

## **BUSINESS LETTER**

### Purpose of a Business Letter

A business letter is a formal way of communicating between two or more parties. There are many different uses and business letters. Business letters can be informational, persuasive, motivational, or promotional. Business letters should be typed and printed out on standard 8.5" x 11" white paper.

### **Sample Business Letter**

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Mrs. Clara Winters -----Return Address 12187 S. Polo Dr.

Fairfax, VA 22030

May 26, 1998 ----- Date

The Tiny Tots Toy Company ----- Inside Address

15456 Pyramid Way

College Park, FL 33133

Dear Customer Service Representative: ----- Salutation

I recently purchased one of your Tiny Tents (Model # 47485) for my three-year old. Unfortunately, after viewing the components that came with the product, I discovered that four of the parts were missing. Also, the instructions that came with the tent are incomplete. Both of these situations have resulted in the tent remaining unassembled and unacceptable as a toy for my daughter.

I am writing to request replacements for the missing parts, and a copy of the full set of assembly directions for the model I purchased. If reasonable arrangements are not made within ten business days, I will return the tent to the store I purchased it from and expect a full refund. To assist you in processing my request, I am including a copy of my sales receipt and a list of the missing parts.

I have purchased other toys manufactured by your company in the past, and have always been impressed with the quality and selection Tiny Tots has made available to its customers. I sincerely hope this is a one-time incident, and that any future purchases I make will live up to the standard my family has come to expect from your company.

Sincerely,----- Closing

Signature

Clara Winters ----- Typed Name and Position

Enclosures: 2 ----- Abbreviations

Legend:

1. Return Address: If your stationery has a letterhead, skip this. Otherwise, type your name, address and optionally, phone number. These days, it's common to also include an email address.
2. Date: Type the date of your letter two to six lines below the letterhead. Three are standard. If there is no letterhead, type it where shown.
3. Reference Line: If the recipient specifically requests information, such as a job reference or invoice number, type it on one or two lines, immediately below the Date (2). If you're replying to a letter, refer to it here. For example,
  - Re: Job # 625-01
  - Re: Your letter dated 1/1/200x.
4. Special Mailing Notations: Type in all uppercase characters, if appropriate. Examples include
  - SPECIAL DELIVERY
  - CERTIFIED MAIL
  - AIRMAIL
5. On-Arrival Notations: Type in all uppercase characters, if appropriate. You might want to include a notation on private correspondence, such as a resignation letter. Include the same on the envelope. Examples are
  - PERSONAL
  - CONFIDENTIAL
6. Inside Address: Type the name and address of the person and/or company to whom you're sending the letter, three to eight lines below the last component you typed. Four lines are standard. If you type an Attention Line (7), skip the person's name here. Do the same on the envelope.
7. Attention Line: Type the name of the person to whom you're sending the letter. If you type the person's name in the Inside Address (6), skip this. Do the same on the envelope.
8. Salutation: Type the recipient's name here. Type Mr. or Ms. [Last Name] to show respect, but don't guess spelling or gender. Some common salutations are
  - Ladies:
  - Gentlemen:
  - Dear Sir:

- Dear Sir or Madam:
- Dear [Full Name]:
- To Whom it May Concern:

9. Subject Line: Type the gist of your letter in all uppercase characters, either flush left or centered. Be concise on one line. If you type a Reference Line (3), consider if you really need this line. While it's not really necessary for most employment-related letters, examples are below.

- SUBJECT: RESIGNATION
- LETTER OF REFERENCE
- JOB INQUIRY

10. Body: Type two spaces between sentences. Keep it brief and to the point.

11. Complimentary Close: What you type here depends on the tone and degree of formality. For example,

- Respectfully yours (very formal)
- Sincerely (typical, less formal)
- Very truly yours (polite, neutral)
- Cordially yours (friendly, informal)

12. Signature Block: Leave four blank lines after the Complimentary Close (11) to sign your name. Sign your name exactly as you type it below your signature. Title is optional depending on relevancy and degree of formality. Examples are

- John Doe, Manager
- P. Smith Director, Technical Support
- R. T. Jones - Sr. Field Engineer

13. Identification Initials: If someone typed the letter for you, he or she would typically include three of your initials in all uppercase characters, then two of his or hers in all lowercase characters. If you typed your own letter, just skip it since your name is already in the Signature Block (12). Common styles are below.

- JAD/cm
- JAD:cm
- clm

14. Enclosure Notation: This line tells the reader to look in the envelope for more. Type the singular for only one enclosure, plural for more. If you don't enclose anything, skip it. Common styles are below.

- Enclosure

- Enclosures: 3
- Enclosures (3)

15. cc: Stands for courtesy copies (formerly carbon copies). List the names of people to whom you distribute copies, in alphabetical order. If addresses would be useful to the recipient of the letter, include them. If you don't copy your letter to anyone, skip it.

# Business Letter Format

## Block Format: Business Letter

Return Address Line 1 1
Return Address Line 2
Date (Month Day, Year) 2
Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. Full name of recipient. 3
Title/Position of Recipient.
Company Name
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name: 4
Subject: Title of Subject 5
Body Paragraph 1 . . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
Body Paragraph 2 . . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
Body Paragraph 3 . . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . . 6

Closing (Sincerely...), 7

Signature 8

Your Name (Printed) 9

Your Title

Enclosures (2) 10

Typist Initials. 11

## Sample Business Letter

3519 Front Street  
Mount Celebres, CA 65286

October 5, 2004

Ms. Betty Johnson  
Accounts Payable  
The Cooking Store  
765 Berliner Plaza  
Industrial Point, CA 68534 Dear

Ms Johnson:

It has come to my attention that your company, The Cooking Store has been late with paying their invoices for the past three months.

In order to encourage our customers to pay for their invoices before the due date, we have implemented a discount model where we'll give you 2% off your invoice if you pay us within 10 days of receiving the invoice.

I hope that everything is going well for you and your company. You are one of our biggest customers, and we appreciate your business. If you have any questions, you can feel free to contact me at (555) 555-5555.

Sincerely,

*Signature* Bob

Powers

Accounts Receivable

## **Apology Letter Sample: (customer service error)**

*(print Apology Letter on corporate letterhead paper)*

June 28, 2007

Ms. Rebecca Quinlan  
2595 Dewhurst Circle  
Unit No. 16  
Birmingham, AL 35233

Dear Ms. Quinlan:

The purpose of this is to convey to you my sincere apologies for any inconvenience you may have experienced last month with respect to the installation of your Internet high speed service.

I just returned from vacation this week and found your file in my in-basket. As soon as I reviewed your case it was clear that somehow your May 20th request for a change in service had somehow slipped through the cracks. The only possible explanation I can give is that we have recently had a number of key staff changes which might have resulted in your letter being overlooked.

Consequently, I have directed our Installation Group to contact you by the end of this week to set up a time convenient to you when they could go to your house and install your new router and make the necessary adjustments to your software.

Because of this serious oversight, and as a testament to our appreciation of you as our customer, we are going to provide you with your first three months of high speed service free of charge. Therefore, your account will not be billed until October of this year.

Ms. Quinlan, let me assure you that what happened in your case is not typical of CableNet's level of customer service. We continue to be committed to providing you and all of our customers with the highest standards of service in the industry.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call me at 754-9785.

Yours in service,

Paulo Colanzi  
Manager, Customer Solutions

DRAFT LETTER OF PREAMBLE CHALLENGE

To

PMO

EBlock,CentralSecretariat,

NewDelhi-110011

India

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN, SOCIALIST, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC, REPUBLIC and to secure to all of its citizens; JUSTICE social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all; FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. In our Constituent Assembly, this 26<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Sincerely,

Your Name

### **REPORT WRITING:**

A report is a written presentation of factual information based on an investigation or research. Reports form the basis for solving problems or making decisions, often in the subjects of business and the sciences. The length of reports varies; there are short memorandum (memo) reports and long reports. Most often you will be asked to write a long report.

What makes an effective report?

- Clear, concise and accurate
- Easy for the audience to understand
- Appropriate for the audience
- Well organised with clear section headings

Report structure: Reports follow a standardised format. This allows the reader to find the information easily and focus on specific areas.

