

Your organization
Your address
Your city, state, zip code

Today's date

Recipient's name
Recipient's address
Recipient's city, state, zip code

Salutation:

The layout of a business letter is normally block or modified block format. In block format, the entire letter is left-justified. In modified block format, the date, closing, and signature are centered, while the rest of the letter is left-justified.

For the salutation, "Dear [name]:" is most common, although some writers choose to omit "Dear." Do your best to identify the name of the person to whom you're sending the letter; "To Whom It May Concern" is outdated. If you don't know the name, you can use the person's title (e.g., "Dear Hiring Manager"). If the recipient has an academic or professional title, such as professor or doctor, be sure to use the appropriate honorific, such as Prof. or Dr.; if there is no honorific, use "Dear [first name, last name]." If the recipient identifies as a woman, avoid using "Mrs." or "Miss." Unless you know the recipient personally, avoid using only a first name.

Some other formatting elements to note:

- Use 1-inch margins and 11- or 12-point font.
- Double-space between the date and the salutation.
- Double-space between each paragraph.
- Do not include your name in the sender's address.
- Do include a name in the recipient's address.
- Use a colon, not a comma, after the salutation.

The first paragraph of a business letter should state the letter's purpose. While a first sentence may establish goodwill – e.g., "I hope this letter finds you well" – you should arrive quickly at the reason you're writing. Don't be impolite but do be concise and professional in tone. Maintain your professional and courteous tone throughout the letter, showing you have respect for the reader and their time. While you should ensure you include all the information your audience needs, strive for concise and clear writing. Frontload information, write in short sentences and paragraphs, and use bulleted or numbered lists if applicable. These techniques will make your letter more readable.

Subsequent body paragraphs expand on your main point in greater detail. Consider your audience: who are they, and how would they want to receive this information? In general,

however, each paragraph should be relatively short, usually around 100 words. Begin with a strong topic sentence that conveys the paragraph's main point; the second sentence explains why that point is important. Subsequent sentences all relate to that same topic. If there is a particular action the recipient should take after reading the letter, or any deadlines to be aware of, make those clear.

Business letters typically include a short conclusion in which the writer again expresses goodwill to the recipient and again references any future action to be taken. Examples of this type of conclusion include, "Thank you for your time," "I look forward to hearing from you," or "Please reach out with questions or concerns." This sentence is followed by a complimentary closing, examples of which include, "Sincerely," "Best regards," or "Respectfully," among others.

Final formatting concerns to be aware of:

- Use a comma after the closing.
- Leave a space of three lines for your signature.
- If there are any enclosures, list them at the very bottom.
- Be sure to center the letter on the page. Look at "print preview" to check the layout.
- Check there are no stranded sentences on a page, or single words on a line.

Lastly, always review and proofread your letter!

Closing,

{YOUR SIGNATURE}

Your name

Your title

Your contact info (You could put your signature block here instead)

Enclosures, if any: