

# Chapter 6

## Message Formats

# Message Formats

- Formatting letters
- Formatting memos

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo.

Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullamco doloribus, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur.

Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

Company Name  
Sales Director  
Name Smith

*Name Smith*

Signature

Huron Intermediate  
School District

## Memo

To: 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade faculty  
From: Leah Zuidema  
Date: November 14, 2003  
Re: What a memo is and how to write one

This memo provides basic information about memos that you may wish to adapt and share with your students. Many teachers are so familiar with memos that we find it difficult to actually explain them to students; this document outlines some of the basics that students need to know. A memo is a short document that members within an organization use to exchange information. To write a memo, consider the needs of your audience, use the inverted pyramid for organization, and support your content with formatting that makes it easy to read.

**What a memo is**  
Memos are considered to be official documents in most organizations. They are used to ask for information or to call for action, or they are written to report back in response to requests for information or action. Memos are often read by many people. Many memos are written to large groups of people within an organization. Some memos are written to only one person but are passed along ("forwarded") to other people in the organization who need the information. Because memos are official organizational documents, they are sometimes read by people outside of the organization. Some memos are made public for legal reasons or during court cases. Other times, particularly "juicy" memos are leaked to the press.

**How to write a memo**  
After you have analyzed your audience and settled on your purpose, you can write a memo by following these steps:

1. Open a new Microsoft Word document and select the memo template, or design a page of your own that looks similar to this one.
2. Before you begin the actual text of the memo, fill in the header. State whom the memo is to, who is writing it, the date that it was written, and a precise and informative subject (labeled "Re:" in this memo).
3. Begin the text of your memo by stating the precise purpose of the memo (why you are writing). Then write a brief but informative summary of your message. The purpose and summary are the most important information to your reader.
4. Write the discussion section of the memo by explaining details and examples that will be essential for your reader to know. It may be helpful to remember to answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how.
5. Finish the text of your memo with a call for action or a statement about action you will take. Politely state what you want your reader to do after reading the memo.

As you are writing your memo, remember to make use of formatting conventions that will help your readers. Use block-style paragraphs, headings, bullets or numbering, and even graphics where appropriate. When you finish the memo and are ready to make it official, hand write your initials next to your name in the "From" line.

If you are interested in additional tips on writing memos, please visit the University of Toronto's website about memos at <http://www.uct.utoronto.ca/~writing/handbook-memo.html>. The memo you are reading is based on advice from this website, and you will be able to discover more detailed advice to help you with writing memos.



Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

Company Name  
Sales Director  
Name Smith

# Letters

- Used for external communication
- Used for formal internal messages to employees

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

- Heading
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature block
- Reference initials

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Heading

- Letterhead or keyed return address
- Date with the month spelled out

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Inside address

- Receiver's name and title
- Company name
- Street address
- City, State and ZIP code



## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Salutation

- Begins a double space after the inside address
- Dear \_\_\_\_\_:
- Should match the first line of the inside address

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Body

- Begins a double space below the salutation
- Single spaced within paragraphs and double spaced between paragraphs



## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Complimentary close

- Sincerely,
  - Sincerely yours,
  - Respectfully,
- 
- Placed a double space below the last line of the body.

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Signature block

- Writer's signed name
- Writer's keyed name
- Writer's Title

## SAN MIGUEL BREWERY CORP.

Name Smith  
1234 Main Street  
Anytown, State ZIP  
123-456-7890  
Sample@example.com

September 19, 2020

Trenz Pruca  
VP of Sales  
Company Name Here  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP

Dear Trenz,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

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Sincerely,

*Name Smith*

Name Smith  
Sales Director  
Company Name

am

# Standard Parts of a Letter

## Reference initials

- Show who keyed the letter
- May also show who wrote the letter if different than the person who signed it

# Supplementary Parts of a Letter

- Attention line
- Subject line
- Company name in signature block
- Enclosure or attachment notation
- Copy notation
- Postscript



2435 Bridge Street, Stafford, VA 22554-5272 (703) 555-5549 • FAX (703) 555-3198

July 17, 2008

Mr. Alan Cruz,  
Director Backshore  
YouthCenter Center  
5628 26th Avenue  
21218 4501

Dear Mr. Cruz:

Subject: LETTER USING FULL BLOCK FORMAT

This letter is in full block format, which is the most streamlined letter style because all parts and all lines begin at the left margin. The letterhead uses less than two vertical inches of stationery, and the date is placed approximately a double space (two lines) below the letterhead.

