



How to write a Business letter

Need to write a polished, professional letter? Most business letters follow an established, easy-to-learn format that you can adapt to any type of content. A business letter should contain the date, information about the sender and recipient, and a few body paragraphs. Follow these steps and modify as necessary to fit your school's standards.

Part 1: Beginning the Letter.

Know the format. Whatever the content of your letter, there are a few business standards to follow regarding the way it looks. There must be two addresses, yours on your right hand side followed by the receiver on your left hand side.

Include information about your company. List your company name and the company address, with each part of the address written on a different line. If you're self-employed or an independent contractor, add your name either in place of the company name or above it.

Include the date. Writing out the full date is the most professional choice. For example, write for example "1 April 2014." This should appear below the sender's address.

Add the recipient's information. Write out the recipient's full name, title (if applicable), company name, and address in that order, with each piece of information on a separate line. If necessary, include a reference number. The recipient's information should be left justified a few lines below the date.

Choose a salutation. The salutation is an important indicator of respect, and which one you use will depend on whether you know the person to whom you're writing, how well you know them and the level of formality in your relationship. Consider the following option:

- "Dear Sir/Madam" is a safe choice.
- Followed by your reference either in capital letters or small underlined caps.

Part 2 : Composing the Body.

Strike the right tone. Time is money, as the saying goes, and most business people hate to waste time. The tone of your letter, therefore, should be brief and professional. Make your letter a quick read by diving straight into the matter and keeping your comments brief in the first paragraph. For instance, you can always start with "I am writing you regarding..." and go from there.

- Don't concern yourself with flowery transitions, big words, or lengthy, meandering sentences - your intent should be to communicate what needs to be said as quickly and cleanly as possible.

Write clearly and concisely. Let your reader know exactly what you are trying to say. Your reader will only respond quickly if your meaning is crystal clear. In particular, if there is some result or action you want taken because of your letter, state what it is. Explain your position in as few words as possible.

Be conversational when appropriate. Letters are written by people to people. Avoid form letters if possible - you cannot build a relationship with canned impersonal letters. However, stay away from colloquial language or slang such as "you know," "I mean" or "wanna". Keep the tone business like, but be friendly and helpful.

- Most likely the purpose of your letter is to persuade your reader to do something: change their mind, correct a problem, send money or take action. Make your case.

Be courteous. Even if you are writing with a complaint or concern, you can be courteous. Consider the recipient's position and offer to do whatever you can, within reason, to be accommodating and helpful.

Wrap it up. In the last paragraph, summarize your points and clearly outline either your planned course of action or what you expect from the recipient. Note that the recipient may contact you with questions or concerns, and say thank you for his or her attention to the letter/matter at hand.

Part 3: Closing the Letter.

Choose a closing. The closing, like the salutation, is an indicator of respect and formality. "Yours sincerely" or "Sincerely" is generally a safe bet; also consider "Cordially," "Respectfully," "Regards" and "Yours Truly." Slightly less formal but still professional closings include "All the best," "Best wishes," "Warm regards," and "Thank you." Use a comma after your closing.

Sign the letter. Leave a line empty for your signature. Sign the letter after you've written or printed it, or, if you're sending it via email, scan an image of your signature and affix it to this part of the letter. Blue or black ink is preferred.

Include your typed name. Beneath your signature, type your name.

Part 4 : Finalising the Letter.

Edit the letter. Presentation is a key element of being professional. Make sure that the recipient will easily be able to see you as capable and in charge by editing your letter for errors. Give the letter a thorough read before you send it.

- Ask yourself whether the letter is clear and concise. Are any paragraphs more than 3-4 sentences long? If so, determine whether you can eliminate unnecessary statements.
- If the letter is extremely important, you might want to have a friend or colleague look it over. Sometimes a second pair of eyes can help you catch errors or awkward wording you may not have noticed.

2Enable Educational Content
By Casterbridge Music Development Academy (www.mpuma-music.org.za)
is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License
Limitation: This content is available under the above license ONLY if downloaded by registered
Users using the 2Enable application only. (www.2Enable.org)