**WRITING THE BUSINESS LETTER**

**Formatting your Business Letter**

* Use **single space**. Never use double space in a business letter. (There should be one blank line of white space between paragraphs.
* Do NOT indent your paragraphs.
* Use Times New Roman as font.
* Two addresses: **Your address** (make it up if want to) and **mine** (provided on instructions)
* Include the date.
* **12pt font**, but you may shrink to 11pt if you need to. You might also delete white space between addresses, or between the conclusion and the signature—cheat where you need to, but 11ptis the smallest I would go!
* See the **block** and **modified block** letter examples in the Project 02 folder.
* Your letter should fill the whole page.

**Salutation:** A common salutation may be “Dear Mr. (last name or full name).” But if you are unsure about titles (i.e., Mrs., Ms., Dr.), you may simply write the recipient’s name (e.g., “Dear Susan Rai”) followed by a colon. If your recipient is a woman, the default is Ms., or use her title, Dr. Rai.

* A comma after the salutation is correct for personal letters, but a colon should be used in business.
* **Avoid:** *To Whom It May Concern,* or *Dear Sir or Madame*. They are impersonal, and old fashioned. However, you can use *To Whom It May Concern,* if the letter will be read by a committee or several individuals (e.g. a recommendation letter).
* Make every effort to find out to whom the letter should be specifically addressed, Dear Mr. Gates or Ms. Nguyen. For many, there is no sweeter sound than that of their name, and to spell it incorrectly runs the risk of alienating the reader before your letter has even been read.
* If you don’t know name, use their title: Dear Professor, Dear Hiring Manager

**Project 02 Introductory Letter:**

**Introduction:** Introduce yourself and include some essential, but general details about yourself. You will then elaborate in the body paragraphs.

In your introduction, you might include some of the following facts about yourself, but the order of ideas and emphasis is up to you!

* Your name—My name is John Smith, or just say “I am” (Because your name will also be listed when you say, “Sincerely”).
* You will mention your major and classification and area of interest; and you may mention important family facts, married, kids, country of origin, work experience, education, military experience, and/or internship experience.
* You might also briefly suggest *why* you chose your major, i.e., why you’re interested in the field.
* For the *last sentence*—this is your transition to the body of the letter—you could suggest a long-term professional goal, a type of job, or company you’d like to work for, which may provide a sort of theme for the letter, or suggest how the course will be useful to you in general. Just do your best!

**Avoid:** Do NOT restate the purpose of this Project 02: Introductory letter—“I am writing to introduce myself” \*I am your audience, I know the purpose and therefore restating it is a waste of precious space.

**Avoid:** No need to tell me that you’re enrolled in the class—I already know; therefore, avoid this: “My name is Eric Smith and I am enrolled in TLIM 3363, your online Technical Communications course that meets on Monday at 4:30pm.”

**Support Paragraphs:**

For Project 02: Introductory Letter, you will want to include 1-2 support (body) paragraphs—however, I would probably recommend *two paragraphs,* for reasons I will explain below.

**Body Paragraph 01** might describe your past academic writing experience, or work writing experience. OR, you might discuss both academic and work writing experience or perhaps your military experience where writing was a component. Lots of options.

**Note:** Focus on the most relevant and unique examples of your past writing experience—essays or projects you wrote, and skills you learned.

**Body Paragraph 02** might reflect on your future career, while explaining what documents you will likely work with, and how writing is important in your field. How will this course assist you with the writing component of your job?

**Note:** Do some Google research if you’re not sure!

**Conclusion**

* Effective conclusions end with enthusiasm and positivity. They are forward thinking and engaging.
* Instead of summarizing, I would recommend emphasizing main points of the letter, and you can do that be adding more details or context about your future goals and how writing will be an asset toward achieving them.
* Or/and try to end with **one last interesting fact** or **detail** about yourself. Perhaps a short or long-term goal– a small business plan you’d love to pursue, a company you’d want to work for, perhaps another education goal?
* In the conclusions, some students will reference how the class—or a specific project from the class—will be useful to them.

**Avoid** a generic, repetitive conclusion that only summarizes what you’ve already said.

**Closing Salutation**

It is important to take into account your audience when ending any business document. Being both respectful and professional are two important elements of your ending salutation.

These following salutations would be for individuals whom you do not have a relationship with, new co-workers, potential clients, or a large email to a wide variety of individuals.

**Examples include:**

Sincerely, [you can never go wrong with this one]

Respectfully,

Best,

**BUSINESS CASUAL TONE**

Tone in writing refers to the writer's ***attitude*** toward the reader and the subject of the message.

* The overall tone of a written message influences the reader just as one's tone of voice affects the listener in everyday exchanges.

**How to create tone:** With your human voice, you all know how to sound serious, formal, sarcastic, hostile, condescending, positive, or encouraging. In writing your create tone by your word choice, sentence structure, usage, grammar, and punctuation.

The tone you are attempting to adopt is called, **“business casual.”** You should sound like a more professional version of yourself. For example, the kind of person in a job interview who is answering questions with facts, facts, facts.

**Avoid the “Letterese” tone:**

**Example of letterese:** Thanking you in advance for your kind assistance, I will patiently wait on your pending reply to my email before alerting the vendor.

* Instead,use a more natural voice, which is achieved by choosing more common words, and using shorter sentences.

**Example of business casual:** Thank you for your help, and I will wait on your response before contacting the vendor.

**Letterese vs. Natural**

As per your request… **vs.** As you requested

Contingent upon receipt of the invoice, I will… **vs.** As soon as we receive the invoice, I will…

**Tone Examples:**

Bob is writing a cover letter for a position as a Sales Representative for a newspaper. He is unsure if he is qualified and uses phrases such as:

"I hope that you will contact me..." "I know that my qualifications are not very impressive, but...“

**Analysis of Weakness:**

The reader is likely to interpret these phrases to mean that Bob isn't really qualified for the position or that he doesn't really want the position. Be confident.

Clearly, Bob is not assuming an appropriate tone. He must consider that:

* He is applying for a position as a Sales Representative.
* He wants the employer to ask him to come in for an interview.
* The employer will look for highly motivated and confident individuals.

**Edited for Proper Tone:**

If Bobwere to consider his audience and purpose, he could rewrite his cover letter to include such phrases as:

"My qualifications make me a strong applicant for this position...“

OR:

"You can reach me at 555-2233; I look forward to hearing from you."

* The tone of the message has changed to sound more confident and self-assured.

**TONE TO AVOID:**

Below is part of a cover letter to JP Morgan written from a college applicant—this is a real letter, and the person writing adopts a tone you should probably avoid.

Tone=the writer’s attitude.

**What is the tone the writer has adopted here?**

To: J.P. Morgan

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am an ambitious undergraduate at NYU triple majoring in Mathematics, Economics, and Computer Science. I am a punctual, personable, and shrewd individual, yet I have a quality which I pride myself on more than any of these.

I am unequivocally the most unflaggingly hard worker I know, and I love self-improvement. I have always felt that my time should be spent wisely, so I continuously challenge myself. i left Villanova because the work was too easy. Once I realized I could achieve a perfect GPA while holding a part-time job at NYU, I decided to redouble my effort by placing out of two classes, taking two honors classes, and holding two part-time jobs. That semester I achieved a 3.93, and in the same time I managed to bench double my bodyweight and do 35 pull-ups.

I am proficient in several programming languages, and I can pick up a new one very quickly. For instance, I learned a years worth of Java from NYU in 27 days on my own…..

Please realize that I am not a braggart or conceited, I just want to outline my usefulness. Egos can be a huge liability, and I try not to have one.

Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Mark