

Business English

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 or businessperson (*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 & 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,
 - 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 & 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 typed on the right hand side

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.
 - All begin at the **left** margin:
 - the sender's address,
 - the recipient's address,
 - the date and
 - all new paragraphs
- (See image)
- 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 image below:
 - Block format
 - Modified block format
 - Semi-block format



Block format



Modified block format



Semi-block format

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

5th December, 20##

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

Your ref: 123
Our ref: abc

Dear Mr. Smith,

Forthcoming Exhibition

First paragraph...

Second paragraph...

Third paragraph...

Sincerely,

Aina Rasendra

Aina Rasendra, President

cc: Brad Williams

Enc: catalogue

Sender's address
May be printed company logo and address

Date

Recipient's address

Recipient's reference (if any)
Sender's reference (if any)

Salutation

Subject

|
|
| **Body of letter**
|

Closing

Signature (hand-written)

Name, Title (typed)

Copy to

Enclosure

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	
½ inch clear zone to allow for Postal Service barcode	

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.

How to Write an Effective Memo

- Memo (short for memorandum) is a business-oriented style that is best suited for inter-office or inter-colleague correspondence [kean].
- More informal in tone and organization than a letter, memos are generally used:
 - to provide or ask for information,
 - to announce a new policy,
 - to update on personnel transfers, or
 - for any other internal issues.

Elements of an Effective Memo

- An effective memo:
 - grabs the reader's attention
 - provides information, makes a recommendation, or asks for action
 - supports your position or explains benefits to reader
 - mentions next steps and deadlines

When composing a memo, always take the 4-step approach to writing:

- plan what you want to say,
- write a draft,
- revise the draft, and
- edit.

Types of Memos

There are 4 types of memos you might have to write, each with its own organizational format:

- information,
- problem-solving,
- persuasion, and
- internal memo proposal.

More informal in appearance and tone than a letter, a memo is set up in a special format.

➤ Information Memo

- used to deliver or request information or assistance
- first paragraph provides main idea
- second paragraph expands on the details
- third paragraph outlines the action required

➤ Problem-solving Memo

- suggests a specific action to improve a situation
- first paragraph states the problem
- second paragraph analyzes the problem
- third paragraph makes a recommendation
- when making a recommendation, include:
 - not only the positive details
 - but also the drawbacks and diffuse them yourself

➤ Persuasion Memo

- used to encourage the reader to undertake an action he or she doesn't have to take
- first paragraph begins with an agreeable point
- second paragraph introduces the idea
- third paragraph states benefits to the reader
- fourth paragraph outlines the action required
- fifth paragraph ends with a call to action

➤ Internal Memo Proposal

- used to convey suggestions to senior management
- first paragraph states reason for writing
- second paragraph outlines present situation and states writer's proposal
- third paragraph describes advantage(s)
- fourth paragraph mentions and diffuses disadvantage(s)
- fifth paragraph ends with a call to action

Memo Parts

- More informal in appearance and tone than a letter, a memo is set up in a special format.
- To make the information more readable:
 - headings,
 - lists,
 - tables or
 - graphsare often used
- All memos consist of 2 sections:
 - the heading and
 - the body.
- The heading indicates:
 - who is writing
 - to whom,
 - when,
 - and why.

The **heading** should include the following 5 parts:

1. To

- lists the names of everyone who will receive the memo
- includes the first and last name and titles or departments of the recipients for:
 - formal memos,
 - memos to superiors, or
 - if everyone on the list does not know each other
- if all recipients know each other's names and positions, use just the first initial and last name of each recipient
- can be listed alphabetically or by rank
- if it is not possible to fit all the names in the To: area, use the phrase "*See distribution list*"
- at the end of the memo add the word "Distribution" and then list the names of the people who will receive a copy of the memo
- arrange the names by rank, department or alphabetically

2. From

- lists the name of the writer(s) in the same way as the name(s) of the recipient(s)
- there is no complimentary close or signature line, but authors initial their names on the From: line

3. Date

- lists the month, date, and year the memo was written
- do **not** use abbreviations
- avoid using numbers for months and days

4. Re: or Subject (Re: is defined as an abbreviation for regarding)

- indicates the main subject of the letter
- should be as specific and concise as possible

5. Cc or c (Cc: stands for carbon copy)

- lists those readers who should have a copy of the memo for their information or reference but are not expected to carry out the same action as the recipients listed in the To: line
- "cc" can also be placed at the end of the memo below the distribution list (if used)

➤ The **body** of the memo conveys the message and generally consists of **4** parts:

1. Introduction

- states the general problem or main idea

2. Statement of facts

- states the facts or discusses the problem or issue

3. Argument

- explains importance or relevance of facts

4. Conclusion

- summarizes the main idea, suggests or requests action
- memos do not have a complimentary close or signature line
- memos end with a call to action

Following are **8** more 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:

- 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,
 - your 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,
- 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.

Things that you can concentrate on to improve the look & readability of your email:

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.