

Study Unit

Types of Business Writing

No matter what your job title is, it's almost guaranteed that you'll have to write something related to your work, usually on a regular basis. Emails, memos, records, letters, reports, and forms—even when they don't appear as part of your job description—are routine in any workday and must be completed correctly. Technicians, sales associates, service personnel and, of course, all kinds of office workers are expected to have the skills needed for everyday communications.

Earlier, you learned about the ABCs (abstract, body, and conclusion) of writing a report or other document for school or work. Now we'll look at the ABCs of business correspondence: *accuracy*, *brevity*, and *clarity*. We'll revisit the importance of writing according to the needs of your audience and purpose, and define the differences between internal and external customer service.

Successful business writing produces correspondence that's professional in tone and a positive reflection on your company, as well as efficient and effective in completing the task at hand. In this study unit, we'll help you prepare for the various kinds of writing you're most likely to need for your job.

When you complete this study unit, you'll be able to

- Process routine information requests and correspondence
- Assist in writing well-structured letters that are professional in appearance
- Correctly format business letters, memos, and emails
- Explain safe and effective uses of email
- Describe the types, purposes, and proper completion of typical office forms



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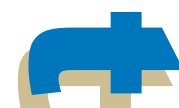
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Types of Business Writing

WRITING EFFECTIVE CORRESPONDENCE

Business correspondence is a personal reflection of the writer, but it also reflects his or her professional standing by its contents and its appearance. For the sake of simplicity, the principles of effective business correspondence will be applied here to letters, but those principles apply as well to email, memos, reports, and so on.

Some letters will be written by the employer and dictated, usually into a dictaphone machine, for later transcription by the secretary. Other letters, concerning the more routine matters in the office, may be written by the secretary. But, no matter how routine the letter might be, its purpose is to convey a message that the reader will understand. Effective letters are characterized by their *clarity*, *conciseness*, *completeness*, *courtesy*, and *correctness*. The *five C's of letter writing* are good to remember.

The Five C's of Letter Writing

Clarity

A letter is, above all, a message to the reader. If the reader doesn't grasp the message clearly and easily, the letter has failed in its purpose, no matter how correct its form or how attractive its appearance. The letter must convey a message

in unmistakable terms. One way to write clearly is to use simple, direct language. Instead of “We beg to advise you that Mr. Quest is out of town at this time,” write “Mr. Quest is away.” Instead of “Enclosed please find,” just say “Enclosed” or “Here is.” Don’t use heavy closing statements like “Thanking you in advance, I am” or “Anticipating the pleasure of an early reply, we remain.” Just say what you have to say, and close with “Sincerely yours.” When it’s necessary for you to sign the employer’s name (always sign in ink, preferably black ink), put your initials directly under your employer’s signature.

Conciseness

By *conciseness*, we mean that unnecessary information should be omitted from the letter. You should always avoid lengthy, repetitive explanations. Get to the point.

Conciseness also means avoiding wordy, repetitious phrases. See [Figure 1](#) for examples of wordy phrases and more concise ones to replace them.

Completeness

You must never leave information out of a letter just to make the letter shorter. Remember that the purpose of the letter is to convey a message, and your message should be complete. Before you start the letter, make a checklist of each item that should be discussed in the letter, and make sure that all of the important items are included. Once the letter is written, read through it to make sure that you’ve included each of the items you’ve listed and haven’t included extra items which aren’t essential.

Courtesy

The success of a business office depends on the courteous relationships maintained with clients, patients, business colleagues, and other businesses. The employer’s correspondence contributes a great deal to this relationship. Even a collection letter can be written in a courteous way. In appropriate places, you should include phrases of cordiality and goodwill.

WRITING A LETTER

WORDY

CONCISE

WORDY

CONCISE

along the lines of
similar to

like

may perhaps

may

at all times

always

past experience

experience

attached hereto

attached

previous to, prior to

before

at the present time
at this writing

now

seems to be

seems

both of them

both

short space of time

short time

by means of

by

there are many that

many

depreciate in value

depreciate

there can be no
doubt that

doubtless

due to the fact that
for the reason that
in view of the fact that

as, because,
since

up to this writing (or
time) we have not

we have not

during the course of

during

with reference to
with regard to

about

final completion

completion

in the city of Chicago
in the month of August
in the year 19—

in Chicago
in August
in 19—

first of all

first

in the meantime

meanwhile

for the month
of September

for September

in the near future

soon

for the purpose of

for

in the neighborhood
of

nearly, about
around

inasmuch as

since

in this place

here

in order to
with a view to

to

made out of

made of

in the amount of

for

in the case of
in the event that
in the event of

if

FIGURE 1—Saying It Concisely

Correctness

In any type of correspondence, correctness is a key ingredient. If the letter isn't correctly written, then it doesn't matter if it's concise, clear, or courteous. Of course, any business communication must be correct in its content, especially in fields like medicine and law, where incorrect information can have serious consequences. In addition, any letter that contains errors, either in the information given or in its grammar, creates a negative impression about your office (Figure 2). After each letter is composed, check it for correctness of

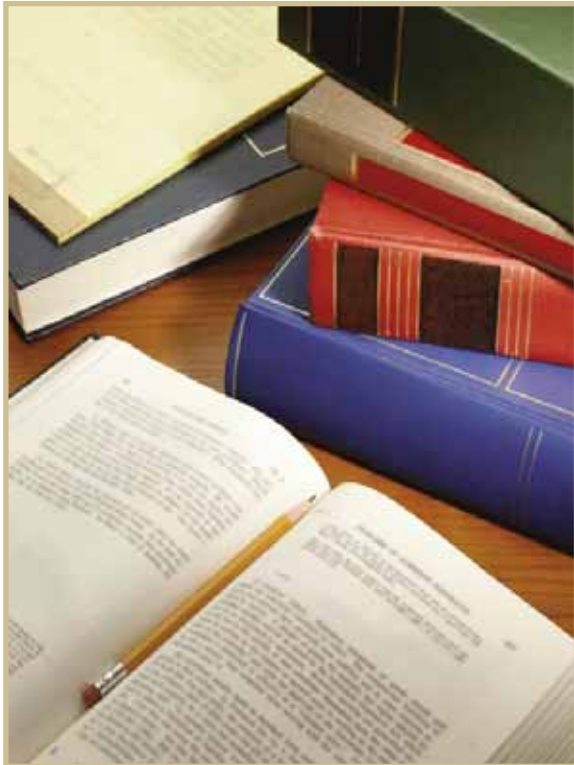


FIGURE 2—"When in doubt, look it up!" Don't risk creating a negative impression by sending a letter marred with errors.

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- The form of numerical expressions
- Abbreviations
- Typing

If you use a spell-check system, which you should, make sure to run it on every letter. Even if you think you're an excellent speller, a spell checker can call your attention to typographical errors that may have escaped your eye. Spell checks won't catch all errors, however. Proofreading is still necessary.

Keep those five C's in mind when composing a letter. And review your letter to make sure that none of those elements has been overlooked.

In addition to the letters that the employer has dictated, a good secretary composes some letters. Either you or your employer may sign them. You must be able to produce letters that are pleasing in appearance and written in a professional manner. When you compose letters for someone else's signature, you should write them as that person would. This will take a certain amount of experience and familiarity with your employer's letters and the way that person thinks and talks. Above all, letters must be professional, clear, concise, and correct in every detail.

Writing with Style

Everyone has a unique way of doing things. For example, if you want to run well, you have to follow instructions and train yourself to perform efficient motions to increase your speed, but you'll still have a certain way of running which is all your own. Speaking style is also unique. Some styles of speech are pleasing; others aren't. But regardless of a person's style, the message is conveyed only if the spoken language is understood.

Writing style, like style in running and speaking, also differs to some extent from individual to individual. Yet the difference in your writing style shouldn't be so great that, when you write, it becomes difficult to understand what you've written. Style is individual, but it must be regulated by certain time-tested principles. A sentence that's perfect in meaning, grammar, and spelling can sound flat if it lacks style.

There are three basic principles of writing style: *unity*, *coherence*, and *emphasis*.

Unity

If a person must spend considerable time trying to figure out what a letter is trying to say, money is being wasted. A letter must have unity. *Unity* means that the communication has one main point and that everything in it relates to, develops, and supports that point. In a business communication, it's a good idea to state your main point at the beginning: "Here is the brochure you requested on November 6 and the answers to the questions you asked." Then make sure that everything that follows relates to that main point. Here are some rules to make sure that your writing is unified:

1. Write complete sentences, not sentence fragments.
2. Avoid any loose, illogical relationship of sentence parts.
3. Include everything that's needed to make your idea fully understood, but nothing more.
4. Avoid foggy ideas. When in doubt, rewrite.
5. Be clear in every way.

Coherence

Not only is it important to know what you're writing about, it's also important to express ideas in an orderly manner. Ideas must be tied together logically. Follow these steps:

1. Have a general plan.
2. Let your thoughts flow in a natural and logical succession. Thoughts and events have their own order. The details of any happening or line of thought must be so arranged and worded that the relation of one to the other is natural and sensible.
3. Finish one topic before beginning another.
4. Use transition words or phrases as necessary to make the relationship clear between sentences and paragraphs.

Here are some common transitions:

For *location*:

above	behind	in front of	over
across	between	inside	to the right
around	down	near	under

For *time*:

about	during	prior to	today
after	first	until	soon
before	second	meanwhile	immediately

For *comparison*:

as	likewise	in the same way
also	like	similarly

For *contrast*:

but	nevertheless	although
however	on the other hand	conversely
yet	on the contrary	otherwise

For *emphasis*:

again	with this in mind	truly
to repeat	for this reason	to emphasize a point

For *concluding* or *summarizing*:

as a result	this	in summary
finally	therefore	in short
consequently	accordingly	all in all

For *adding information*:

again	and	for instance	furthermore
also	besides	likewise	finally
additionally	for example	moreover	along with

For *clarifying*:

that is	put another way	to clarify
in other words	stated differently	for instance

Emphasis

By stressing certain parts of your letter and playing down other parts, you can emphasize important ideas over less important ones. Proper emphasis holds the reader's attention. Arrange each sentence so that the most important idea occupies the most prominent position. Don't make the reader hunt for the main idea. The beginning and end of every sentence is a prominent position. These two parts of the sentence shouldn't be occupied by unimportant words.

