education or job experience
 2. Do not get too personal
 3. Do not state 'References will be supplied on request' (In India, providing **references** is preferred.)
 4. Do not use your company's official phone number or email address
- It is always better to use your personal email address and phone number rather than your professional contact details.
5. Do not experiment with wrong and unsuitable resume formats
 6. Do not clutter the resume with too many colours and pictures
 7. Do not include your high school education if you are a college graduate

Following is an example which shows college details along with high school education that you need to avoid.

B.Tech. (Civil Engg.)	74%	Osmania University Hyderabad	2012–2016
Plus Two	82%	Loyola College Hyderabad	2010–2012

High School	85%	St.Gabriel's Hyderabad	2006–2010
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8. Do not list your past salary information

If the advertisement requests applicants to specify a salary range in their application, then state it in the cover letter. Otherwise, wait until after you have cleared the interviews to discuss your salary.

Basic Outline of a Resume

Your Name:

.....

PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

.....

EDUCATION

Master's Degree: 2008–2010

Title of Degree M.Sc. Chemistry

Specialisation: Obtained first class and rank...

Bachelor Degree: 2005–2008

Studied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry as major subjects

.....

WORK EXPERIENCE (HISTORY)

Title of Job: 2012 TILL DATE

Company Name:

Job Description Responsibilities:

Title of Job: 2010–2012

Company Name:

Job Description Responsibilities:

.....

SKILLS

Language:

Software:

Organisational:

Social:

.....

REFERENCES

1. From Former or Current Employer
2. From University Professor/Supervisor

Resume Formats

Chronological Resume

This is the most commonly used format for **experienced applicants**. In this format, your past jobs are **listed by time period**, starting with the current job. This can be used when work history is the applicant's strong point.

Functional Resume

In this format, your **skills and professional experience are important**, not the order in which you received your degrees or completed your previous roles. Candidates who have some work experience with a few gaps between jobs or those who are seeking a job change can use this format.

Combination Resume

Combination resume allows you to **detail both skills and work experience in a chronological list**. This format is **flexible** in nature. Hence, you can choose to tell a story to the hiring manager about your work experience.