

Writing Business Letters

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Who Writes Business Letters?

- Business → Business
- Business → Consumer
- Job applicant → Company
- Citizen → Government official
- Employer → Employee
- Staff member → Staff member

Why write Business Letters?

- to persuade
- to inform
- to request
- to express thanks
- to remind
- to recommend
- to apologize
- to congratulate
- to reject a proposal or offer
- to introduce a person or policy
- to invite or welcome
- to follow up
- to formalize decisions

General Guidelines

- Stress on specificity and accuracy.
- Assume the recipient has limited time.
- Readers want to know the “bottom line”.
- In most cases, the business letter will be the first impression that you make on someone.

Writing Style

- You can use “I” and “you” in a business letter.
- Refer to yourself as “I” and to the reader as “you”.
- Be careful when you use “we” since it commits your company to what you have written.
- For clarity: minimize the use of passive voice.

Focus and Specificity

- Business writing should be clear and concise.
- “concise” does not have to mean “blunt”.



After carefully reviewing this proposal, we have decided to prioritize other projects this quarter.



Nobody liked your project idea, so we are not going to give you any funding.

Planning

- Who am I writing this letter to?
- Why am I writing this letter?
- Are there specific details I need to include?
- Do I require a response?



Sections of a Business Letter

Sections

- Introduction:
 - ◆ The reason for writing.
 - ◆ Helps the reader understand in which context the letter should be considered.
- Details:
 - ◆ What you would like to accomplish.
- Conclusion / Next Steps:
 - ◆ What you would like to happen in the future.
 - ◆ Provide a call for future action.

1. Addressing the Recipient

- Dear Personnel Director
- Dear Sir or Madam: use if you don't know who you are writing to.
- Dear Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms Smith: use if you know the person but have a formal relation with
- Dear Frank: use for close business contacts.

2. The Reference

- Refer to previous letters, contact or meetings.
- Examples:
 - ◆ With reference to ...
 - your advertisement in the *Times*.
 - your letter of 23rd March.
 - your phone call today.
 - ◆ In reply to your request, ...
 - ◆ I would just like to confirm the main points we discussed on Tuesday.

3. Reason for Writing

- I am writing to...
 - ◆ inquire about
 - ◆ apologize for
 - ◆ confirm
 - ◆ comment on
 - ◆ apply for
- I recently read/heard about and would like to know
- I would be interested in (obtaining / receiving) ...

3. Reasons for Writing (cont.)

- Requesting
 - ◆ Could you possibly?
 - ◆ I would be grateful if you could...
 - ◆ We would appreciate it if you would ...
- Agreeing to Requests
 - ◆ I would be delighted to ...
- Giving Bad News
 - ◆ Unfortunately...
 - ◆ I am afraid that...
 - ◆ We regret to inform you that ...

3. Reasons for Writing (cont.)

- Giving good news
 - ◆ We are pleased to announce that ...
 - ◆ I am delighted to inform you that ..
 - ◆ You will be pleased to learn that ...
- Offering help
 - ◆ Would you like us to ...?
 - ◆ We would be happy to ...
 - ◆ We are quite willing to ...
 - ◆ Our company would be pleased to ...

3. Reasons for Writing (cont.)

- Complaining
 - ◆ I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with ...
 - ◆ Please note that the goods we ordered on (date) have not yet arrived.
- Apologizing
 - ◆ We are sorry for the delay in replying to ...
 - ◆ I regret any inconvenience caused (by) ...
 - ◆ Once again, please accept my apologies for ...
 - ◆ I would like to apologize for the (delay, inconvenience)...

4. Enclosing Documents

- If you are sending other documents with the letter
- Examples:
 - ◆ I am enclosing...
 - ◆ Please find enclosed...
 - ◆ Enclosed you will find...

5. Closing Remarks

- Thanking:
 - ◆ Thank you for your help, please contact us again if we can help in any way.
 - ◆ Please contact us again if there are any problems.
- Refer to future contact: I look forward to ...
 - ◆ hearing from you soon.
 - ◆ meeting you next Tuesday.
 - ◆ seeing you next Thursday.