For instance, the sentence "Our relations have been satisfactory in every way" gains emphasis if the important word *satisfactory* is placed at the end, thus: "Our relations have in every way been satisfactory."

Vary the word order. Show the reader what's most important by the way you arrange the ideas in your sentence. The sentence "They're today the biggest sellers in the field of low-priced books" isn't as forceful as the sentence "In the field of low-priced books, they're the biggest sellers today."

Omit words that add nothing to the thought. If you wish to be emphatic, express your thoughts in the fewest words possible. The sentence “Concerning the offer you made to me, I desire to state that it appeals to me strongly” is weak because it’s wordy. Why not come right to the point? “Your offer interests me.” Wordiness weakens an idea. The greater the number of words, the less emphasis you have.

External Customer Service

Tact and courtesy are indispensable ingredients in all business correspondence. You wouldn’t think of slamming the door in a customer’s face or of speaking to the customer with loud, abusive language. Nor should you ever write a letter which, in effect, does the same thing (Figure 3). Offensive, argument-provoking phrases have no place in business letters.



FIGURE 3—The friendly, professional manner you use with customers should extend to your correspondence.

Your attitude is reflected in your writing. Once a letter is written and mailed, it can’t be recalled. You can’t be there to show by gesture, by tone of voice, or by the persuasiveness of your personality that everything you said was intended for the best interests of the customer. The words you choose must reflect an attitude appropriate to the subject and audience.

Attitude

Your letter may be courteous and tactful. It may be written so that it adheres strictly to grammatical principles, and it may present a pleasing appearance; yet it may lack a “from me to you” attitude. Every person is, to a greater or lesser degree, an egotist. A letter should be written so that it appeals to your reader, who is an egotist. Look at the two letters that follow. Both say the same thing, but the second letter would make a better impression on the reader.

Typical Reply

We have received your letter of July 27, and we wish to say that we appreciate your response to our survey. Our purpose is to provide the best service possible to our customers.

Better Reply

Thank you for your thoughtful comments in your letter of July 27. It was kind of you to take the time to tell us you're pleased with our service. When you call on us again, we'll be happy to serve you in any way we can.

The “from me to you” attitude, however, isn't conveyed merely by a liberal sprinkling of “you's” in the letter. It takes much more than that. You must put yourself in the reader's place. You must think with the reader's mind, see with the reader's eyes, and feel with the reader's emotions. In other words, you have to be both writer and reader. Your chief concern is the question, How will these words affect my reader?

Patience

A good business letter will be patient. Even when you're answering a correspondent who seems unintelligent or addresses you in a way which might ordinarily provoke anger or resentment, you must be cool and careful in your own letters. You must make detailed explanations when they're necessary. You must try to understand the stresses and problems of the other person. As a business correspondent, you must never give yourself the luxury of being short-tempered.

Firmness

A good business letter will be firm. It will make its points with such clarity that a *yes* or *no* answer follows naturally. It won't deal in shades of meaning, in words or ideas like *perhaps* or *possibly*. It will show decisiveness without oversimplifying the problem.

Firmness results from the careful planning of your letters. It's difficult to be firm and decisive unless you know exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it.

Knowledge of Your Company

To write the best possible letters to customers or clients, you must have a complete knowledge of your company's products, policies, achievements, and plans for further growth. The more you learn about your firm, the more fun you'll get out of working—and the more valuable you'll become to your employer. Only with the help of complete, practical, factual knowledge can you hope to write a business letter that will fulfill its purpose.

Interest and Freshness

Last of all, a good business letter shows that its writer has a real interest in the matter at hand. Be sure your letters aren't repetitious. The addressee wishes to feel, for a time at least, that you've devoted all your effort and attention to him or her.

Too many letter writers lack originality. They follow the path of least resistance and wearily plod along with the same old ideas expressed in the same old way. To develop reader interest, avoid the clichés and tired phrases that can so easily creep into business writing. You must compose each letter as a separate entity, with its own special phrasing.

Internal Customer Service

The term *customer service* applies not only to a company's external customers, but also to relationships among company employees. These relationships are no less important to the success of the business than external communications. Your correspondence, no matter how informal, should address your internal customers respectfully and professionally.

Attitude and Medium

While memos used to be the standard method of inside communication, email has now become the quickest way to contact others within the company. Since many people also use email to stay in touch with friends and family, they may become accustomed to the informal, slapdash writing that's

accepted in very casual circumstances. But lax writing practices are never acceptable in business. Remember, even if you're writing a quick question to a friend in your own department, business correspondence must meet professional standards. At minimum, make sure you write in complete sentences and use correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Other types of internal communications—memos, announcements, reports, policy documents, and so on—are written more formally. Make sure you adjust your writing style to fit the purpose and the audience for each type of document. Some companies use standardized templates or forms for certain types of documents, which may make your job easier if you're assigned to produce one. If you don't have a template to work from, you may want to look at a few samples of the type of document you have to write to get an idea of what it should look and sound like.

Rewriting

Don't be surprised if, especially at first, you're asked to rewrite your work. It can take some time to grasp exactly what your supervisor wants (Figure 4). If you haven't hit the mark the first time, ask questions to help you focus on where you made your mistakes. Perhaps you've got all the information right and the grammatical points are fine, but the manager wants her memo to sound more like her own style of expression. In that case, ask her for a few specific words she would substitute for what you've written to give you an idea of her phrasing. You may even want to keep a list of "her" words—many people have favorite expressions—to use in the future. As you get to know the people for whom you write, you'll pick up on their preferences and the fine distinctions in their speech that define their personal style of communication.

The corporate culture of your company also has a "voice" or style. Pay attention to the structure and vocabulary of its publications. Since communications reflect the company's mission and personality, they offer many good clues to what the administration will be looking for in its written materials. It may take some time to absorb all you need to know, but looking for patterns and asking questions will help you adapt more quickly.

FIGURE 4—Your supervisor is likely to check your work, at least until you're familiar with the company culture and writing style.



Practice Exercise 1

Your online store received a complaint about a sewing machine it sold. An assistant jotted down the following draft as a response. However, you can easily see that the letter doesn't meet the five C's of letter writing. Identify the writing errors, then mark any grammatical errors you find. Rewrite the letter, keeping in mind customer service, attitude, unity, coherence, and style, as well as the five C's.

Mr. Kimmel,

At this time I have no reason to believe it is damaged or defective. You mean you think the Shuttle Hook and Bobbin assembly is out of synchronization with the Motor, which is impossible. It seems to me that the problem is not with the machine but rather with the operator. There can be no doubt about it that if you thread it right it will work without bunching up the thread like that. Or if you need to adjust the tension. I make the assumption that you have already gone ahead and read the instructions as anyone should do when they get a new piece of equipment like this. If not than do so immediately. You may have to look under troubleshooting. This happens alot.

Enclosed please find copies of the warranty, which you may perhaps should of also read before final completion of the sale. You'll notice it doesn't cover this type of problem.

Yours truly,
Alex Cleaver

Alex Cleaver

CS Rep

Check your answers with those on page 85.



Self-Check 1

At the end of each section of *Types of Business Writing*, you'll be asked to pause and check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "self-check" exercise. Answering these questions will help you review what you've studied so far. Please complete *Self-Check 1* now.

In the examples below, name the "C" quality of effective correspondence that's being violated.

1. Now at this point in time it can be said with absolute certainty that this is the appointed hour.

2. Sitting long hours at the computer.

3. He told him that his turn was next.

4. I'll fill your order when I can get to it.

Answer the following as indicated.

5. Coherence in a paragraph or letter is achieved in large part by using _____ words or phrases.

6. Two emphatic positions in a paragraph or letter are the _____ and the _____.

7. If a writer strays away from his or her main point to points not directly related to it, he or she is violating the principle of _____.

8. Briefly explain appropriate tone in a business communication.

(Continued)



Self-Check 1

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

- _____ 9. Having a “from me to you” attitude in a business communication can be achieved by simply writing a letter or memo with a lot of “you’s” in it. Explain your answer.
- _____ 10. The term “customer service” applies only to your company’s clients.
- _____ 11. Standard writing rules apply to emails in the office.
- _____ 12. Asking questions and reviewing company publications will help you adapt your writing style to the needs of your employer.

Check your answers with those on page 91.

WRITING EMAIL

In today's world, *email* (electronic mail) has become the work-horse of both personal and interorganizational communication (Figure 5). "Checking email" has become an office ritual people repeat many times in a business day. Understanding how and when to use email has become a critical skill in the modern office.

FIGURE 5—Millions of people depend on email for both personal and professional communications.



Email communication is distinctive in a number of ways. First, email screens may be used to forward messages in either memo or letter format. In fact, they may be used to transmit images, graphs, charts, or tables. Second, unlike a written memo or letter, an email is both the message and the medium. Written memos must be posted to employee mailboxes, and letters must be posted for mailing. Emails, however, can be quickly prepared and instantly sent. Depending on the servers that handle them, emails arrive any place in the world within moments of when they're sent.

The marketing of personal computers has emphasized email as the new way to communicate all kinds of messages, sentiments, and images across distances. For that reason, emails can clutter electronic mailboxes with jokes and animated greeting cards from friends, chain letters, sales pitches and other "junk mail," as well as personal messages.

Because of the large volume of email traffic, the office computer has become a creature that needs managing. It may become very tempting to respond briefly and ever so informally to emails that need “clearing.” It’s also too easy to send ill-considered responses. For these reasons and others, email discipline is a skill demanded of all kinds of people in all kinds of organizations in this new electronically linked twenty-first century.

Using Email Safely

Safety in email use refers partly to your safety and partly to organizational security. An email that you send to one individual may end up on the computers of people you didn’t intend to address. Emails that include company policies or strategies may end up in places you would rather they didn’t. And email messages get stored on hard drives for a long time. Ill-conceived or rash messages may end up creating a permanent record that you wish didn’t exist. To be safe, assume that all your email correspondence will be monitored for quality assurance. In that way, you’re more likely to be careful about what you say.

You must also be careful of computer viruses. A *virus* is a program or piece of computer code that gets into your computer without your knowledge. Email arriving at your computer may bring computer viruses with it. For that reason, it makes sense to avoid opening email messages that arrive from unknown senders, even if your computer is protected by antivirus software. Be particularly wary of email with attachments, especially if you don’t know the person who sent it. The attachment itself may contain a virus that activates when the attachment is opened.

