

BUSINESS LETTER WRITING SUMMARY

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Before beginning your letter, pay attention to the following:

- whether it is a letter you are writing in your name or in the name of your company; in case you are writing on behalf of your company, the letter **must have a letterhead**;
- depending on the type of the letter, you must address a specific person. If this is the case, you **must not** begin your letter with “Dear Sir or Madam”, “To whom it may concern”, etc;
- if you are asked to write a letter as a person working for a certain company on a certain position, make sure you put your **job title** in the signature;
- be sure to follow exactly the **instructions** given – use all the information given in the task;
- finally, remember to include all parts of the letter depending on the **letter format** (full-block, modified, official, block or simplified)

GENERAL

All types of letters **should** contain the following:

- **Sender's address or letterhead**
Name
Address (Street number, Street name, City code, City, Country)
- **Date** – pay attention to the format

E.g. 16 March, 2011
March 16, 2011

- **Inside address** – the address of the recipient
Name
Address (Street number, Street name, City code, City, Country)
- **Salutation**
 - If the recipient is known:
Dear Mr. Smith,
Dear Ms. Smith,
 - If the recipient is unknown:
Dear Sir,
Dear Sir or Madam,
To Whom it may concern,

- **Body of the letter**

It is very important that you organize the body of the letters in paragraphs:

- **Introduction**
- **Middle paragraphs**
- **Conclusion**

- **Complementary clause**

If you began your letter with addressing a **specific recipient** (Dear Mr. Smith), you should finish your letter with “**Yours sincerely**”. If the recipient was **unknown**, you should close your letter with “**Yours faithfully**”.

TYPES OF LETTERS

1. Congratulation letter

Congratulation letters are written on numerous positive occasions: achievements, award, honours, prizes, speeches, publications, anniversaries, years of service, wedding, birthdays, graduation, a new job, religious milestones, significant personal achievements etc.

Introductory paragraph

- Mention the specific occasion and say “congratulations”

Middle paragraph(s)

- Tell how you learned about the good news (depending on the occasion it can be through a friend, colleague, newspaper, internet, etc)
- Express your feelings regarding the occasion, without exaggerating
- If this is a significant event, say what kind of effect it has on the person’s life or environment

Conclusion

- Close with assurances of best wishes, love, admiration, warmth, interest, affection, delight, pleasure, etc.

2. “Thank you” letter

Occasions for writing these types of letters can be various – outstanding efforts, well done jobs, various kinds of favours, advice or help; gifts, bonuses, loans; hospitality, etc. These letters are often not very long, but should contain the following:

Introductory paragraph

- You should mention what you are grateful for and express it in an appreciative way

Middle paragraph(s)

- Elaborate in detail why you are grateful for, describe the details of the event or occasion; express your feelings regarding the situation, but be careful not to exaggerate;
- If the occasion or event have a positive effect on your present state, feel free to point it out

Conclusion

- Close with a promise to either see the person soon or by sending greetings to the members of the family or close associates

3. Job application letter

Introductory paragraph

- Say when and where you saw the job advertisement (e.g. internet, newspaper, magazine, etc).

2nd paragraph

- Write a short paragraph saying how you meet the most important of the selection criteria you have identified.

3rd (and 4th) paragraph

- Write short paragraphs about the second and third most important of the selection criteria you have identified (why you believe you are suitable for the job).
- Emphasize in what way your previous working experience and education influences your new position.
- Point out in what ways the position you are applying for could help you improve your skills and qualifications even more.

Conclusion

- Tell the Employer that you are enclosing your resume, references, credentials, etc. with this letter and would be available for an interview at their earliest convenience.

NOTA BENE: If you are mentioning this information in the conclusion, make sure to put it in the enclosure line depending on the letter format.

4. Cover letter

Introductory paragraph

- It should be interest-getting and states or implies employment interest.
- Use personal contact or specific company knowledge.

2nd paragraph

- A value-selling paragraph that demonstrates your ability to be value-adding and highlights your key strengths and abilities.
- This paragraph describes the value that you can bring to the hiring organization.
- This IS NOT simply a listing of your strengths. Instead, it lists specific results achieved and contributions made – make sure to give examples.
- This provides a key opportunity to market yourself to prospective employers.