6. Greeting

- Yours faithfully: If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to.
- Yours sincerely: If you know the name of the person you're writing to.
- Best wishes.
- Best regards: If the person is a close business contact or friend.

Proofreading

- Allow time between writing and proofreading.
- Make sure your requests, needs or concerns are clear.
- Check spelling, formatting, and organization.
- Check sentence structure.



Different Formats of a Business Letter

Block Format

Sender's Address

Date

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Address

Salutation

Paragraph 1.
Paragraph 2.
Paragraph 3.

Greeting

Signature

Modified Block Format

Sender's Address

Date

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Address

Salutation

Paragraph 1.
Paragraph 2.
Paragraph 3.

Greeting

Signature

Semi Block Format

Sender's Address

Date

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Address

Salutation

Paragraph 1.
Paragraph 2.
Paragraph 3.

Greeting

Signature



Writing Different Types of Letters



Acceptance Letter



Acceptance Letter

- Written for accepting a job, gift, invitation, honor, and many other special situations.
- Content:
 - ◆ Thank the person, business, organization, etc. when you begin your letter.
 - ◆ Briefly identify what it is that you are accepting.
 - ◆ Thank those who have helped you, if you feel it is appropriate.
 - ◆ Close your letter by restating your appreciation for being offered the job, award, gift, etc.

Acceptance Letter Guidelines

- Restate the terms as you understand them:
 - ◆ Example: for a job, include the starting date, job expectations, compensation plan, etc.
- If you are accepting an invitation:
 - ◆ Express your anticipation that the event will be a success.
 - ◆ Clarify any details about the event.

Example

Dear Mrs. Mellish:

It was certainly wonderful news when you called this afternoon to offer me the position as assistant buyer for Greenley Corp. Please consider this letter my formal acceptance.

I am pleased to accept your offer at a salary of \$34,000 annually.

As we agreed, my starting date will be July 28 to enable me to finish a summer computer class that will enhance my skills for Greenley Corp.

Thank you again, Mrs. Mellish, for offering me this wonderful opportunity, and do let me know if I can do anything in advance of my start date to facilitate the paperwork, or if there are any areas you'd like me to be reading up on.

What a delight it will be to work with you and the Greenley team!

**Sincerely,
Jane Oakley**



Acknowledgement Letter

Acknowledgement Letter

- A letter where the work or the effort of an individual or a group of individuals is recognized.
- Written to say that a particular letter / assignment / project has been received.

Acknowledgement Letter Guidelines

- Offer a polite, appreciative response that helps clarify what is expected of you.
- Send within a couple of days of receiving the original letter.
- Include a short, sincere apology if the acknowledgment letter is delayed.
- Address your letter to a specific person, if possible, not just the company or organization in general.

Example 1

Dear Mrs. Mellish:

With this letter we hereby acknowledge receipt of Your payment of \$5,000. Paid amount will be credited to your account today. Your credit card is fully functional again. All of your spending privileges have been resumed.

Call us with any questions you may have on our toll free line. We are available to all our customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Sincerely,
Jane Oakley**

Example 2

Dear [Recipients Name],

Your memo regarding the Shields vs. Walker case was excellent. You gave me every detail I needed to complete my research. You even anticipated a few facts I hadn't thought of but were very helpful to my search.

Thank you for your thoroughness. Your attention to detail will not be forgotten.

Sincerely,
[Sender's Name]



Application Letter

Application Letter

- Also known as “Cover Letter”.
- Specifically state what it is that you are applying for.
- Identify the reason that you are applying.
- Give the reasons that you feel you merit or qualify for the position.
- Identify what you hope to accomplish by sending your letter and the action you would like the recipient to take.

Application Letter (cont.)

- Indicate the date by which you would like a response to your letter.
- Refer to any other documents you have included with your letter.
- Include your contact information.
- Close your letter by sincerely thanking the person for his/her time or for any assistance he/she can give you.

Example 1

Dear [Recipients Name],

At the suggestion of Charlotte Suarez, I am submitting my resume for the position of Event Coordinator. My forte is in bringing together topnotch people from a variety of interests to present a well-coordinated and well-attended event.