Computers have become central to day-to-day operations in business and industry. Pay attention to virus warnings, and remember that carelessness on your part may cause or contribute to a catastrophic loss of information or even the collapse of an electronic information network.

Email Etiquette

The etiquette followed in email is sometimes referred to as *netiquette* (short for *Internet etiquette*). It consists of community-accepted standards you should follow when corresponding by email. Most of them are common sense.

- In general, keep the emails you send concise and to the point. They shouldn't exceed three monitor screens in length.
- Differentiate between internal and external recipients. Carefully create messages intended for external parties, and generally make them a bit more formal than those directed to people within your organization.
- Check the electronic address carefully. Computers are totally unforgiving when it comes to address typos. To avoid mistakes and wasted time, store frequently used e-addresses in your online address book.
- Use standard grammar, punctuation, and word choices just as you would for any type of written communication. You may use contractions in emails, but avoid slang. Always spell-check what you've written before you send it.
- Use standard capitalization. Don't type in all capital letters—on the Internet, this practice is considered shouting. SHOUTING often provokes *flaming*.
- Don't encourage *flames*, and don't participate in *flame wars*. Flaming occurs when someone sends a message that provokes an angry—and often nasty—response. When others join in, a full-fledged flame war ensues. The point of the original email usually gets lost in the heated exchange of flames.
- Don't forward or respond to electronic versions of chain letters, false warnings of impending Internet disasters, and so on. Simply delete them as soon as you realize what they are.

- Don't send anything you wouldn't want published. What you write and how you write it will be judged by the recipient and, for all you know, by people checking stored emails for years into the future.
- If you're responding to another person's message, keep any original quotations or excerpts from that message to a minimum. This courtesy will be especially welcomed when you're sending email to a newsgroup, bulletin board, or mailing list. Use only as much of the original message as you need to provide a sense of context for your response.
- Before sending any large attachments, such as photos, be sure your recipient's email system won't be overtaxed by the memory requirements.
- Be careful about expressing your emotions in an email message. Irony, tongue-in-cheek humor, or a note written in anger may come back to haunt you. Remember that your reader can't see your face or your body language and therefore may misinterpret any subtle attempts at humor.
- When using email to send a memo or a letter, compose it offline—on paper or with a word processing program, for example. Write and revise it; use your spell checker and, when in doubt, your grammar checker or thesaurus. When you're confident that your message is just the way you want it, copy and paste it into your email screen. Check the copy again to make sure the transfer worked, and then send it.
- Always include a subject line that clearly and specifically states what the email is about. Today, email inboxes are likely to be jammed with spam (promotional messages) and other irrelevant messages that may contain viruses. Most busy people simply delete emails with subject lines like "Quote for the Day" or "Hi, What's New." Use appropriate subject lines in title case (capitalizing key words), like "Pay Raises for Next Fiscal Year" or "Update on the South Street Project."
- Never use offensive language or include vulgar, racist, or sexist comments.

- Remember that you're communicating with real people, not machines. Extend the same courtesy you would to someone you talk to in person or on the telephone. Don't make any remarks you wouldn't make to the person's face. Take the time to put together a well-written message. Once you hit the **Send** button, you won't have another chance to revise what you've written.
- Refrain from using *emoticons* (keyboard characters used to represent a facial expression or emotion) or animated pictures in business emails. They're unprofessional and may be misinterpreted by the receiver.

Formatting Email

Figure 6 shows a sample of an email directed to a person outside the organization. Study the sample to get an idea of an effective formatting approach to email messages. Pay particular attention to the following items:

- The subject line is specific and to the point.
- A standard, formal salutation is used, even though the tone of the message suggests that the sender and the receiver know each other well.
- The questions the sender wants answered, if any, are set up as a list.
- Double spacing is used between the salutation and the opening sentence, between paragraphs, and between any listed questions or bulleted items.
- The message has an informal, cordial complimentary close.
- For convenience, the sender's email address is included directly below the name of the sender.

The way your email appears to a reader sends a message about you, the writer. Watch out for misspelled words, typos, and misused words. Don't send an email you haven't thought out. Remember that it may be stored on a hard drive for a long time.

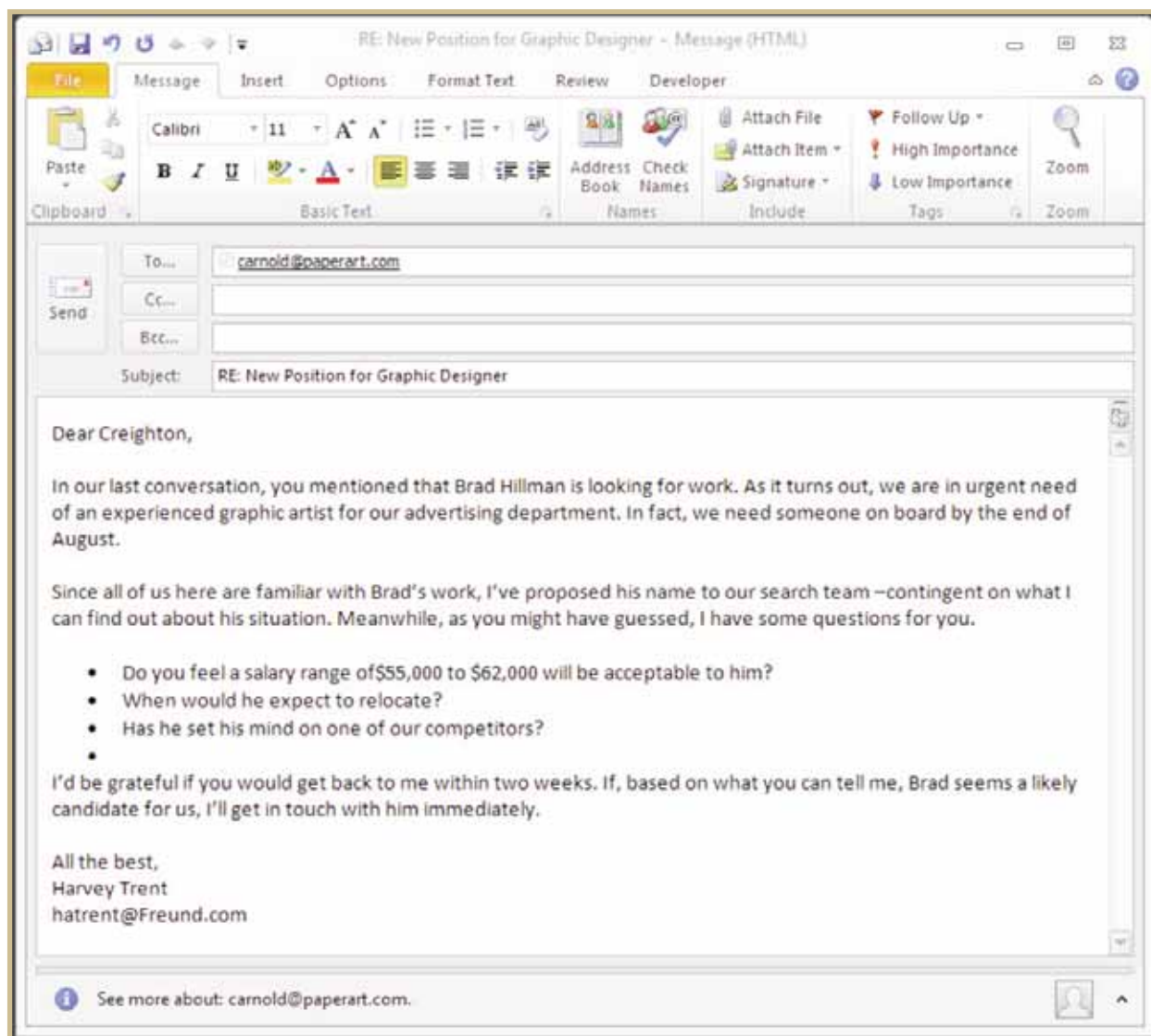


FIGURE 6—Formatted email can be an effective way to communicate quickly and in a professional manner.



Self-Check 2

1. What is meant by the concept of email safety? Respond in a paragraph of four to six sentences.

2. Explain at least four sound practices to follow in writing email messages.

Check your answers with those on page 91.

WRITING MEMOS

When you need to communicate with someone who works in your own company, you may choose to use the format designed exactly for that purpose: the interoffice memo, short for *memorandum* (Figure 7). The capitalized initials (JG) at the end of the memo represent the author of the document who dictated it to or assigned it to someone with the initials *srp*, who typed it in its current form.

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Interoffice Memo

TO:

Timothy Middleton, M.D.

FROM:

Janice Glaser, Medical Records Technician

JG

DATE:

August 15, 20—

SUBJECT:

Transcription Procedures

Welcome to the staff. We in the Medical Records Department look forward to assisting you with the documentation of patient care here at Community Hospital. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

We hope that you will find the enclosed *Transcription Procedures Manual* useful in your orientation to hospital policies. Pages 12–18 outline the physician’s responsibilities to the Medical Records Department.

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to call me (x378). Again, welcome.

JG/srp
enclosure

FIGURE 7—An Interoffice Memo

Why Write Memos?

Why and when should you write a memo? The answer depends on your purpose and your audience. Some people send too many memos, forgetting that there may be other, better ways to communicate. For example, a memo frequently isn't the best way to deliver bad news—it's usually better to do so in person. Memos shouldn't be used to confront, threaten, or accuse people. If a problem exists, it's better to explore solutions in person. If you're angry, try not to communicate in writing (the words may come back to haunt you).

On the other hand, memos are good communication tools for these purposes:

- To congratulate people on promotions or a job well done
- To reach many people when you can't do so in person
- To get a message to a person who is hard to reach by phone
- To be sure a number of people receive precisely the same information
- To provide a record of communication

You should have only one specific purpose per memo. If you need to send two messages to the same person, write separate memos. More than one message in a memo confuses the reader and lessens the importance of each of your messages. In addition, the recipient may want someone else to review one memo but not the other. Combining the memos may delay review and response.