The inside address is keyed flush with the left margin and is the same as the address on the envelope. Depending on its length, the position title may be keyed after the name on the first line or on the line below the name.

The salutation is on the second line below the inside address. The name used in the salutation should be the same as would be used if the sender met that person on the street. Notice the colon after the salutation (mixed punctuation).

The subject line is keyed flush with the left margin a double space below the salutation and is considered part of the body. The body is single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs.

The complimentary close is keyed a double space below the body and is flush with the left margin. A comma follows the close (mixed punctuation). The signature block (writer's name and title) is keyed four lines below the complimentary close. The reference initials are keyed a line below the sender's title.

Sincerely,

*Clark Patrick*

Clark Patrick  
Communication

vfr

Heading

Inside Address

Salutation

Subject Line

Body

Complimentary Close

Signature Block

Reference Initials

# Punctuation Styles

- Mixed punctuation
  - Colon (:) after the salutation
  - Comma (,) after the complimentary close
- Open punctuation
  - no punctuation after the salutation
  - no punctuation after the complimentary close

# Letter Formats

- Full Block

- Modified Block

- Simplified

**Office Services**  
"Preparing Your Office for the Future"  
2435 Bridge Street, Stafford, VA 22554-5272 (703) 555-5549 • FAX (703) 555-3198

July 17, 2008

Mr. Alan Cruz, Director  
Backshore Youth Center  
5628 26th Avenue South  
Baltimore, MD 21218-4501

Dear Mr. Cruz:

Subject: LETTER USING FULL BLOCK FORMAT

This letter is in full block format, which is the most streamlined letter style because all parts and all lines begin at the left margin. The letterhead uses less than two vertical inches of stationery, and the date is placed approximately a double space (two lines) below the letterhead.

The inside address is keyed flush with the left margin and is the same as the address on the envelope. Depending on its length, the position title may be keyed after the name on the first line or on the line below the name.

The salutation is on the second line below the inside address. The name used in the salutation should be the same as would be used if the sender met that person on the street. Notice the colon after the salutation (mixed punctuation).

The subject line is keyed flush with the left margin a double space below the salutation and is considered part of the body. The body is single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs.

The complimentary close is keyed a double space below the body and is flush with the left margin. A comma follows the close (mixed punctuation). The signature block (writer's name and title) is keyed four lines below the complimentary close. The reference initials are keyed a line below the sender's title.

Sincerely,  
*Clark Patrick*  
Clark Patrick  
Communication Specialist  
vfr

**FIGURE 6.3**  
Full Block Letter Format,  
Mixed Punctuation

Heading

Inside Address

Salutation

Subject Line

Body

Complimentary Close

Signature Block

Reference Initials



# Letter Formats

- Full Block

- **Modified Block,  
Block Paragraph**

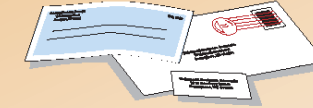
- Simplified

**FIGURE 6.4**  
Modified Block Letter  
Format, Blocked Paragraphs,  
Open Punctuation

**Heading**

**Carson Associates**

703 Trey Lane  
Charleston, WV 25304-2142  
(304) 555-6341 FAX (304) 555-2796



May 11, 2008

**Inside Address**

Quality Healthcare  
863 Granny Lane  
Charleston, WV 25304-1532

**Salutation**

Attention: Personnel Services

**Subject Line**

Ladies and Gentlemen

You asked for information about the most popular letter style used in business—the modified block letter format. This letter is in the modified block format with blocked paragraphs. A pamphlet with additional information about letter formats is enclosed.

Notice the date in the heading begins at the horizontal center of the page. The inside address is flush with the left margin. The addressee's name is unknown, so an attention line is used. The salutation is plural because the first line of the inside address is the name of a company; the use of a singular title in the attention line has no effect on the salutation. No punctuation is used after the salutation because the open punctuation style is used.

**Body**

The body of this letter uses blocked paragraphs but could have used indented paragraphs. As in most letters, the body is single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs.

The complimentary close is keyed a double space below the body and at the horizontal center of the letter. Notice that it is in line with the date and is followed by no punctuation (open punctuation).

The reference initials contain the originator's and keyboard operator's initials because the individual signing the letter did not originate the document. The enclosure notation is used to ensure that the person mailing the letter includes the pamphlet and that the person receiving the letter is aware that it was included.

Modified block is the most widely accepted letter format.