My interest in your fast-growing consulting firm comes from the creatively planned events your firm is known for. My energy is boundless and I am at my best when I am in the "thick of things."

One of the most personally rewarding aspects of working in the convention industry is meeting and establishing relationships with others who thrive on the excitement this business inspires. I will contact you early next week to find out when we might meet to discuss the position.

Sincerely,
[Sender's Name]

Example 2

Dear [Recipients Name],

Please find enclosed my CV in application for the post advertised in the Guardian on 30 November.

The nature of my degree course has prepared me for this position. It involved a great deal of independent research, requiring initiative, self-motivation and a wide range of skills.

I am a fast and accurate writer, with a keen eye for detail and I should be very grateful for the opportunity to progress to market reporting. I am able to take on the responsibility of this position immediately, and have the enthusiasm and determination to ensure that I make a success of it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this application and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
[Sender's Name]



Recommendation Letter

Recommendation Letter

- Used to gather additional information about a candidate for employment, graduate study or other opportunity.
- Should give an overall picture of the candidate's:
 - ◆ Personal characteristics.
 - ◆ Performance.
 - ◆ Experience.
 - ◆ Strengths.
 - ◆ Capabilities.
 - ◆ Professional promise.

Recommendation Letter Content

- Opening:
 - ◆ Explain the relationship between you and the candidate.
 - ◆ Explain why the letter is being written.
 - ◆ Describe the type of experience, length, and time period during which you worked with the candidate.
 - ◆ Describe any special assignments or responsibilities that the candidate completed.

Recommendation Letter Content

- Body:
 - ◆ Personal characteristics such as confidence, dependability, creativity, etc.
 - ◆ Specific areas of strength or special experiences.
- Closing:
 - ◆ Briefly summarize previous points and clearly state that you recommend the candidate for the position

Guidelines

- Write only complimentary, yet factual, observations.
- If you cannot do this, you should decline to write a letter of recommendation.
- Any negative implication may destroy a person's chance at getting the new job.

Bad Example

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend Mr. Smith for your program. I know Mr. Smith because he worked in my lab for one summer. Mr. Smith was given a project to work on. He was in the lab the amount of time required by the program that was funding him. He was diligent in his work, and he completed all assignments. I met with him regularly to detail the work that needed to be completed. Mr. Smith is a personable young person, and it was a pleasure to have him in the lab. In summary, I recommend Mr. Smith for your program.

Sincerely,

Richard Hughes, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Good Example

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing this letter to strongly recommend Mr. Smith for your program. I know Mr. Smith because he worked in my lab for one summer. Mr. Smith came to me a year ago to discuss the possibility of spending a summer working in my lab. I met with him and outlined a project. I gave him some background reading at our first meeting. By the time of our second meeting he had read what I had given him and prepared a two-page project description. This level of effort is typical of a good medical student who joins my lab, so I agreed to take him on for a summer.

Good Example (cont.)

During his time in my lab, Mr. Smith demonstrated a good work ethic and interpersonal skills. We outlined a scope of work to be completed, and he successfully completed that work in the time required. He put in extra hours as necessary in order to meet specific deadlines that I set. I teamed him up with another student to work on the project. He seemed to work well with the other student, and I found him very personable. Mr. Smith put in sufficient work to be a co-author on a manuscript. Overall, I would strongly recommend Mr. Smith for a position in your program.

Sincerely,

Richard Hughes, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Requesting a Recommendation Letter

- Ask for a recommendation letter from people who know you and your capabilities.
- Be sure to give them enough time.
- State your goals and suggest what they might write to help you achieve those goals.
- Once you receive your recommendation letter, send a thank-you note.

Recommendation vs. Reference Letter

- Both are primarily used to introduce a person and complement his or her skills, abilities, integrity, character, and interests.
- Recommendation Letter:
 - ◆ Contains information specific to the person applying for a position.
 - ◆ Specifically related to skills, and qualifications.
- Reference Letter:
 - ◆ More general in nature.
 - ◆ Refers more to the overall character of a person.



Introduction Letter

Introduction Letter

- Most commonly used in business communications.
- Used to establish contact, request information, or outline a new product or service.
- In many cases, the letter can be sent via email, because that's the quickest and easiest way to connect.