Formatting Memos

Many of us have learned generally accepted formats for memos in school, from our employers' formats, or from the memos we receive. In addition, sample memo formats are presented in many books available at your local library. We won't, therefore, present *all* the possible formats here—just the basics.

Most companies make preprinted memo forms available to employees. Word processors can also help you make attractive memo forms.

A memo has a distinctive heading that provides the same function as some of the parts of a letter. This heading is made up of four subheadings. They can be formatted in list form:

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

When typing a memo, be sure to align the headings along with *the information itself*. Don't just type the information one or two spaces after the colons. If you do, it will look unattractive.

Unattractive:

TO: All Office Personnel

FROM: Charlotte Perkins

DATE: March 28, 20—

SUBJECT: Office Procedures Manual

Better:

TO: All Office Personnel

FROM: Charlotte Perkins

DATE: March 28, 20—

SUBJECT: Office Procedures Manual

Headings can be either double-spaced or single-spaced. Some formats include a line at least partway across the page that separates the heading of the memo from the body. For the exam, you should apply the format indicated in the previous sample. Remember to use a specific subject in title case so the reader(s) know exactly what topic or issue you're discussing.

Memo messages can be as informal as a quickly scribbled note to be discarded after reading, or as formal as a carefully edited report to be filed as a permanent document. Begin the body of the memo three spaces after the headings. The body of a memo is much like the body of a letter. Most writers start each paragraph on the left margin, but indenting each paragraph is also correct. Just remember to remain consistent within any given document. You may find it useful to highlight important information with descriptive headings, especially if the memo is long.

Instead of using a complimentary close as in a letter, the sender of a memo will simply initial his or her name in the heading (the usual practice) or sign the bottom. In either case, when you initial a memo or sign a memo or letter, whether or not you've typed it, it's an acknowledgment that you approve it. So, if you initial a memo or sign a letter without reading it over, you're responsible for it—errors and all. The memo, like a letter, includes the sender's and typist's initials (two spaces below the end of the body) and may include enclosure notations and/or a distribution list.

Using Headings

Headings serve as useful guides to the reader. Headings, like outlines, can also help writers organize complex material. But there's a trick to using them. You can't just throw in an underline here and a few capital letters there. For headings to guide the reader accurately, they must have parallel structure—the same sort of parallel structure that applies to sentence grammar. Headings of equal importance are most effective when they have the same tone, part of speech, and style of punctuation.

Headings and subheadings can be thought of in *levels* or *ranks* (Figure 8).

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A FIRST-LEVEL HEADING

Usually, the first level is in all capital letters, and may be in bold, as well. All around the heading is plenty of space to make these words the most prominent ones on the page. A typical report or proposal has four first-level headings that identify the introduction, body, conclusions, and recommendations. Beneath each first-level heading there may be subheadings that specify the subtopics under discussion.

This Is an Example of a Second-Level Heading

The second level of heading is usually at the left margin and has a line of its own, though it may instead have a colon followed directly by text. It may be capitalized, underlined, or both. Every second-level heading is a subheading (identifying a subtopic) of the preceding first-level heading.

This Is an Example of a Third-Level Heading

These headers are usually at the margin, with only the first letter of important words in capital letters. Often these headings are underlined.

This is a an example of a fourth-level heading. The fourth-level heading will sometimes be indented. It may be capitalized, underlined, placed in italics, or formatted in some other way to make it different from first-level, second-level, and third-level headings. It's usually directly followed by text. The fourth-level heading is a subheading of the preceding third-level heading.

Once you choose a heading style for each level, make sure you use them consistently throughout your project.

FIGURE 8—You can use headings to organize your writing.

Practice Exercise 2

Write a memo related to your area of study or your intended career announcing the promotion of a supervisor to a department manager. Make up enough details to make it realistic. Make sure you use correct memo format and headings. Then check your memo against the examples in the study unit.

This exercise is for your own benefit. *Do not* send your memo to the school.



Self-Check 3

1. The four headings at the top of a memo are _____, _____, _____, and _____.
2. A long memo may be more readable if you use descriptive _____ within the body.
3. It's best not to use a memo if you have to deliver _____.
4. A heading in prominent capital letters at the top of a page is a _____ heading.
5. More than one _____ in a memo may confuse the reader.
6. When you _____ a memo, you're giving it your approval.
7. The purpose of headings is to _____ the reader.
8. A subheading in bold, capital letters, and/or italics followed directly by text is probably a _____ heading.
9. *True or false?* A memo is a good tool for sending a message to a person when you can't reach him or her by phone.
10. *True or false?* A memo is useful for reaching many people with the same information.

Check your answers with those on page 92.

WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

Why is it important to use a special format for business letters? Because conventional formats have two advantages: they're functional and familiar. They help you write effectively and efficiently, and they help the reader read effectively and efficiently. By knowing an established format for conveying messages, you can put together a good letter very quickly. You can even revise an old letter to fit a new situation. By knowing an effective format for receiving messages, a reader can understand information very quickly. For instance, anyone who has received business letters knows exactly where to look for the main point, where to find the sender's name, and where to locate the return address.

Parts of a Business Letter

Readers and writers alike have come to expect several standard parts to business letters, including letterhead, dateline, inside address, subject or attention line, salutation, body, complimentary close, signature block, reference initials, enclosure or copy notations, and postscripts. These parts of a business letter are labeled in -. Of course, you won't always use all the parts for every letter. Which ones you use will depend on your purpose and audience.

Letterhead/Heading

People in business, including doctors and lawyers, don't just type their return address at the top right corner of the page. They have their name or the name of their business, often with an eye-catching symbol called a *logo*, printed on good-quality stationery. This embossed or imprinted stationery is called *letterhead*. Since letterhead is expensive, it should be used only for final drafts. To ensure a professional image, as well as to assure the recipient that the letter is authentic, letterhead should be used for all official correspondence leaving the office. Store letterhead and its matching blank stationery in a compartment where it will lie flat and remain clean. Don't let the edges stick out and get damaged.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING COMPANY

1886 Emerson Drive
Cambridge Park, PA 29993-9483

PREPRINTED
LETTERHEAD

DATELINE
October 12, 20—

Refer to Invoice A-8668 ——— SPECIAL NOTATION

Mr. Richard R. Serif
Vice President and General Manager ——— READER'S TITLE
Office Supplies Unlimited
88 Academic Lane ——— INSIDE ADDRESS
Emerson, PA 98980-9909

RE: Damaged shipment ——— SUBJECT LINE

SALUTATION
Dear Mr. Serif:

BODY { We received today our standing monthly order of 50 boxes (500 reams) of paper for our Neverfail copier. Six of the boxes of paper were damaged when they were delivered to our warehouse.] BEGINNING

{ It appears that the six boxes in question were exposed to excessive moisture at some point before delivery. The paper is damp and will not work in our machine. These damaged boxes of paper are still in our warehouse where they can be picked up at any time by a representative of Office Supplies Unlimited.] MIDDLE

{ I hope it will be possible for you to ship six replacement boxes of copier paper at once. This is our busiest season and we will not be able to meet all of our deadlines without a sufficient quantity of paper for our copier.] END

Sincerely yours, ——— COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

Edwin M. Sheffield] SIGNATURE BLOCK

Edwin M. Sheffield
Managing Editor

EMS/srp ——— REFERENCE INITIALS OF DICTATOR AND TYPIST

Enclosure: copy of Invoice A-8668 ——— ENCLOSURE NOTATION

PHOTOCOPY NOTATION [pc: Marc Alighieri
Manager of Warehouse Operations]

POSTSCRIPT NOTATION
P.S. We are about to expand our printing facilities to include full-color printing and would be pleased to receive a copy of your latest printing supply catalogue.]

FIGURE 9—The Parts of a Business Letter

When you have no letterhead, type a return address at the top of the page. This is called the *heading*. Center it or place it on the left margin, depending on the letter style you're using. (A later section of this study unit explains letter styles.) The return address should include the following:

Line 1: Company's legal name (if a business)

Line 2: Complete street address

Line 3: City, state or province, and zip code or postal code

Line 4: Phone number (optional)

Line 5: Email address or website (optional)

When typing the return address, as opposed to using letterhead, it's customary to place the date on the next line after the address, with no extra space.

Medical Arts Building, Suite 7
460 Washington Avenue
Anytown, State 12345-6789
May 26, 20—

Notice that the sender's name doesn't appear in a typewritten return address, even though it does appear on some letterheads. The reader knows to find the name in the typed signature line.

Dateline

Every letter should be dated. This may seem like a minor detail in a letter to your mother, but in a professional document the date is extremely important. Type the dateline at least two or three spaces below the letterhead—it can be as much as 17 spaces down the page in a very short letter. If the letter has been dictated, the date of the letter should be the day dictated, not the day placed in the mail. Spell out the month in full, whether you use the traditional style

September 22, 20—

or the British and military style

22 September 20—

and note the difference in comma usage. You won't get mixed up if you remember that the comma is used to separate, and in a written date it separates two numbers (date and year).

Should you put the date on the right or the left? There are variations here—as you’ll see during the discussion of specific business letter formats.

Special Notations

You’re probably familiar with the types of notations that go at the bottom of a letter, such as those indicating who did the typing and whether there are enclosures. Did you know that some special notations belong two lines below the date?

They’re the sorts of notations that require immediate attention:

CONFIDENTIAL

PERSONAL

via REGISTERED MAIL

Refer to Policy DVF—822

The Inside Address

You may wonder why the inside address is necessary, since the address on the envelope should succeed in getting the letter to its destination. Often, however, the envelope is thrown away as soon as the letter is opened. In that case, the inside address serves as identification. Furthermore, the United States Postal Service (USPS) checks the inside address of a misdirected letter when there’s no return address on the envelope. Here again the inside address serves as identification.

The inside address of the letter follows the same format as the address on the envelope. It should contain the name, street address, city, state or province, and zip or postal code of the person to whom the letter is being sent. Note, however, that the inside address uses punctuation, which the envelope address doesn’t. Also, the inside address is keyed in a mix of upper and lowercase (except for the state or province code). Spell and express the name of the person to whom you’re writing according to the person’s preference. It’s discourteous to do otherwise. Use the customary forms of address. Don’t abbreviate (with the exception of the states’ or provinces’ abbreviations set up by the post offices). An address is incomplete without the zip or postal code. Consult a zip code directory or, if you don’t have one, just call the post office for the information or look it up on the USPS website:

<http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>.

