

# Business English

Collection of documents

**Business** (noun):

1. Commercial activity; a commercial organization.
2. Somebody's regular occupation; work to be done or things to be attended to.
3. Somebody's concern.

Other words:

Businessman/businesswoman (noun);

Businesslike (adjective);

Busy (adjective)

**Business English** is English language especially related to international trade.

**Business English** is a part of English for Specific Purposes and can be considered a specialism within English language learning and teaching.

**Business English** focuses on vocabulary and topics used in the worlds of business, trade, finance, and international relations.

**Business English** refers to the communication skills used in the workplace, and focuses on the language and skills needed for typical business communication such as:

*Presentations,*

*Negotiations,*

*Meetings,*

*Small talk,*

*Socializing,*

*Correspondence,*

*Report writing,*

...

In both of these cases it can be taught to native speakers of English, for example, students preparing to enter the job market.

It can also be a form of international English.

## **It is important to learn Business English**

Nowadays we live in a wide society, where communication with almost every part of the world is possible. English is the language of international business mostly used by people working with colleagues, clients and partners from other countries to understand each other, so that they can form effective and productive working relationships.

In order to meet the demands of modern employers, everyone from university graduates to senior managers must be able use English for business. Effective internal and external communication is essential to the success of any business, but professionals who need to communicate with each other as non-native English speakers can greatly benefit from learning Business English.

## **Difference between Business English and General English?**

Business English and General English both require the development skills in fluency, reading, writing and listening, the application of linguistic principles and, of course, plenty of hard work. It is important to have a good basis of General English to be able to communicate effectively. However, Business English courses focus on specific vocabulary, topics and skills that are applicable to the workplace and enable you to communicate accurately.

Examples:

- Phone/conference calls
- Presentations
- Meetings
- Negotiations
- Emails/reports/business letters

You will also be able to study a variety of topics that are relevant to your industry or company, which could include law, finance, medicine, IT, Marketing or Human Resources, while simultaneously enhancing your General English skills.

### **The use of Business English**

By studying Business English you can improve your overall English language ability while targeting areas that will help you achieve your professional goals. These could be anything from starting on your career path, looking for a promotion, pushing for a pay rise or simply feeling more confident in your role. Whatever your reasons may be, learning Business English can contribute to your professional progress, not to mention being rewarding and enjoyable.

# Business Letters in English

*How to write business letters and other correspondence including memos and emails in English?  
Following are tips from English Club, the world's premier free website for learners and teachers of English.*

## Business letters

Business letters are formal paper communications between, to or from businesses and usually sent through the Post Office or sometimes by courier. Business letters are sometimes called "snail-mail" (in contrast to email which is faster). This lesson concentrates on business letters but also looks at other business correspondence. It includes:

- Letter
- Memo
- Fax
- Email

## Who writes Business Letters?

Most people who have an occupation have to write business letters. Some write many letters each day and others only write a few letters over the course of a career. Business people also read letters on a daily basis. Letters are written from a person/group, known as the sender to a person/group, known in business as the recipient.

Here are some examples of senders and recipients:

- Business «» business
- Business «» consumer
- Job applicant «» company
- Citizen «» government official
- Employer «» employee
- Staff member «» staff member

## Why write Business Letters?

There are many reasons why you may need to write business letters or other correspondence:

- 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

Read through the following pages to learn more about the different types of business letters, and how to write them. You will learn about formatting, planning, and writing letters, as well as how to spot your own errors. These pages are designed to help you write business letters and correspondence, but they will also help you learn to read, and therefore respond to, the letters you receive. You will also find samples that you can use and alter for your own needs.

## Business Letter Vocabulary

**Attachment:** extra document or image that is added to an email

**Block format:** most common business letter format, single spaced, all paragraphs begin at the left margin

**Body:** the content of the letter; between the salutation and signature

**Bullets:** small dark dots used to set off items in an unnumbered list

**Certified mail:** important letters that sender pays extra postage for in order to receive a notice of receipt

**Coherent:** logical; easy to understand

**Concise:** gets to the point quickly

**Confidential, personal:** private

**Diplomacy, diplomatic:** demonstrating consideration and kindness

**Direct mail, junk mail:** marketing letters addressed to a large audience

**Double space:** format where one blank line is left between lines of text

**Enclosure:** extra document or image included with a letter

**Formal:** uses set formatting and business language, opposite of casual

**Format:** the set up or organization of a document

**Heading:** a word or phrase that indicates what the text below will be about

**Indent:** extra spaces (usually 5) at the beginning of a paragraph

**Informal:** casual

**Inside address:** recipient's mailing information

**Justified margins:** straight and even text, always begins at the same place

**Letterhead:** specialized paper with a (company) logo or name printed at the top

**Logo:** symbol or image that identifies a specific organization

**Margin:** a blank space that borders the edge of the text

**Memorandum (memo):** document sent within a company (internal), presented in short form

**Modified block format:** left justified as block format, but date and closing are centered

**On arrival notation:** notice to recipient that appears on an envelope (e.g. "confidential")

**Postage:** the cost of sending a letter through the Post Office

**Proofread:** read through a finished document to check for mistakes

**Punctuation:** marks used within or after sentences and phrases (e.g. periods, commas)

**Reader-friendly:** easy to read

**Recipient:** the person who receives the letter

**Right ragged:** format in which text on the right side of the document ends at slightly different points (not justified)

**Salutation:** greeting in a letter (e.g. "Dear Mr Jones")

**Sensitive information:** content in a letter that may cause the receiver to feel upset

**Semi-block format:** paragraphs are indented, not left-justified

**Sincerely:** term used before a name when formally closing a letter

**Single spaced format:** where no blank lines are left in-between lines of text

**Spacing:** blank area between words or lines of text

**Tone:** the feeling of the language (e.g. serious, enthusiastic)

**Transitions:** words or phrases used to make a letter flow naturally (e.g. "furthermore", "on the other hand")

## Business Letter Formats

There are certain standards for formatting a business letter, though some variations are acceptable (for example between European and North American business letters). Here are some basic guidelines:

- Use **A4** (European) or **8.5 x 11 inch** (North American) paper or letterhead

- Use **2.5 cm** or **1 inch** margins on all four sides

- Use a simple font such as **Times New Roman** or **Arial**

- Use **10 to 12 point** font

- Use a **comma** after the salutation (Dear Mr. Bond,)

- Lay out the letter so that it fits the paper appropriately

- Single space** within paragraphs

- Double space** between paragraphs

- Double space** between last sentence and closing (Sincerely, Best wishes)

- Leave **three to five** spaces for a handwritten signature

- cc:** (meaning "copies to") comes after the typed name (if necessary)

- enc:** (meaning "enclosure") comes next (if necessary)

- Fold in three (horizontally) before placing in the envelope

- Use right ragged formatting (not justified on right side)

## Formatting Business Letters

Block format is the most common format used in business today. With this format, nothing is centered. The sender's address, the recipient's address, the date and all new paragraphs begin at the left margin, like this:

Informatika Gasy Ltd  
300 Avenue de l'Indépendance  
Antananarivo 101  
MADAGASCAR

SENDER'S ADDRESS  
may be printed company logo and address

5th December, 2012

DATE

Mr. John Smith  
Cyber Space Co.  
1000 Beaver St, #100  
New York, NY 10004  
USA

RECIPIENT'S ADDRESS

Your ref: 123  
Our ref: abc

RECIPIENT'S REFERENCE (IF ANY)  
SENDER'S REFERENCE (IF ANY)

Dear Mr. Smith,

SALUTATION

Forthcoming Exhibition

SUBJECT

First paragraph...

|

Second paragraph...

|

BODY OF LETTER

|

Third paragraph...

|

Sincerely,

CLOSING

Aina Rasendra

SIGNATURE (HAND-WRITTEN)

Aina Rasendra, President

NAME, TITLE (TYPED)

cc: Brad Williams

COPY TO

Enc: catalogue

ENCLOSURE

There are other, slightly different ways of formatting a business letter, where for example paragraphs are indented or the date is typed on the right hand side. You can see examples of these in the sample letters.

## Formatting Envelopes for Business Letters

It is best to type an envelope for a business letter. Most word document programs contain an envelope labelling function to help you. All you need to do is indicate the size of envelope you are using and type the correct information in the appropriate fields, for example:

Sending company's name and address  
is sometimes printed here

Postage  
stamp

Ms. John Smith  
Cyber Space Co.  
1000 Beaver St, #100  
New York, NY 10004  
USA

## Formatting Business Memos

Memos are short internal business letters, sent to other staff within the same company. A memo (or memorandum) may also be posted somewhere inside a company for all to see. Memos are becoming less common as electronic mail becomes more common.