**Complimentary Close**

Sincerely

*Clarence Harris*

**Signature Block**

Clarence Harris  
Communication Consultant

**Reference Initials**

CH:ne

**Enclosure**

Enclosure

# Letter Formats

- Full Block

- Modified Block,  
Indented Paragraph

- Simplified

**FIGURE 6.5**  
Modified Block Letter  
Format, Indented  
Paragraphs, Open  
Punctuation

**Carson Associates**  
703 Trey Lane  
Charleston, WV 25304-2142  
(304) 555-6341 FAX (304) 555-2796



May 11, 2008

Quality Healthcare  
863 Granny Lane  
Charleston, WV 25304-1532  
  
Attention: Personnel Services  
  
Ladies and Gentlemen

You asked for information about the modified block letter format. This letter is in the modified block format with indented paragraphs. You will notice that it is identical to the modified block except that the first word in each paragraph is indented one-half inch. When a subject line is used, it may be centered or indented one-half inch to match the paragraphs. A pamphlet with additional information about letter formats is enclosed.

The date in the heading begins at the horizontal center of the page, whereas the inside address is flush with the left margin. No punctuation is used after the salutation because the open punctuation style is used.

The body of this letter uses indented paragraphs but could have used blocked paragraphs. As in most letters, the body is singled-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs.

The complimentary close is keyed a double space below the body and at the horizontal center of the letter. Notice that it is in line with the date and is followed by no punctuation (open punctuation).

The reference initials contain the originator's and keyboarder's initials because the individual signing the letter did not prepare the document. The enclosure notation is used to ensure that the person mailing the letter includes the pamphlet and that the person receiving the letter is aware that it was included.

Modified block is a well-accepted letter format that is popular in many organizations.

Sincerely  
*Clarence Harris*  
Clarence Harris  
Communication Consultant

CH:ne  
Enclosure

Heading

Inside Address

Salutation

Subject Line

Body

Complimentary Close

Signature Block

Reference Initials

Enclosure

# Letter Formats

- Full Block
- Modified Block

- Simplified

FIGURE 6.6  
Simplified Format

The diagram illustrates a letter in simplified format. On the left, a vertical column of red labels with arrows points to specific parts of the letter on the right. The labels are: **Heading**, **Inside Address**, **Subject Line**, **Body**, **Writer's Name and Title**, **Keyboard Operator's Initials**, **Enclosure**, and **Copy Notation**.

**Heading** points to the BBS Bluegrass Business Services logo and address: 2175 Bonnie Castle Lane, Louisville, KY 40204-4372, (502) 555-5218 FAX (502) 555-8326.

**Inside Address** points to the recipient's address: Mr. Marc Dicken, Dicken Insurance Agency, 681 Aldrich Avenue, Paducah, KY 42086-2184.

**Subject Line** points to the subject line: SIMPLIFIED FORMAT.

**Body** points to the main text of the letter, which includes a list of guidelines for using the simplified format and a closing sentence.

**Writer's Name and Title** points to the signature: Amy Elam.

**Keyboard Operator's Initials** points to the initials: rs.

**Enclosure** points to the word: Enclosure.

**Copy Notation** points to the copy notation: cc: E. J. Scorpio.

**Letter Content:**

**BBS Bluegrass Business Services**  
2175 Bonnie Castle Lane  
Louisville, KY 40204-4372  
(502) 555-5218 FAX (502) 555-8326

10 June 2008

Mr. Marc Dicken  
Dicken Insurance Agency  
681 Aldrich Avenue  
Paducah, KY 42086-2184

SIMPLIFIED FORMAT

This letter, Marc, is in the simplified format. Follow these guidelines when preparing letters using this modern, time-saving format:

1. Use full block format.
2. Omit the salutation and complimentary close. Use the addressee's name in the first sentence to personalize the message.
3. Use a subject line keyed in uppercase letters. The subject line is keyed a double space below the address; the body is keyed a double space below the subject line.
4. Key all enumerations at the left margin.
5. On the fifth line (leave four blank lines) below the body of the letter, key the writer's name and title in uppercase letters flush with the left margin.
6. Key the keyboard operator's initials in lowercase letters a double space below the writer's name. Enclosure notations and copy notations begin a double space below the keyboard operator's initials.

Marc, you will enjoy using this format once you become familiar with it. The enclosed brochure describes future writing workshops that will give you practice creating letters in different formats.

*Amy Elam*

AMY ELAM, TRAINING SPECIALIST

rs

Enclosure

cc: E. J. Scorpio



# Personal Business Letters

---

- Written by an individual conducting business of a personal nature
- Contain the same elements as a business letter

# Personal Business Letter Heading Format

- 2" top margin
- Writer's street address
- Writer's City, State, and Zip Code
- Date

The diagram illustrates the format of a personal business letter. It shows a letter on a light orange background. At the top right, the heading is written: "858 Church Road", "Pittsburg, KS 66762", and "April 17, 2008". A red double-headed arrow indicates a 2-inch top margin. Below the heading, the inside address is written: "Dr. Ron Clement", "453 Grouse Lane", "Pittsburg, KS 66762". Below the inside address, the salutation is written: "Dear Ron:". The body of the letter consists of four paragraphs. The first paragraph states: "This is a personal business letter keyed in modified block format with indented paragraphs. The personal business letter may use any of the three accepted formats." The second paragraph states: "The heading contains the sender's address immediately above the date. This address is keyed and not printed, as it would be in letterhead stationery. Notice that the individual sending the letter omits his or her name in the heading. A general guide is to place the heading two inches from the top edge of the paper, but this varies with the length of the letter." The third paragraph states: "The inside address is flush with the left margin four to six lines below the dateline. The inside address is the receiver's address, which also appears on the envelope." The fourth paragraph states: "The salutation is a double space (two lines) below the inside address. When mixed punctuation is used, key a colon (not a comma) after the salutation because this letter is business and not personal in content." The fifth paragraph states: "Supplementary parts (attention lines, subject lines, enclosures, etc.) are used as in regular business letters. The body of the letter contains the message that the sender is transmitting to the receiver. The body should be single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs." The sixth paragraph states: "The writer signs in the space between the complimentary close and the signature block. Normally, a personal business letter does not contain reference initials because the sender keys the letter." At the bottom right, the complimentary close is written: "Sincerely,". Below the complimentary close, the signature block is written: "Gary Smart" (in a cursive font) and "Gary Smart" (in a plain font). Red arrows point from labels on the right to the corresponding parts of the letter: "Heading" points to the heading, "Inside Address" points to the inside address, "Salutation" points to the salutation, "Body" points to the body paragraphs, "Complimentary Close" points to the complimentary close, and "Signature Block" points to the signature block.

**FIGURE 6.7**  
Personal Business Letter

**Heading**

858 Church Road  
Pittsburg, KS 66762  
April 17, 2008

**Inside Address**

Dr. Ron Clement  
453 Grouse Lane  
Pittsburg, KS 66762

**Salutation**

Dear Ron:

**Body**

This is a personal business letter keyed in modified block format with indented paragraphs. The personal business letter may use any of the three accepted formats.

The heading contains the sender's address immediately above the date. This address is keyed and not printed, as it would be in letterhead stationery. Notice that the individual sending the letter omits his or her name in the heading. A general guide is to place the heading two inches from the top edge of the paper, but this varies with the length of the letter.

The inside address is flush with the left margin four to six lines below the dateline. The inside address is the receiver's address, which also appears on the envelope.

The salutation is a double space (two lines) below the inside address. When mixed punctuation is used, key a colon (not a comma) after the salutation because this letter is business and not personal in content.

Supplementary parts (attention lines, subject lines, enclosures, etc.) are used as in regular business letters. The body of the letter contains the message that the sender is transmitting to the receiver. The body should be single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs.

The writer signs in the space between the complimentary close and the signature block. Normally, a personal business letter does not contain reference initials because the sender keys the letter.