Examples of inside addresses:

Franz A. Heiden, M.D.
193 Wall Street
New York, NY 37781

Samuel Feldon, Attorney at Law
1216 King's Place
Boston, MA 41467

Geoffrey K. DeRoberts
2066 Cray Street, #502
Montreal, QC H3A 1K6

If you know only the title or position but not the name of the individual, first call the company to try to find out the person's name. If you're unsuccessful, address the letter to the individual's title in the company:

Director of Human Resources
Community Hospital
101 Main Street
Anytown, State 12345-6789

If your letter is for an organization as a whole and not an individual or specific group, then use the following format:

Childers Investment Group
4115 Market Boulevard
San Francisco, CA 90332

Subject or Attention Line

Use a *subject line* if the topic is part of a series of correspondence, such as an ongoing problem with a customer or an order. You may also use a subject line to speed the handling of your letter if you know it will pass through the hands of an administrative assistant. Most letters, however, don't require a subject line.

Use an *attention line* when you're directing a letter to an individual's attention, but not addressing the letter directly to that person. Usually, if you're addressing a specific person, it's best to simply address the letter to that reader and not use an attention line. However, sometimes that target reader will be acting as part of a larger group. An attention line ensures that the letter moves through the proper channels to receive attention from all members of the group (Figure 10).



FIGURE 10—You may wish to use an attention line to ensure a letter will be seen by a particular person, even though it's addressed to a group.

The subject or attention line usually goes two lines after the inside address and two lines before the salutation. The heading for a subject line, especially in a field such as medical records, is often RE:, which is short for *regarding*.

Example of a subject line:

Jacob Esau, M.D.
Chief of Staff
Community Hospital
101 Main Street
Anytown, State 12345-6789

RE: Tanya Owens-Lord

Dear Doctor Esau:

Example of an attention line:

Community Hospital
101 Main Street
Anytown, State 12345-6789

ATTENTION: Jacob Esau, M.D., Chief of Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The attention line doesn't mean the letter is being written to Dr. Esau, so the greeting is given to the larger group. Also, don't include *Dear* when using *Ladies and Gentlemen*.

Salutation

Salutation is a fancy word for a greeting. Most business letters begin the salutation with the conventional *Dear*. After that, it can get tricky! If you know the name of the person you're addressing, you need to decide the level of formality to use. Even in business letters, it's possible to use an informal salutation—but only when the letter writer is on very familiar terms with the recipient.

Dear Jake,

Thanks again for that delightful surprise party. We've never had a more enjoyable anniversary celebration. But what I'm really writing about is the condition of the EKG equipment at Community . . .

Business letters usually maintain a formal tone, even among friends.

Dear Doctor Esau:

The tight economy has limited the availability of funds for new equipment, and we certainly understand financial constraints. Nevertheless, the physicians of Family Health Associates have become quite concerned about the deterioration of the EKG equipment at Community Hospital.

A formal salutation uses the person's title and last name. It ends with a colon. An informal salutation ends with a comma when the first name is used alone. In a formal salutation, type *Doctor* instead of *Dr.* Don't use two titles meaning the same thing. For example, in preparing the inside address, use Mitchell Powell, Ph.D., not Dr. Mitchell Powell, Ph.D. For the salutation, use Dr. Powell, followed by a colon.

The trick in writing salutations is deciding how to address recipients whose gender you don't know. Now that women are prominent at all levels in all sorts of businesses, you can't just type *Gentlemen* or *Dear Sir*. It's always preferable to use a name in the address and salutation, but if you can't do so, you can rely on an old standby.

To Whom It May Concern:

However, many readers feel that this old standby is too old-fashioned and stiff. Here's a nonsexist salutation with a slightly more personal tone.

Dear Sir or Madam:

If you know the person's name but you don't know whether the person is male or female, don't guess. You don't want to use Ms. Donnelly just because the person's first name is Chris. In these instances, use Dear Chris Donnelly:

Groups can be addressed as follows:

Ladies: (when the group is composed entirely of females)

Gentlemen: (when the group is composed entirely of males)

Ladies and Gentlemen: (when the group is composed of both genders, or when you don't know the composition of the group)

If all of your recipients belong to the same group, you can use the name of the group in the salutation:

Dear Sales Team:

Dear Profile Committee:

Dear Colleagues:

The Body

The *body* of a letter, which begins two lines after the salutation, is the actual text or message being conveyed. While you may not be the person actually composing most of the communications in your workplace, knowing the components of an effective communication will be valuable information when you're typing or editing those communications. In addition, if you show yourself knowledgeable about such matters, you may find your supervisor or office manager turning over some of the correspondence to you.

We'll look more closely at the body of a letter in the next section.

Complimentary Close

The salutation is the letter's "hello," and the *complimentary close* is the "good-bye." Select a close that matches the salutation in tone and level of formality. Place the close two spaces beneath the body of the text, aligned with the date. Capitalize only the first word in the close, and follow the phrase with a comma.

Most formal: Yours truly, Yours respectfully, Very truly yours

Formal: Sincerely yours

Less formal: Sincerely

Informal: Warm regards, Cordially, Best wishes

When in doubt, choose the simple and useful *Sincerely*.

Signature Block

The signature block contains the letter-sender's name written twice—first handwritten and then in type, preferably in black ink. The letter-sender's name belongs four spaces directly below the complimentary close. Under the sender's name, type his or her formal title, if appropriate.

Sincerely yours,

Katherine Schnell

Katherine Schnell
Chief Executive Officer

When two people have to sign the letter, you can type the two signature blocks side by side or one beneath the other. The side-by-side method saves space and suggests that the two people are equally behind the letter.

Sincerely yours,

Kay Bell

Kay Bell, M.D.
Chief of Staff

Joseph Roman

Joseph Roman, R.N.
Head Nurse

In most cases, the author will want to review any transcribed letter and sign it (Figure 11). If you send out a transcribed letter the author hasn't seen, you can sign the person's name, followed by a slash and your own initials. Two spaces below the typed signature, you can type the line *dictated but not read*, or *dictated but not signed by _____ (name)*.

Sincerely yours,

Katherine Schnell/lrf

Katherine Schnell, M.D./lrf
Chief of Staff

dictated but not read

Reference Initials

Two spaces below the typed signature line, flush to the left margin, type the reference initials as preferred by the dictator. They go first, in capital letters. Follow the dictator's initials by a slash or a colon, and then type your own initials in lowercase letters. If the dictator doesn't want his or her initials included, simply type your own initials in lowercase. But you should usually follow the common rule: If someone is dictating, use his or her initials; if you're writing for someone, use your initials.

KS/lrf

or

KS:lrf

or

lrf

Be careful not to type initials that may be (unintentionally) funny or offensive. For instance, Patricia Ingrid Green may not want to include her middle initial.

Dr. James Robert Kline and Mrs. Alice Smith Simpson might prefer to omit theirs, too.

If the writer and signer of the letter also types his or her own work, reference initials aren't used.



FIGURE 11—A letter-sender signs in the space between the complimentary close and the typed name and title.

Enclosure Notation

It's important in formal business communication to indicate whether there are enclosures accompanying the letter. The *enclosure notation* allows you (or another sender) to double-check and make sure the package is complete before it goes out. The enclosure notation also helps the recipient know if he or she has received what the sender intended to send.

When there's more than one enclosure, note the number. Even better, list what the enclosures are. This information will also help you select the right-size envelope to use. Here are some sample notations.

Enclosure

2 Enclosures

Enc.

Enc. (2)

Check enclosed

Enclosed: Urinalysis results

Enclosed: Trial transcripts (3)

Copy Notation

If copies of the letter will be distributed to more than one person, you should type the *pc*: (for photocopy) or *c*: (for copy), followed by a list of the recipients' names. You can place the names in order of rank—but in most cases, the easiest (and safest) ranking to figure out is alphabetical. Place a check mark beside the name of the person receiving that particular copy.

lrf

c: R. Brennan

J. Esau ✓

S. L. Robel

Sometimes copies are sent to others without the *c*: or *pc*: notation on the original. In these cases, be sure to include the notation on the file copy to ensure a complete record.

The Postscript (P.S.)

P.S. is an abbreviation for *postscriptus*, which is a Latin phrase meaning “something written after.” Any P.S. belongs at the very end of the letter, two spaces below the last enclosure or copy notation. Be careful not to use a P.S. for information that really should have been worked into the body of the letter. If you've overlooked an important point,

don't just tack it on later—instead, revise the letter. On the other hand, it's fine to add an afterthought that's not really crucial to the main point of the letter.

P.S. Thanks, by the way, for the surprise party. We've never had a more enjoyable anniversary celebration.

Another acceptable way to use a P.S. is to emphasize an important point that might get lost in the middle of a letter.

P.S. After May 15, please use my Maine address.

Writing the Body of a Letter

When anyone is composing the body of any communication, he or she needs to consider the reader and the purpose. In other words, to whom is the letter being written and why? Is it a response to a memo from the boss regarding specific information he or she has requested? Is the president of your company being addressed regarding what's considered an unfair company policy? The answer to the question is key to developing an effective business communication.

Like any other piece of writing, a business communication has three essential parts: a *beginning*, a *middle*, and an *end*.

The Beginning

Business and professional people are busy, so a letter should tell them what they want or need to know up front in the first sentences. This can include

- A reference to any important previous correspondence
- A brief statement of the subject and purpose of the letter or memo
- The establishment of a satisfactory tone, generally pleasant—not harsh, critical, or arrogant

Here are some examples of effective openers:

Dear Pete:

Our meeting last Thursday (May 3, 20—) established a good start to our task of financially consolidating our interests in Weatherby stocks and bonds. I hope you'll find helpful the following list of major points we agreed to work on.

Dear Ms. Banks:

Thank you for your letter of August 1, 20—, in which you answered my questions about the construction of a new wing. May I ask you one more question about your estimate?

It's generally good advice to start on a positive note, even if the letter will be delivering a negative message (Figure 12). If a negative message isn't buffered, the reader may simply not read on to understand the decision. In addition to sounding rude, a negative decision stated bluntly before the reasons are given may seem to imply that the writer made the decision with a closed mind.

FIGURE 12—If you have to deliver a negative message, try to start your message on a positive note.



