

Memorandum

To: UWP 104A Students
From: Ken Andersen
Date: Tuesday, January 4, 2022
Subject: **Formal Letter Assignment Guidelines**

Your next major assignment in this course will be a formal complaint letter. What follows are the guidelines for this 100-point, individual assignment.

The Formal Letter

We'll be discussing formal letter formatting and content as well as some of the reasons we might write and send formal letters. Soon you'll be submitting a letter proposal, after which time you'll have the go ahead to move forward on this assignment. Your next task will be to draft your letter. As you embark on your writing process, there are several important aspects of letter writing that you'll need to keep in mind.

Your Letter's Target Reader

You'll need to conduct some initial research to determine the decision maker to whom you should be writing your letter. If you received bad service at a restaurant, for example, it wouldn't make sense to write to the server who provided that bad service. Find the name of a manager, supervisor, or owner who would be in a position to act on the directive you include in your letter. Be sure to also find the correct address for that recipient. Remember that it's *never* appropriate to begin any correspondence with "To whom it may concern."

Your Letter's Organization

As we'll discuss in class, the direct approach to writing this letter is likely the most appropriate approach. You'll need an introduction that draws the reader in (and that doesn't alienate them) and that addresses the following:

- The reason you're writing
- A brief and general description of the situation
- A smooth transition to the letter's body

The body of your letter will be where you provide the details of the situation that you feel called for this letter. Answer the following questions as you draft your letter's body:

- What, specifically (but concisely), were the circumstances surrounding this negative experience?
- What claims do you need to make?
- How will you support your claims?
- What does the recipient need to know to be able to act?

As is the case with your letter's introduction and body, your conclusion should be clear and concise.

You'll also need to include persuasive appeals in an effort to get the recipient to act on your directive. To craft the conclusion, consider your responses to the following questions:

- Is a thank you appropriate? (Probably)
- What will your directive be?
 - What do you want *done* as a result of this letter?
- Is a timeline necessary?
 - If yes, what are reasonable dates?
- Do you wish to be contacted?
 - If you wish to be contacted, *how* should the recipient contact you?

Once you've drafted your formal letter, be sure to review it from beginning to end to make sure that the content and organization are appropriate and effective in terms of helping you accomplish your communication goals. As you review your work, put yourself in the position of the recipient. Would *you* be likely to respond favorably to the letter if *you* were the recipient?

Submission Procedures and Deadlines

Submit to Canvas a one-paragraph formal letter-topic proposal by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday, January 17**. This paragraph should *concisely* explain the circumstances surrounding the situation about which you plan to write your letter. *Do not write a letter draft for this part of the assignment*. One paragraph is the limit.

The rough draft of your formal letter is due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday, January 24**. Please note that missing this deadline will cause you to miss the peer reviews for this assignment, and you'll lose the peer-review points.

The final draft of your formal letter is due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday, January 31**.

I'll evaluate your letter based on how well it meets the characteristics of effective business communication. Your letter should also be free of typos and spelling errors. As we've established, grammar and punctuation should facilitate, not hinder, the clarity of your message. For more specifics on the grading of this assignment, see the Grading Criteria section below.

Formal Letter Grading Criteria

The following outlines the grading criteria for the formal letter assignment.

Content	70
Organization (appropriate approach?)	
Development, support	
Persuasiveness (explanations?)	
Reader benefit development	
Relevance	
Concision, clarity, coherence	
Professional content/tone	
Adherence to the assignment prompt	
Format	15
Readable format	
Appropriate visual cues, such as headings, lists, white space, etc.	
Professional appearance	
Mechanics	15
Correct spelling, no typos, good grammar, appropriate punctuation	
Total Points	100