A report must have:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract or Executive Summary
4. Introduction (or Terms of Reference and Procedure)
5. Findings and/or Discussion
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. References

A report may also contain:

1. Cover letter

2. Bibliography
3. Glossary
4. Appendices

The table below summarises the main headings used in reports and outlines the purpose of each section. Please note: Further headings or subheadings may be used depending on the report's content, and are specific to the individual report.

Section	Purpose
<b>Title Page</b> (Not part of the word count)	Gives the title of the report, the student name/number, the name of the person the report is being submitted to, and the completion date.
<b>Table of Contents</b> (Not part of the word count)	Shows the sections of the report. Gives the headings, subheadings and page numbers.
<b>Abstract or Executive Summary</b>	Gives a summary of the whole report. Outlines the report's purpose, methodology, findings, main conclusions and recommendations.  Mainly written in past tense, and prepared last.
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Briefly states the purpose and scope of the report. This includes who requested the report, the main issues or problems to be identified, the reason for undertaking the report and the due date of the report.
<b>Procedure</b>	Outlines the methods used to collect information e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observations and/or



	<p>research.</p>
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>(May be used instead of the Terms of Reference and Procedure)</p>	<p>Outlines the context, background and purpose of the report.</p> <p>Defines terms and sets limits of the investigation.</p> <p>The reader/audience can easily identify what the report is about, how information was gathered, and why the report is needed.</p> <p>Mainly uses past tense and can be written last – but is presented first.</p>
<p><b>Findings and/or Discussion</b></p> <p>For this section, avoid using the headings “Findings” or “Discussion”. Instead, create headings and sub-headings that identify the main issues or problems.</p>	<p>Findings: What was found during the research or investigation.</p> <p>Gives the facts only – no interpretation by the writer of the report.</p> <p>Tables, graphs or diagrams can be used. Must be relevant to the issues and problems identified in the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Arranged in a logical order with headings and sub-headings.</p> <p>Discussion: You may also be required to analyse, interpret and evaluate the findings. The discussion draws together different parts of the findings and may refer to findings of other studies and/or theories.</p>

<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>Brief statements of the key findings of the report (full explanation is given in the Findings and/or Discussion).</p> <p>Arranged so the major conclusions come first.</p> <p>Should relate directly to the objectives set out in the Terms of Reference or Introduction.</p>
	<p>Follow logically from the facts in the Findings and/or Discussion. Must be complete enough for recommendations to be made from them.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>(note: not all reports give recommendations)</p>	<p>The opinions of the writer of the report about possible changes, or solutions to the problems, including who should take action, what should be done, when and how it should be done.</p>
<p><b>References</b></p> <p>(Not part of the word count)</p>	<p>A list of the sources that are used in and referred to in the report.</p> <p>Use APA referencing style.</p>
<p><b>Bibliography</b></p> <p>(Not always required)</p>	<p>Lists any sources that were read for the research but were not cited in the report. (Bibliography is not included in the word count).</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>(Not always required)</p>	<p>Additional relevant information. May include interview questions, surveys, glossary etc. (Appendices are not included in the word count).</p>

The major part of the report will consist of the Introduction, Findings and/or Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

## RESUMES, APPLICATIONS, AND COVER LETTERS:

Good résumés, applications, and cover letters broadcast your abilities. They tell employers how your qualifications match a job's responsibilities. If these paper preliminaries are constructed well, you have a better chance of landing interviews—and, eventually, a job.

**A résumé** is a brief summary of your experience, education, and skills. It is a marketing piece, usually one or two pages long, designed to interest an employer. Good résumés match the jobseeker's abilities to the job's requirements. The best résumés highlight an applicant's strengths and accomplishments.

There are four main steps to creating a résumé: Compiling information about yourself and the occupations that interest you, choosing a résumé format, adding style, and proofreading the final document.