Not: No, I can't speak at your meeting on July 14.

But: I am honored to have been asked to address your July 14 meeting, but unfortunately I have prior commitments on that date.

Not: You've been refused acceptance into our organization.

But: Because our organization must limit its membership to 100 and since there were so many exceptionally qualified applicants who applied for admission, I'm sorry to inform you that we can't offer you membership in our organization at this time.

The Middle

The middle paragraphs of any communication will develop and support the case or main idea. They may also

- Present those questions that needed answering
- Answer the ones posed by the reader
- Address the reader's complaint
- Supply the information mentioned in the opening

In short, this is the place to make sure the reader understands the what and why of the message.

The Ending

In most cases, what readers remember in a document or letter is the last thing they read. Endings are especially important parts of letters for that reason. This is the place to

- Restate the letter's desired action
- Leave the reader with a lingering, positive impression of the writer and the company or organization you represent
- Influence future business

If the letter requests an action, the closing paragraph should promote that action by telling the reader *what* is to be done, *when*, and *how*. If the response can be made easily and save time for the reader, so much the better: "Phone me collect so I can answer all your questions"; "Check the appropriate box and detach the bottom of this letter along the perforated line";

or “For your convenience, you may answer my questions in the margins of my letter and return it to me in the enclosed, addressed, stamped envelope.”

If you focus your communication on the reader with an honest attempt to treat him or her with respect, whether the message is negative or positive, it’s likely that the reader will be left with a positive impression about both the writer and the company. Another way to achieve that is to extend an appropriate compliment, if warranted, or sincere congratulations if the occasion deserves one. At the very least, appreciation should be expressed for work well done, for business given, or for the opportunity to say what had to be said: “Your interests are our interests. Your success is our success. We look forward to serving you again soon.”

Finally, try to close letters or memos by focusing on the future, as in the following: “I will happily service any of your future needs,” or “I’d be very happy to stop by your office and give you a personal rundown of our other goods and services.”

One last note: Make sure the concluding sentence is a complete sentence.

Not: Hoping to hear from you.

But: We hope to hear from you soon.

Also avoid ending by thanking the reader for something he or she hasn’t done yet.

Not: Thanking you in advance.

But: Your attention to this matter will be much appreciated.

The Second-Page Heading

Most business letters fit on one page. In fact, if a letter goes to two pages, it’s usually a good idea to edit it down to one page. But in some letters, especially consultation reports or other letters with a good deal of information to convey, you’ll need a second page. The format of a two-page letter can vary, but in general, follow these style guidelines:

Make sure the second page contains at least five lines of material, and that at least two of those lines are the actual letter (not just the closing, the signature, and other “end” matter). To get the five lines, you may have to widen the margins and

leave more space on the first page. A bottom margin of one inch is usual, but it's acceptable to use a two-inch margin if that last inch of text would look better on page two.

If there's still not enough material to look good on a second page, try other typists' tricks to get the letter all on one page. For example, you can narrow the margins and remove the extra spaces between the letter's "front" parts (especially the dateline).

Always use the same margins on the second page as you did on the first page. Also, try to start the second page with a new paragraph. If you must split a paragraph, try to have at least two lines of it on each page.

To help the reader understand the material easily, be sure the page turn comes between sentences or between phrases, or at the very least between two words. Never hyphenate the last word on the first page.

On the second page, type a heading that includes the name of the addressee, the page number, and the date.

Jacob Esau, M.D. January 3, 20— Page 2

If a subject line was used on page one, also include the subject in the heading for page two.

Jacob Esau, M.D. January 3, 20— RE: Tanya Owens-Lord Page 2

Leave three spaces between the heading and the continuation of the letter.

Use the same heading on any following pages, numbering consecutively. However, never number the first page.

Jacob Esau, M.D. January 3, 20— RE: Tanya Owens-Lord Page 3

In some places of business, it's customary and acceptable to simply number each additional page, number only, in the upper right corner.

Practice Exercise 3

Look carefully at the letter below. Then follow the directions for Parts A and B.

Wilcox Industries
1210 N. Summit Avenue **1**
Chicago, Ill. 33302

Cory D. Taylor
421 E. 72nd Street **2**
Dayton, OH
Dear Sir, **3**

RE, Acc. # 407-201E **4**

_____ **5**

Wishing you best regards, **6**

Marcia Miller **7**

mm: tc **8**
P.S. **9**
enc. **10**

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 3

A. Identify at least five errors in the form of the letter.

B. Identify each of the numbered parts.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Check your answers with those on page 87.

Styles of Business Letters

In school you may have learned “the right way” to set up a letter. However, there are several “right” letter styles, and the right ones to use in office correspondence will always be up to your boss or your company to determine. Some offices even use an individual letter style that has been created to suit their own needs. Don’t worry, then, if your boss asks you to format a letter in a way that seems to contradict the “rules” you’re learning here. As long as the style is consistent, attractive, and practical, the reader isn’t likely to object. Of course, if the style is confusing, ugly, and difficult to type, then you might want to suggest an alternative. (Suggest very tactfully, of course!)

Letter styles don’t differ in their writing style, although they may use different patterns of punctuation. They differ in where they place certain lines on the page. And the differences in punctuation correspond to the placement of letter parts, not to the punctuation of sentences in the letter’s body. For instance, you’ll place a colon or comma after the

salutation in most letter styles. But in the simplified style, you don't use a standard salutation or close, and you don't need the "standard" punctuation, either.

Full-Block Style

In the *full-block style*, begin all lines at the left margin, except the heading. This is obviously the most efficient way to type, since you don't have to spend time figuring out where to center, set tabs, or indent items. But a letter in this style can also look lopsided and unattractive, depending on the location of the letterhead and the size of the paragraphs (Figure 13).

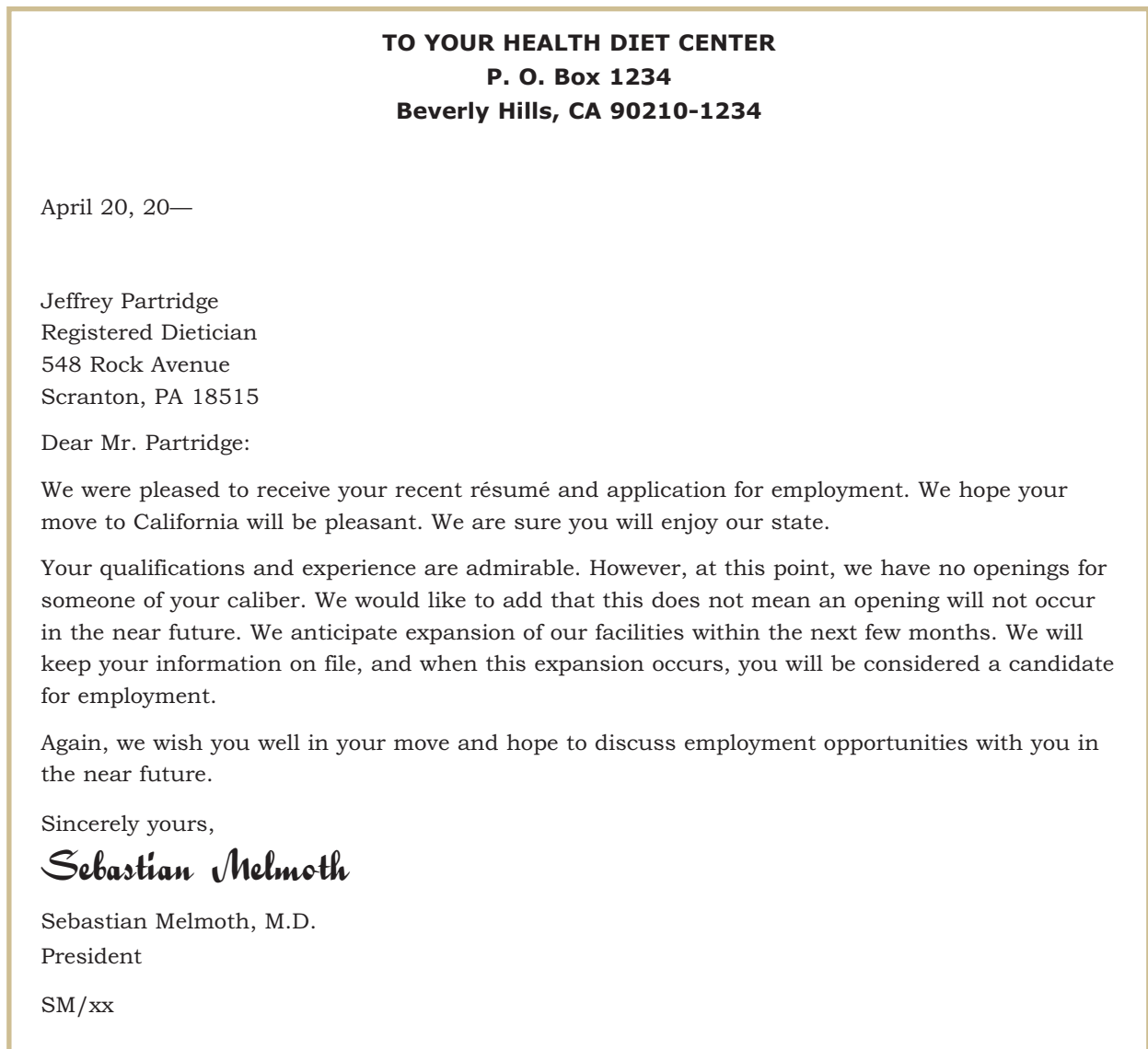


FIGURE 13—Letter in Full-Block Style

Modified-Block Style

When using the *modified-block style*, also called the *semiblock style*, align the following items at the center of the page:

- Dateline
- Reference or subject lines
- Complimentary close
- Signature block

All other parts begin at the left margin (Figure 14). You may use a variation of the modified-block style in which the first line of each paragraph is indented. Usually, you use five spaces for the paragraph indent. That's why many typewriters and word processors come preprogrammed with a five-space tab indent.

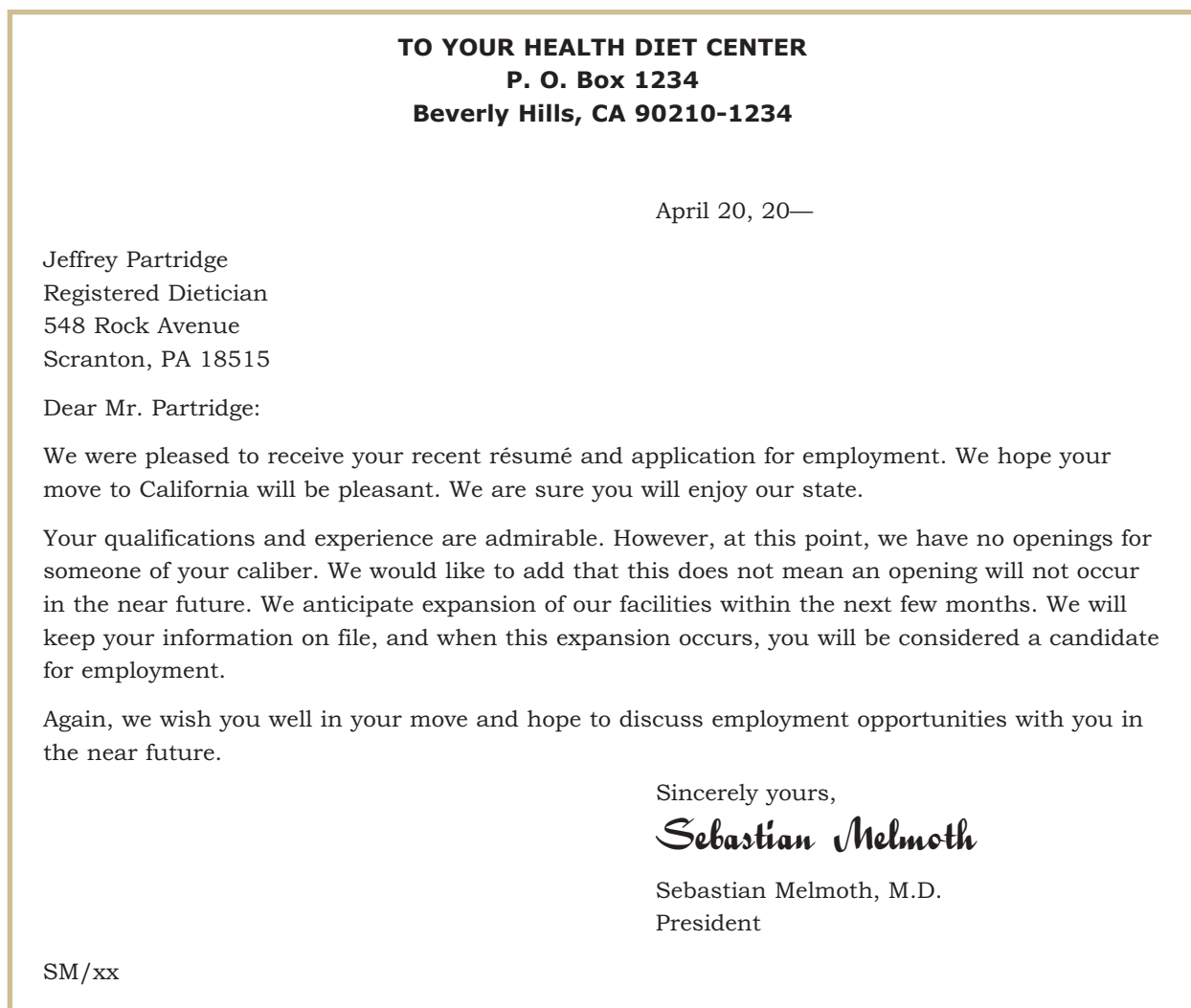


FIGURE 14—Letter in Modified-Block Style

Simplified Style

The *simplified style* is even more efficient than the full-block style (Figure 15). Not only does it begin every line on the left margin, but it also leaves out the formal salutation, the complimentary close, and the handwritten signature. Instead, you type the following:

- An uppercase subject line three lines below the inside address (Begin the body three lines below the subject line.)
- An uppercase typed signature on the fifth line below the body

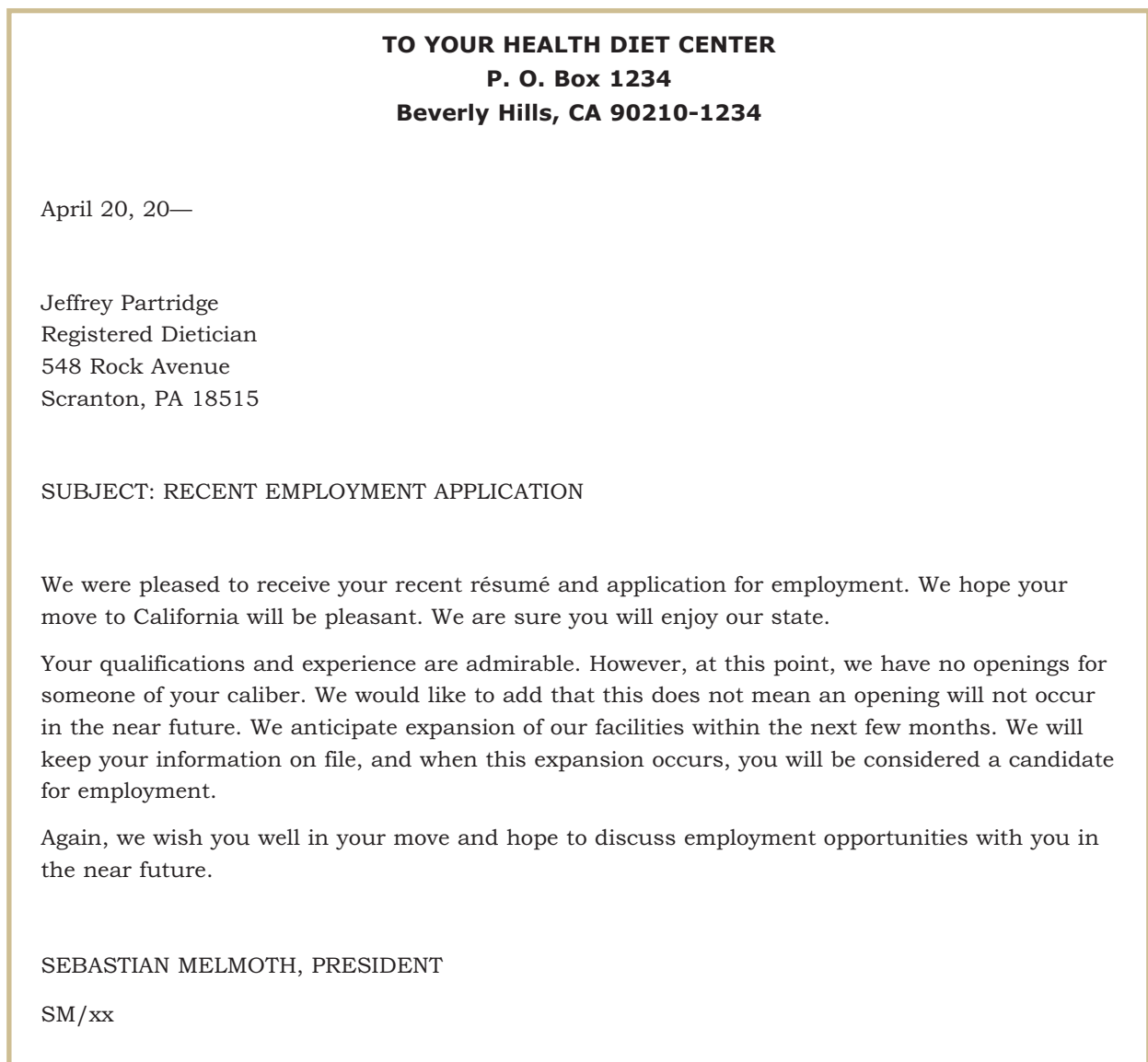
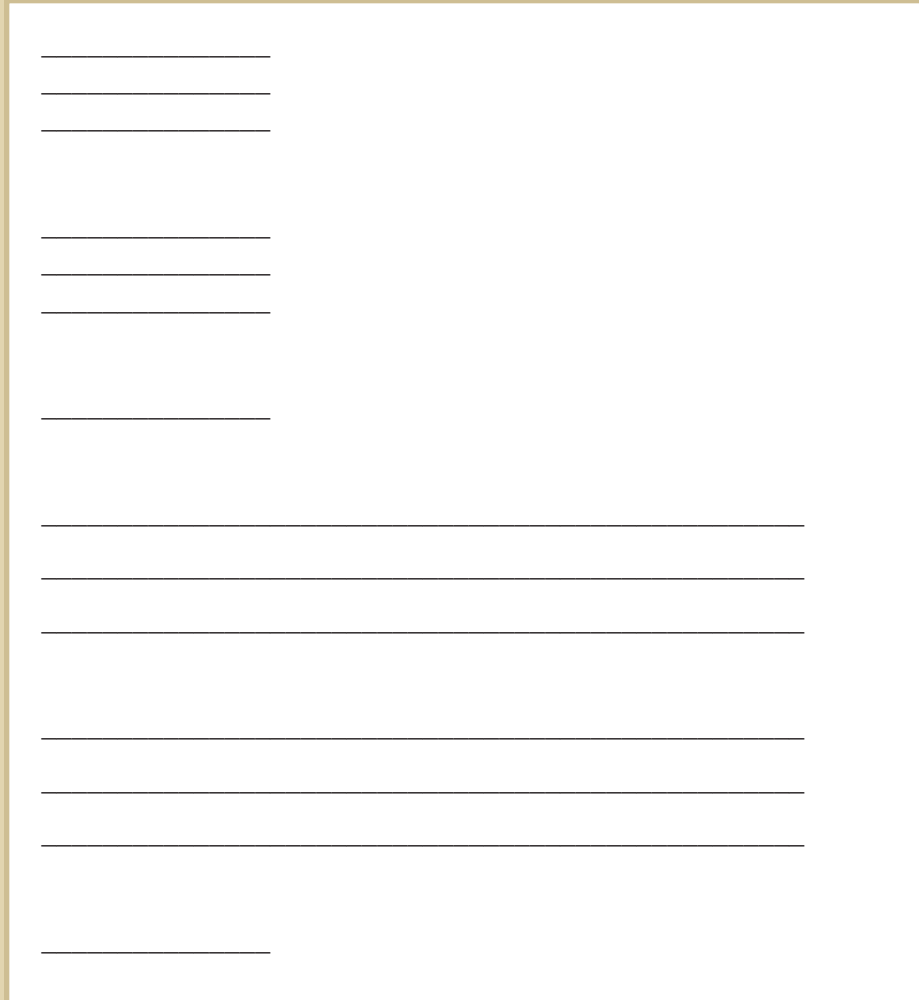


FIGURE 15—Letter in Simplified Style

Practice Exercise 4

Identify the letter styles configured here.