**Complimentary Close**

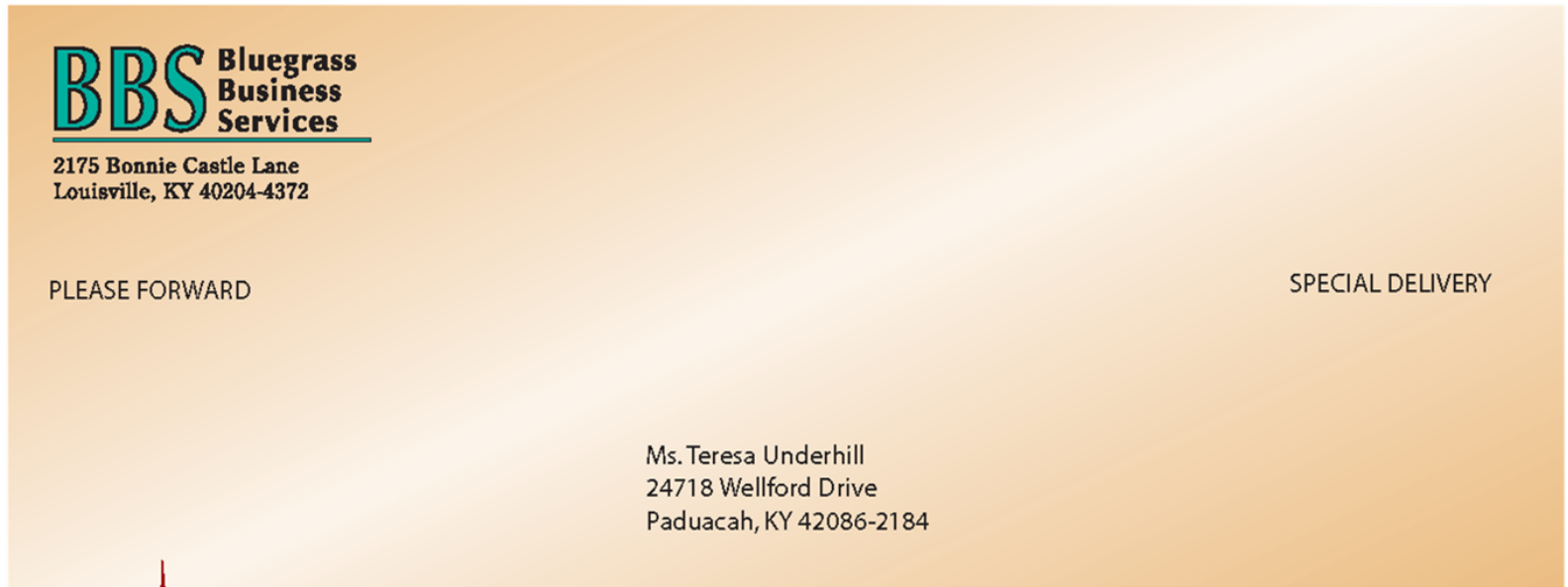
Sincerely,

**Signature Block**

Gary Smart  
Gary Smart

# Envelopes

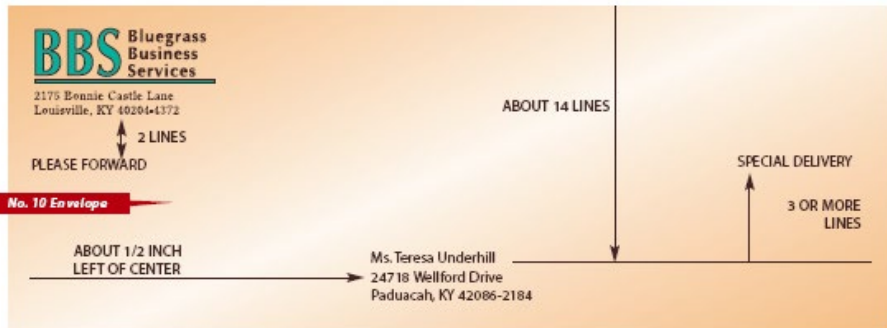
- Envelop paper should be the same color/design tone
- Quality as the letterhead stationery.



No. 10 Envelope



No. 6 3/4 Envelope





# Memos and E-Mail

## Memo

- Internal business communication
- Less formal and shorter than letters

## E-mail

- Gradually replacing memos for internal communication
- May be used selectively for external communication

**FIGURE 6.13**  
Memo Prepared Using  
Microsoft Word Memo  
Template

*Company Name*

*Heading*

*Body*

*Reference Initials*

# Memo Format

- To:
- From:
- Date:
- Re:

**Taylor Enterprises**

## Memo

To: All Employees  
From: Janet Wilkins, Administrative Specialist JW  
Date: 03/17/08  
Re: Characteristics of Formal Memos

Many questions have arisen concerning proper construction and use of formal memos. The following guidelines should answer these questions.

Formal memos contain several unique characteristics. Some of these characteristics follow:

1. A memo should have a preprinted or keyed heading consisting of **TO:**, **FROM:**, **DATE:**, and **SUBJECT:** or **Re**.
2. The individual sending the memo may or may not use a business title. The sender normally does not use a complete signature. An individual's first name or initials are usually written after the keyed name on the **FROM** line in the heading.
3. The memo is not centered vertically as is a letter.
4. Memos, whether formal or simplified, are normally short and contain only one topic; that topic is indicated in the subject line. If more than one topic is needed, separate memos are sent.
5. The body of the memo is in block style beginning a triple space below the heading. The body is single spaced.
6. Informal writing style is appropriate for memos. First person, I, is commonly used as in letters.

Remember that memos should be concise and easy to read; they should not contain any irrelevant information.

fp





# Stationery

- Size
- Weight
- Color
- Quality
- Envelope Paper