### **Applications: Fitting yourself to the form**

Many jobs require jobseekers to complete an application instead of submitting a résumé. But an application is a résumé in disguise: Its purpose is to show your qualifications. Assembling the following information about yourself in advance will make it easier to complete applications:

- **Identification.** Be prepared to give your name, address, phone number, and social security number. You may also need to bring proof of identification when you pick up and drop off the application.
- **Employment history.** List the month and year you started and ended each job; your supervisor's name, address, and phone number; your job title, location, salary, and major duties; and your reason for leaving.
- **Education and certification.** Know the name and city of the schools you attended and the year you received your degrees and the name, level, and award and renewal dates of certification.
- **Special skills.** List any special skills you have that are closely related to the job, such as computer applications, or equipment operation.
- **References.** Provide the names, phone numbers, and addresses of three or four people who have agreed to recommend you.

When you pick up an application, don't miss an opportunity to make a good first impression. Dress as you would for the job. Politely request two copies of the form, or make your own copies of the original before you start filling it out. Read the entire application before you begin. Then, use one copy as a rough draft and the other as the final product. Write neatly with black ink.

Answer every question on the application. Write "not applicable" or "none" if a question does not apply to you. Some reviewers suggest answering "will discuss in interview" if asked for information that might disqualify you.

# Sample chronological

Elizabeth Smith

## Current Address

1016 Campus Drive, room 312  
College Town, LS 41112  
(453) 555-5555  
Smith@LS.edu

## Permanent Address

1510 Park Street  
Hamlet, LS 41112  
(454) 555-5555  
Smith@somewhere.com

Horizontal lines help  
define different sections

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## Qualifications Summary

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Proven communications skills and experience creating promotions for wide audiences.

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## Education

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### University of Large State

Bachelor of Arts, English, expected 2010  
Minor: Business  
G.P.A.: 3.5/4.0, English Honors Society

Students often list  
education before  
experience

### Related Courses

Public Relations

Marketing

Consumer Behavior

The Language of Advertising

Writing for Mass Media

Writing for Business

Coursework relating to  
the position applied for

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## Experience

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### Program Coordinator

Campus Activities Council, Large State University

- Initiated and organized the Campus Run for Charity
- Promoted event with fliers, e-mail, newspaper ads, and campus radio station announcements
- 1,000 students participated

08-present  
Most recent job first

Show results

### Campus Tour Guide

Office of Recruiting, Large State University

- Led weekly tours for prospective students and parents
- Answered questions and addressed concerns
- Wrote information sheet explaining campus-housing policy
- Selected to train new guides

06-07  
Give approximate  
dates of employment

Bullets  
emphasize  
accomplishments

### Administrative Assistant

ABC Business, Harristown, Large State

- Drafted correspondence
- Prepared and edited reports
- Complimented for accuracy and attention to detail

summers, 05 and 06

Separate section  
for special skills

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## Foreign Language Skills

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Fluent in Spanish

References available on request — Statement sometimes omitted

# Sample functional

Sarah Jones  
1310 Rock Ledge Street  
Hamlet, Large State 41112  
(455) 555-5555

Leave adequate  
margins on all sides

## QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Strong customer service, administrative, and communication skills to improve workplace efficiency.

### EDUCATION

Bold capital letters  
emphasize major headings

Large State Community College  
A.A. in Liberal Arts, expected May 2010  
G.P.A.: 3.6/4.0

Hamlet High School  
Diploma, May 2007  
G.P.A.: 3.3/4.0

### EXPERIENCE

#### Customer Service

Selected for the express lane while working as a cashier  
Directed customers to product locations  
Served restaurant patrons and responded quickly to requests  
Handled food substitutions and special requests efficiently

Identify  
major  
skills  
required  
for the  
position

#### Administration

Recorded meeting notes and maintained membership roster for College Outdoors Club  
Calculated restaurant customers' bills accurately

#### Communication

Explained menu items to customers  
Relayed special requests to chef  
Received A's in speech and composition classes

Include specific  
achievements

#### Computer Applications

Excel, Word, Windows XP

Begin statements  
with action verbs

### WORK HISTORY

Brief work history  
goes at the end

Table Server, Good Food Restaurant, Hamlet, Large State, 2008  
Cashier, Blue Skies Chain Store, Hamlet, Large State, 2006-2007

References available upon request

## Cover letters: Introducing yourself

Every résumé you send, fax, or e-mail needs its own cover letter. Sending a résumé without a cover letter is like starting an interview without shaking hands. The best cover letters spark the employer's interest and create an impression of competence.

### Parts of the cover letter

Cover letters should be written in standard business format with your and the reviewer's addresses at the top and your signature above your typed name at the bottom. (E-mailed cover letters do not include mailing addresses.) All letters should be single Spaced, flush left, with each paragraph followed by a blank line. Use professional, polite words. Revealing your personality is fine, as long as your style conforms to business protocol. For a sample cover letter, see page the facing page.

Most cover letters are two or three paragraphs long. Every cover letter should fit on one page and contain the following four parts: Salutation, opening, body, and conclusion.

**Salutation.** Whenever possible, send your letter to a specific person rather than to an office. Consider how differently you respond to a letter addressed to you, as opposed to one addressed to "Occupant." If you do not know whom to write, call the company and ask who is hiring for the position. Check that the name you use is spelled correctly and the title is accurate. Pay close attention to the Mr. or Ms. before gender-neutral names. Finally, use a colon after the name, not a comma.

**Opening.** The first few sentences of your cover letter should tell the reviewer which job you are applying for and the connection you have to the company. If someone the reviewer knows suggested you apply, mention that recommendation. If you are responding to an advertisement, refer to it and the source that published it.

Your knowledge of the company might give you another opportunity to connect yourself to the job. You could briefly describe your experience with its products, cite a recent company success, or refer to an article written about the company. But don't go overboard; save specifics for the interview.

**Body.** The next portion of your cover letter is a brief explanation of your qualifications. Don't simply repeat your résumé; summarize your most relevant qualifications or provide additional details about a noteworthy accomplishment. Address the employer's requirements directly, and don't be afraid to use special formatting to your advantage. You might, for example, create a chart matching the employer's requirements on one side to your qualifications on the other.

You can also use the body of your cover letter to address gaps in your work history or other problems evident on your résumé. But do not volunteer negative information unless you must. Always maintain a positive, confident tone.

**Closing.** In your final paragraph, thank the reviewer, request an interview, and repeat your home phone number. The closing is your chance to show commitment to the job. If you tell the reviewer you plan to call, make sure you do it. Making the effort to call and follow up helps to keep your name in the mind of your interviewer.

1 Occupational Outlook Quarterly • Summer 1999 (2009 update)

Submitting your qualifications

You introduce yourself to prospective employers through both your cover letter and your resume. Because first impressions are usually lasting ones, make sure yours is a good one by proofreading your cover letter as carefully as you do your resume.

When sending your résumé through postal service mail, consider how it will look when it arrives on a reviewer's desk. Hastily stuffed, illegibly addressed, and sloppily sealed envelopes do nothing to enhance your image as a neat, would-be professional.

When submitting a résumé through email, it's best to put the cover letter as the body of the e-mail. The résumé should either follow the cover letter in the body in plain text or be a separate attachment, depending on the reviewer's preferences

**Sample cover**

**John Ryan  
15Spring Road  
Hamlet, LS 41112  
(545) 555-5555**

January 5, 2009

Mr. Brian Carson  
Hiring Manager  
Rest Easy Hotel  
Hamlet, LS 41112

Dear Mr. Carson:

The management trainee position you advertised in today's Hamlet Gazette greatly interests me. The Rest Easy Hotels have always served as landmarks for me when I travel, and I would like to contribute to their continued growth. I have enclosed my résumé for your review.

In May, I will be graduating from Large State University with a degree in business. While in school, I developed strong organizational and customer service skills. As a dormitory assistant, I organized events, led meetings, and assisted students. As treasurer of the Business Society, I maintained the budget and presented budget reports. My summer jobs also required extensive interaction with the public. I believe these experiences have prepared me for your management trainee position.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications more fully in an interview I can be reached at (545) 555-5555. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**John Ryan**

John Ryan

Enclosure

*Addresses are omitted for e-mailed cover letters*

*Letter is addressed to a specific individual, if possible*

*State position applied for*

*Sell yourself*

*Place your phone number near the end*

*Request an interview*

*Sign each letter*

