

GLOSSARY



Writing Formal Business Letters and Emails

With Tom Geller

Use these terms and definitions below to understand concepts taught in the course.

Transcript Search: note that you can search for terms directly within the course. To search video text, switch to the *Transcripts* tab, then press Cmd/Ctrl + F on your keyboard to run a search within the active transcript.

Term	Definition
accessibility	Using language and structure that will make your letter or email more understandable to the target recipient.
recipient	The person receiving your letter or email.
TAP	A method for sending effective reminders. TAP stands for Timeline, Alternatives, Peskiness.

Sample Letter: Researched Target

Ms. Clarke:

My name is Salman Voorbeeld, and I'm responding to your job listing for an experienced Developmental Editor, ideally to start around August 1st. My resume is attached.

I currently work at JustTheSun Publishing, where over the past three years I've helped about a dozen writers to create materials about such aspects of green living as renewable energy and sustainable housekeeping. Prior to that I was a writer and copy editor for three years at the Mid-Urban Tribune.

Please write back to set up a time to talk by phone. I look forward to hearing from you.

Action

Sincerely,

Salman

P.S. My research shows that you're the best person to contact for this. If not, I'd appreciate if you could forward my message, or refer me to the right person.

Researching Your Topic: Letter Comparison

Unedited Letter

KinetEco:

My name is Salman Voorbeeld, and I'm responding to your job listing for an experienced Developmental Editor, ideally to start around August 1st. My resume is attached.

I currently work at JustTheSun Publishing, where I enjoy creating materials that inspire fantasy as well as thought.

Please write back to set up a time to talk by phone. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Salman

Edited Letter

KinetEco:

My name is Salman Voorbeeld, and I'm responding to your job listing for an experienced Developmental Editor, ideally to start around August 1st. My resume is attached.

I currently work at JustTheSun Publishing, where over the past three years I've helped about a dozen writers to create materials about such aspects of green living as renewable energy and sustainable housekeeping. Prior to that I was a writer and copy editor for three years at the Mid-Urban Tribune.

Please write back to set up a time to talk by phone. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Salman

Question 1 of 2

What is an "action item"?

✔ You are correct!

something you're asking the reader to do right away

Feedback

It's a "call to action", compelling the reader to do something.

Question 2 of 2

What's probably your best source for useful information about a topic?

✔ You are correct!

primary sources such as job listings and requests for quotes

Feedback

The closer you get to the original source of information, the more likely it is to be accurate.

My research shows that you're the best person to contact for this. If not, I'd appreciate if you could forward my message, or refer me to the right person.

- ① Put the goal up front.
- ② Remove confusing details.
- ③ Rearrange and check.
- ④ Use fewer words.

within those golden eight seconds.



Phrasal Verbs

I looked over your document and broke it down...

I had been hoping to meet...

Little apple, little egg.

His idea was out of left field.



Accessible Alternatives

I read your document and analyzed it...

I hoped to meet OR I hope to meet

...

His idea was unexpected.



Difficult Subjects: Letter Revisions

Unedited Letter

KinetEco:

You owe me money and I'm really mad about it. I created graphics for your website but never got the payment you promised. I think you were lying when you hired me—you never had the money to begin with.

I expect you to pay me as soon as possible, or I'll see you in court.

Sincerely,

Salman

Intermediate Version

KinetEco:

You contracted me to create graphics that now appear on your website. Per our agreement, payment of \$350 was due on May 1st, but I unfortunately still haven't received it.

I've attached a copy of the invoice that I previously sent you on March 15th. I accept payment by check, direct deposit, PayPal, or bitcoin: Details are in the invoice. I'm afraid I'll be unable to do further work for you until I receive this payment.

Sincerely,

Salman

Final Version

KinetEco:

It was a pleasure to work with you recently, creating graphics that I see are now on the website. It looks great!

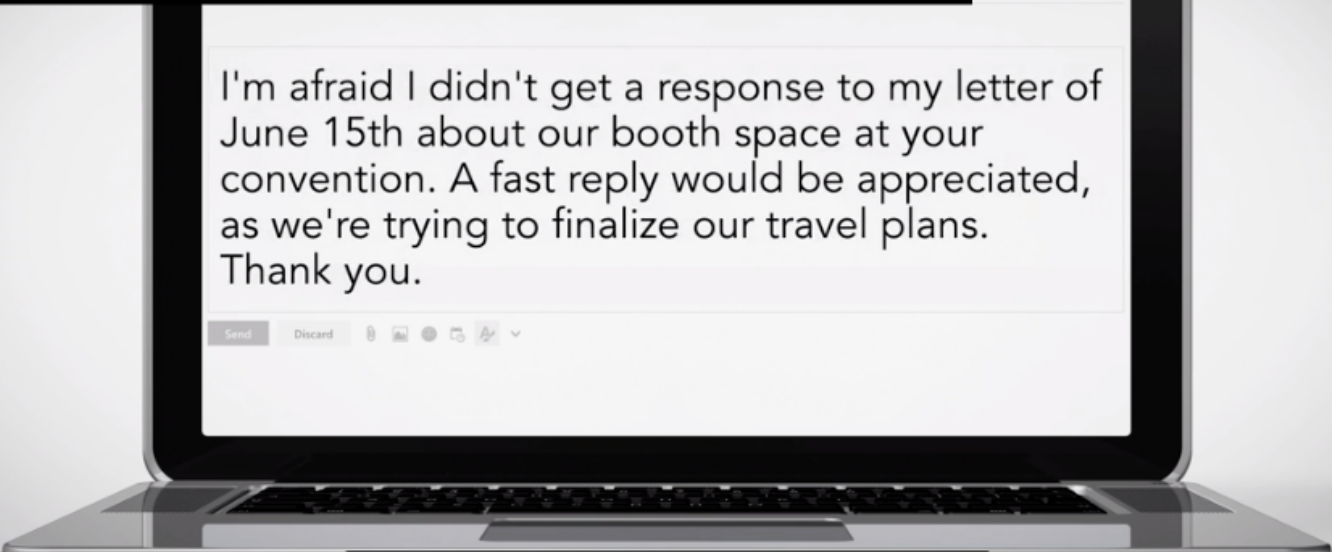
Unfortunately, I still haven't received the \$350 payment for this work that our agreement specified, and which was due on May 1st. I've attached a copy of the invoice that I previously sent you on March 15th. I accept payment by check, direct deposit, PayPal, or bitcoin: Details are in the invoice. I'm afraid I'll be unable to do further work for you until I receive this payment.

Thanks again for the opportunity to work together; I look forward to continuing our productive relationship after this matter has been settled.

Sincerely,

Salman

Sending effective reminders

A laptop screen displays an email draft. The text of the email is: "I'm afraid I didn't get a response to my letter of June 15th about our booth space at your convention. A fast reply would be appreciated, as we're trying to finalize our travel plans. Thank you." Below the text, there are buttons for "Send" and "Discard", and a row of icons for attachments and formatting.

I'm afraid I didn't get a response to my letter of June 15th about our booth space at your convention. A fast reply would be appreciated, as we're trying to finalize our travel plans. Thank you.

I think it's often a good idea to include something like: I previously discussed this with so and so, but I haven't heard from them lately. Again, use your judgment. Reminder letters set up an implicitly confrontational situation because you're effectively pointing out something that they failed to do.

But if you gauge your own need to follow up and handle the matter politely, time spent writing follow-up letters can pay off handsomely.