3rd paragraph

- A background summary paragraph that briefly summarizes your relevant education and experience.
- It includes the academic degree held, major field of study, number of years of experience and a short description of job-relevant experience.
- The purpose is to convey that you have the appropriate training, experience and seasoning to support the position for which you are applying.
- Keep it brief!

4th paragraph

- This paragraph is an action statement – a statement that either “compels or ensures follow up action”
- This statement should somehow ensure action beyond simply reading the letter – it should urge the employer to take favorable action on your employment candidacy.

5th paragraph

- A statement of appreciation.

NOTA BENE: A cover letter always goes together with a CV, so make sure to list it in the enclosure.

5. Letter of Recommendation

Introductory paragraph

- Say what the purpose of the letter is.

2nd paragraph:

- Indicate the nature and length of your relationship with the candidate, when you met, what course of yours he attended.

3rd paragraph:

- Central part – use specific examples to illustrate the candidate's skills.
- List what you know about his/her academic success.
- Point out any specific projects, research, seminars, etc. the candidate participated in.
- List positive characteristics of the candidate you noted during the time he/she attended your classes.

Conclusion

- Repeat your overall recommendation and offer further help if needed

6. Letters of Enquiry and Request

When you want to know about something, you write letters of enquiry. When you want to ask for something, you write a letter of request.

These types of letters represent the first point of contact between business and potential customers. Occasions for writing such letters are numerous: asking for price/samples/information/brochures of goods and services; payments; learning about any job openings; introductions; information/explanations, instructions; fundraising; adjustments, etc.

Introductory paragraph

- Introduce yourself (and your company) briefly and give your reason for writing.
- Let them know of what you are interested in.

2nd paragraph

- Say how you heard about the company you are contacting.
- If appropriate, use the opportunity to point out the success, influence, etc. of the company on the market.

3rd paragraph

- Ask for specific information.
- Be precise when asking questions or making requests.

Conclusion

- Use a polite expression of thanks and/or indicate further cooperation.

BUSINESS LETTER FORMATS

FULL BLOCK FORMAT

- all elements begin at the left margin with no exceptions

25 Glavna, 11080 Zemun
Belgrade
Serbia

February 4, 2001

English Language School
54 Poplar Street
London SW8 7AC
UK

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would be grateful if you could send me your information brochure about courses offered by your school in 2001.

My brother and I are university students and we are interested in summer courses in July or August.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Yours sincerely,

Milan Filipović
Student

BLOCK FORMAT

- it is similar to the full-block letter, with the exception of the date and the signature block (complimentary close, signature, name and title) which go the right margin

25 Glavna, 11080 Zemun
Belgrade
Serbia

February 4, 2001

English Language School
54 Poplar Street
London SW8 7AC
UK

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would be grateful if you could send me your information brochure about courses offered by your school in 2001.

My brother and I are university students and we are interested in summer courses in July or August.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Yours sincerely,

Milan Filipović
Student

SEMI-BLOCK/MODIFIED BLOCK FORMAT

- this is identical to the block, except all paragraphs are indented five to ten spaces

25 Glavna, 11080 Zemun
Belgrade
Serbia

February 4, 2001

English Language School
54 Poplar Street
London SW8 7AC
UK

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would be grateful if you could send me your information brochure about courses offered by your school in 2001.

My brother and I are university students and we are interested in summer courses in July or August.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Yours sincerely,
Milan Filipović
Student

OFFICIAL FORMAT

- the inside address appears two to five lines below the signature block and all elements of the letter are at the left margin

25 Glavna, 11080 Zemun
Belgrade
Serbia

February 4, 2001

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would be grateful if you could send me your information brochure about courses offered by your school in 2001.

My brother and I are university students and we are interested in summer courses in July or August.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Yours sincerely,

Milan Filipović
Student

English Language School
54 Poplar Street
London SW8 7AC
UK

SIMPLIFIED FORMAT

- as in the full-block format, all elements begin at the left margin. The subject line exchanges the salutation and there is no complimentary close. The sender's name and title are printed in capital letters

25 Glavna, 11080 Zemun
Belgrade
Serbia

February 4, 2001

English Language School
54 Poplar Street
London SW8 7AC
UK

Request for information

I would be grateful if you could send me your information brochure about courses offered by your school in 2001.

My brother and I are university students and we are interested in summer courses in July or August.

Thank you in advance for your response.

MILAN FILIPOVIĆ
STUDENT