Following are tips from WikiHow to write a Business Memos

1. Write the heading section of the memo. The heading contains information about the recipient of the memo, the sender, the date and the business memo subject. The subject of the memo should be a short sentence that describes the entire memo.
2. Compose the opening paragraph. The first paragraph of a business memo should clearly state the intention of the memo and an overview of what information is going to be presented in the body of the memo.
3. Briefly describe the issue. The catalyst behind the release of a business memo needs to be summed up succinctly. Sentences used to define the issue should be short, to the point and rely heavily on facts.
4. Explain the solutions in progress. If you are working on a solution to a problem, or have an idea of how it can be solved, the third paragraph is the place to describe it. If the point of the memo is to deliver bad news, use this paragraph to highlight any positives that may result.
5. Summarize your findings in the fourth paragraph. If the memo is short, this is an optional section. But if the memo takes up more than one full page, a summary section highlighting the main points

discussed is helpful. This will ensure that the main points do not get lost within the bulk of the memo. Consider using a bullet list to make this section stand out.

6. Finish the memo by including what the recipients need to do and a deadline date for completing the requested action. Include any information about follow-up communication in the last paragraph.

7. Sign the memo. This is an optional step, but some companies adhere to the practice of completing business correspondence with the sender's signature appearing above the sender's typed name.

8. Proofread the memo. Prior to sending the memo internally or externally, make sure that the content is grammatically correct. If the memo contains sensitive information, check your company policy to see who can edit or read the memo for you.

In contrast to letters, memos do not usually contain salutations or closings, and may be typed or hand-written. The text portion of the memo is generally in block format. Memos should include "From", "To", "Date", "Subject" and the message itself, like this:

[Company logo]

#### MEMORANDUM

From: [name or initials]

To: [name or initials]

Date:

Subject: [short description]

Message starts here...

Often  
With  
Bullet  
Points

## Formatting Business Email

When using email in business, most of the guidelines for standard formatting in business letters apply. Here are a few differences:

- Choose a subject line that is simple and straightforward. Refrain from using key words that might cause an email to go into another person's trash box.
- Repeat the subject line in the body of the email, beneath the salutation (as with a letter).
- Use the "cc" address line to copy more than one person with your correspondence.



- You can request a receipt for important letters. The system will automatically let you know when someone has opened your email.
- Instead of a signature, include your typed name, and below it include your email address, business name and address, phone and fax number, and website if appropriate.
- Remember that people often print out emails, so your own email address and the subject line would be lost if you had not included them in the body of the email.
- Internal electronic mail may be formatted more like a memo than a formal letter.

Following are tips from WikiHow to Write Business Emails

Business emails are an entirely different 'kettle of fish' than the emails you send to your friends. You usually have a defined purpose in mind when you communicate with business associates and could have any number of things to talk about with a friend or family member. To properly use email in your business or job, use the following 6 steps.

1. Keep in mind that email is less formal than a written letter would be and treat it accordingly.
2. Decide how to phrase the greeting. If you don't know the person, a simple 'Hello' will do. If you know the person, talk to them as if you were in a conversation together.
3. Do not use abbreviated verb forms.

*Say:*

He is, We are, He would,

*Do not say:*

He's

We're

He'd.

4. Give the person another way of contacting you. A work or cell phone number will usually work.
5. Practice good email etiquette when responding to anyone. Quote the part you are responding to and delete the rest.
6. Don't feel that just because it is easy, you should shoot off a reply without giving any thought to it. For your emails to stand out from the tons of email that people receive, do something that will distinguish it.

Some of the things that you can concentrate on to improve the look and readability of your email are:

### **Style**

The human eye reacts differently to a computer screen than a piece of paper, so how you format your email is vital.

Use short, succinct sentences that get to the point immediately; remember, your goal is to communicate important information, so give that to the reader right up front.

Always include a greeting and a signature, and use as many line and paragraph breaks as possible; this makes the email easier to read. And resist the urge to write a book: short business emails are better; the equivalent of a page or so is sufficient.



**Tone**

Just because you CAN be horribly familiar and informal...don't be. Know who you are emailing and keep an appropriate tone.

**Grammar**

Check and double-check your email.

Watch closely for grammatical errors. Even if you put a lot of thought and effort into your communications, poor grammar gives it the appearance of something thrown together. If it is a real problem, find ways to ensure that you aren't sending poor quality emails.

Watch your spelling and punctuation.

Read and read again to make sure that repetition is removed. No one wants to hear the same old thing over and over.

Anyone receiving your emails will appreciate the obvious care that you take with them because they probably receive a lot of poorly written ones.

**Response**

Be sure that what you are asking for or expecting is understood. If you are sending information as an FYI...let the reader know. If you expect a response or results, be clear about those as well. However, always remember your manners when requesting a response. You get more results with honey than vinegar.

**Tips**

Check into some grammar correcting software.