How to Write an Introduction Letter

- Address your letter to a specific person, whenever possible.
- Begin your letter by stating your name and your position or role.
- Tell how you got the reader's name, if applicable.
- State the purpose for your letter.
- Indicate what it is that you hope to accomplish by sending your letter.
- Close by thanking the person, and end on a positive note.

Example 1

Dear [Recipients Name],

Last month while attending the convention in Centerville, I met Ms. Jane Doe. She is the director of marketing for Doe and Associates in Springfield and has been responsible for marketing several successful products.

She has excellent ideas about how to present our product. I think it would be in our best interest to talk with her more about hiring her firm for marketing. I am confident you will be as impressed as I was.

Sincerely,

[Sender's Name]

Example 2

Dear [Recipients Name],

My name is Eric Doe. For three summers now I have worked as a docent and farrier in the blacksmith shop at the Springfield Museum of the Old West. Since I will be attending your Winter Workshop on Historical Smithery, I thought I would send a brief note to introduce myself and confirm my reservation.

I'll quickly admit that I don't know much about early smithery. Aside from a few weeks spent at my grandfather's dude ranch four years ago, my training has been entirely on the job here at the museum. Because the museum curator is eager to provide visitors with an authentic experience, they've agreed to send me to your workshop for in-depth training.

I'm excited about your program and look forward to meeting you this January.

Sincerely,
[Sender's Name]



Inquiry Letter

Inquiry Letter

- Be courteous. Remember, by making this request you are imposing on the reader's time and/or resources.
- Don't send an inquiry letter for information you could easily find out by other means.
- Allow a couple of weeks for response.
- Make sure to include contact information.
- When the person responds to your inquiry, send a thank you note.

Example 1

Dear [Recipients Name],

Perhaps you are seeking an addition to your marketing team. A new person can provide innovative approaches to the challenges of marketing. I am an innovator of new ideas, an excellent communicator with buyers, and have a demonstrated history of marketing success.

Presently, I am marketing computer products for a major supplier using television, radio and news advertising. I have a reputation for putting forth the effort required to make a project succeed.

Example 1 (cont.)

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. EFTG Industries has a reputation for excellence. I would like to use my talents to market your quality line of technical products. I will call you to further discuss my talents and how I can benefit your company. If you prefer, you may reach me in the evenings at (555) 555-5555.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

[Sender's Name]

Example 2

Dear [Recipients Name],

Jane Doe has listed you on her resume as her first business reference. I am considering Ms. Doe for a position in our aluminum window plant management team.

The successful candidate for this position must have experience in multilevel management and be able to regulate workloads in circumstances of fluctuating demand. If you could offer your candid evaluation of Jane Doe's abilities in these areas, I would be most grateful.

We are considering several candidates and want to fill the position by August 15. If it would be more convenient for you to telephone me, my office number is 555-5555.

Sincerely,
[Sender's Name]

Responding to an Inquiry

- Specifically indicate the inquiry that was made, as you understand it.
- Express your appreciation for the person's interest.
- If you cannot personally answer the person's question, let him/her know that you have contacted the person who can and that he/she will shortly be in touch with the reader.
- If appropriate, you might want to include additional information about your organization or services.
- Close by saying that you would be happy to help the reader in the future.

Useful Links

- <http://www.4hb.com/letters/>
- <http://www.isampleletter.com/>
- <http://www.101businessletter.com/>

Course Project

The required course project would be an academic overview (survey) report on a topic of your choice.

Delivery Requirements:

- The delivery would be in the lecture in the week starting 28-12.
- Work individually or in pairs (i.e. 1-2 persons)
- Printed, hard copy.

Course Project (cont.)

Report Requirements:

- Length: 5-7 pages.
- Includes a very short table of contents.
- All pages should be numbered properly.
- Must include an abstract, introduction, and conclusion.
- Include at least two figures, properly formatted.
- Include a properly formatted reference list.
- Do not plagiarize, use quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing.
- Refer to sources in the text.

• 2010年12月22日，
“中国首艘自主建造
的30万吨级矿砂船”
“中远3198”轮在
大连造船厂顺利
下水。

Thank you