1.



The style is _____.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 4

2.

A large rectangular box containing horizontal lines for writing. The lines are arranged in three groups: three lines at the top right, three lines on the middle left, and a larger set of seven lines in the center. A single line is at the bottom center.

The style is _____.

Check your answers with those on page 88.

Selecting and Addressing Envelopes

When writing to your mother, you may cram several 8" × 11" pieces of paper into a #6 envelope (the one that's 3⁵/₈" × 6¹/₂"). But business correspondence requires a more professional approach. Be sure to use the right-size envelope, not only for the letter but also for its enclosures.

If a short letter is typed on a small sheet of stationery, but its enclosure is three pages of 8" × 11" photocopies, then use a #10 business envelope (the 4" × 9" size). Even better, mail the items flat in a 9" × 12" envelope. But before you put the letter in the envelope, you'll want to print out or type the address.

Letters addressed in cursive penmanship still reach their destination (if the mail carrier can read your writing, that is). However, handwritten envelopes aren't considered appropriate for professional correspondence. In addition, now that postal services use computer scanning to sort mail, letters can reach their destinations much more quickly if envelopes are addressed so that the *optical character recognition (OCR)* equipment can read them. Substantially the same format is recommended by the Canada Post Corporation for the optical scanning of letters in Canada.

The USPS website (www.usps.com) can tell you what you need to know about business mailing. The website includes information on addressing standards, design criteria for letters and reply mail, rates and fees, and other topics important to businesses.

Figure 16 shows a "business-size" (#10) envelope with the dimension of the OCR read area indicated.

For complete addressing and mailing information, visit the Canada Post website at www.canadapost.ca or the USPS website at www.usps.com.

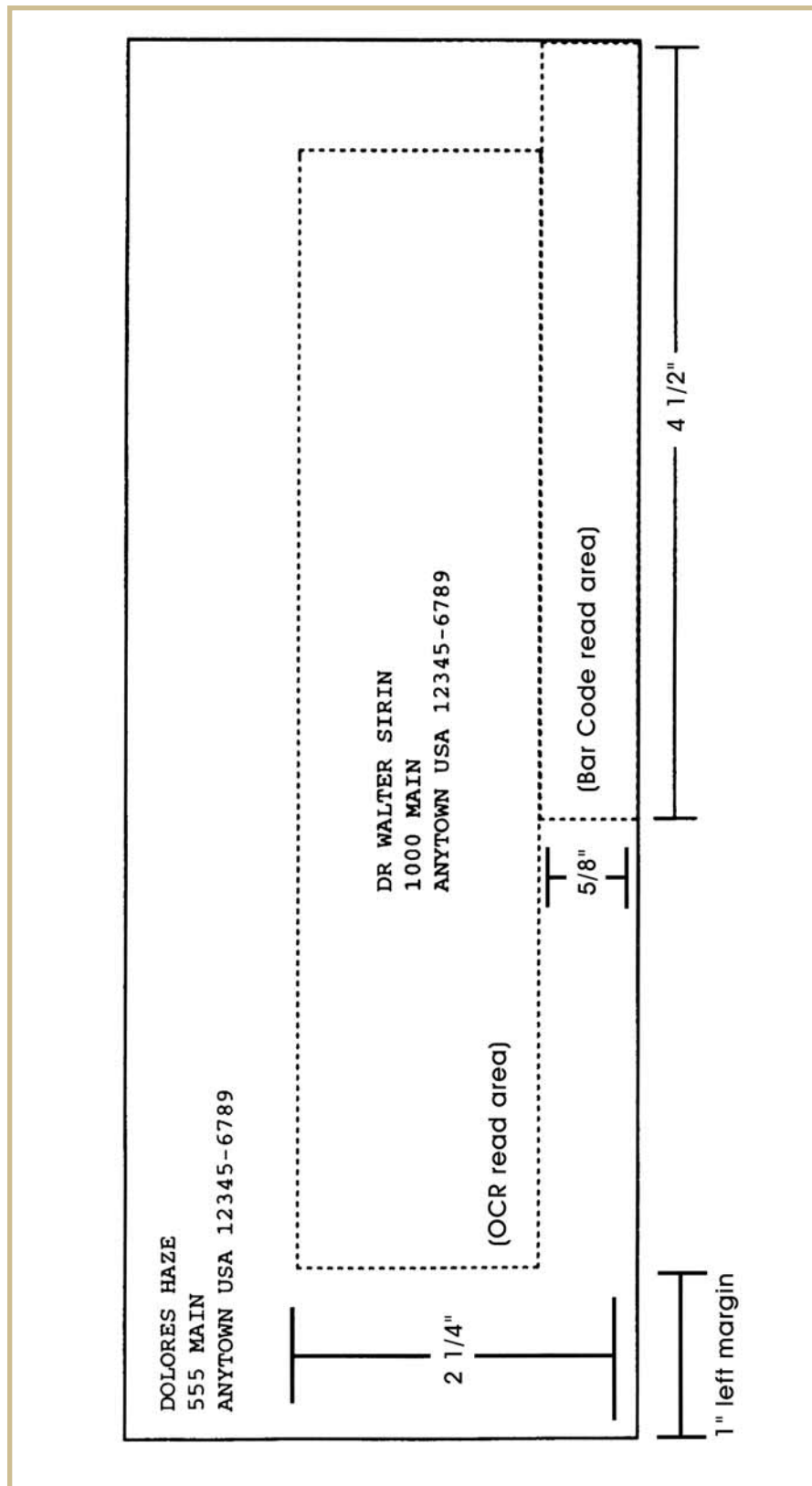


FIGURE 16—A Properly Addressed Business Envelope

Here are some general tips for addressing business mail:

- To ensure that the print is scannable, always type rather than address the envelope by hand.
- Don't use italic or script fonts (type styles), which OCR can't read.
- If the envelope is too large to fit into your typewriter or printer, use an address label.
- Type the entire address in uppercase letters.
- Place information in this order:

Line 1: Recipient's name or attention line. (If an attention line is necessary, the USPS recommends that you always put it first.)

Line 2: Company, department, title, or other important sub-information. (You may divide this line into two and end up with a five-line address, or omit this line and end up with a three-line address.)

Line 3: Street address or P.O. box number and any defining information such as room, suite, or apartment number. (All of this information should go on one line, and that line should be second from the bottom.)

Line 4: City, state or province, and zip code or postal code. Use the following two-letter state or province abbreviations (both capital letters with no period after the second letter) on all letters:

United States

Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
California	CA	New Jersey	NJ
Colorado	CO	New Mexico	NM
Connecticut	CT	New York	NY
Delaware	DE	North Carolina	NC
District of Columbia	DC	North Dakota	ND
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK

Hawaii	HI	Oregon	OR
Idaho	ID	Pennsylvania	PA
Illinois	IL	Rhode Island	RI
Indiana	IN	South Carolina	SC
Iowa	IA	South Dakota	SD
Kansas	KS	Tennessee	TN
Kentucky	KY	Texas	TX
Louisiana	LA	Utah	UT
Maine	ME	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Washington	WA
Michigan	MI	West Virginia	WV
Minnesota	MN	Wisconsin	WI
Mississippi	MS	Wyoming	WY
Missouri	MO		

Canada

Alberta	AB	Nova Scotia	NS
British Columbia	BC	Ontario	ON
Manitoba	MB	Prince Edward Island	PE
New Brunswick	NB	Quebec	QC
Newfoundland	NF	Saskatchewan	SK
Northwest Territories	NT	Yukon Territory	YT

- Avoid putting the zip code on its own line. If you must use another line to stay in the OCR read area, begin it flush with the other lines rather than indenting.
- Don't use punctuation, even if leaving it out seems incorrect to you—no periods after abbreviations, no comma between city and state or province.
- If you don't know a zip code or postal code, look it up in the *U.S. Postal Service Zip Code Directory* or *Canada's Postal Code Directory* both of which are available online, or you can order the U.S. zip code directory from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

- Use standard abbreviations, especially when writing out the material will cause the line to go beyond the OCR read area.

Apartment	APT	Ridge	RDG
Attention	ATTN	River	RV
Avenue	AVE	Road	RD
East	E	Room	RM
Expressway	EXPY	Route	RT
Heights	HTS	Rural	R
Hospital	HOSP	Shore	SH
Institute	INST	South	S
Junction	JCT	Square	SQ
Lake	LK	Station	STA
Lakes	LKS	Street	ST
Lane	LN	Terrace	TER
Meadows	MDWS	Turnpike	TPKE
North	N	Union	UN
Park	PK	View	VW
Parkway	PKY	Village	VLG
Plaza	PLZ	West	W

It's also acceptable to use abbreviations of a long-titled professional organization.

Instead of:

SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S
BOOK WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS
P.O. BOX 66296
MAR VISTA STATION
LOS ANGELES CA 90066

Type:

SCBWI
P.O. BOX 66296
MAR VISTA STA
LOS ANGELES CA 90066

- Place any special markings in the appropriate corner, outside of the OCR read area and bar code read area. For instance, a notation for the person who mails the letter, such as SPECIAL DELIVERY or REGISTERED MAIL, should go in the upper right, beneath the space left for

postage. A notation for the recipient, such as HOLD FOR ARRIVAL or PLEASE FORWARD, should go in the lower left corner of the envelope.

Now you're ready to put the letter in the envelope. Be sure to fold the letter carefully. Keep edges lined up straight so the letter won't get wrinkled or the creases won't give the letter a lopsided look when the reader opens it. Also, crooked creases can lead to damaging the letter on the way in and out of the envelope. Be aware that a sharp letter opener can cut a carelessly folded letter along with the envelope. If you follow the conventional folding method in [Figure 17](#), you'll have perfect creases every time.

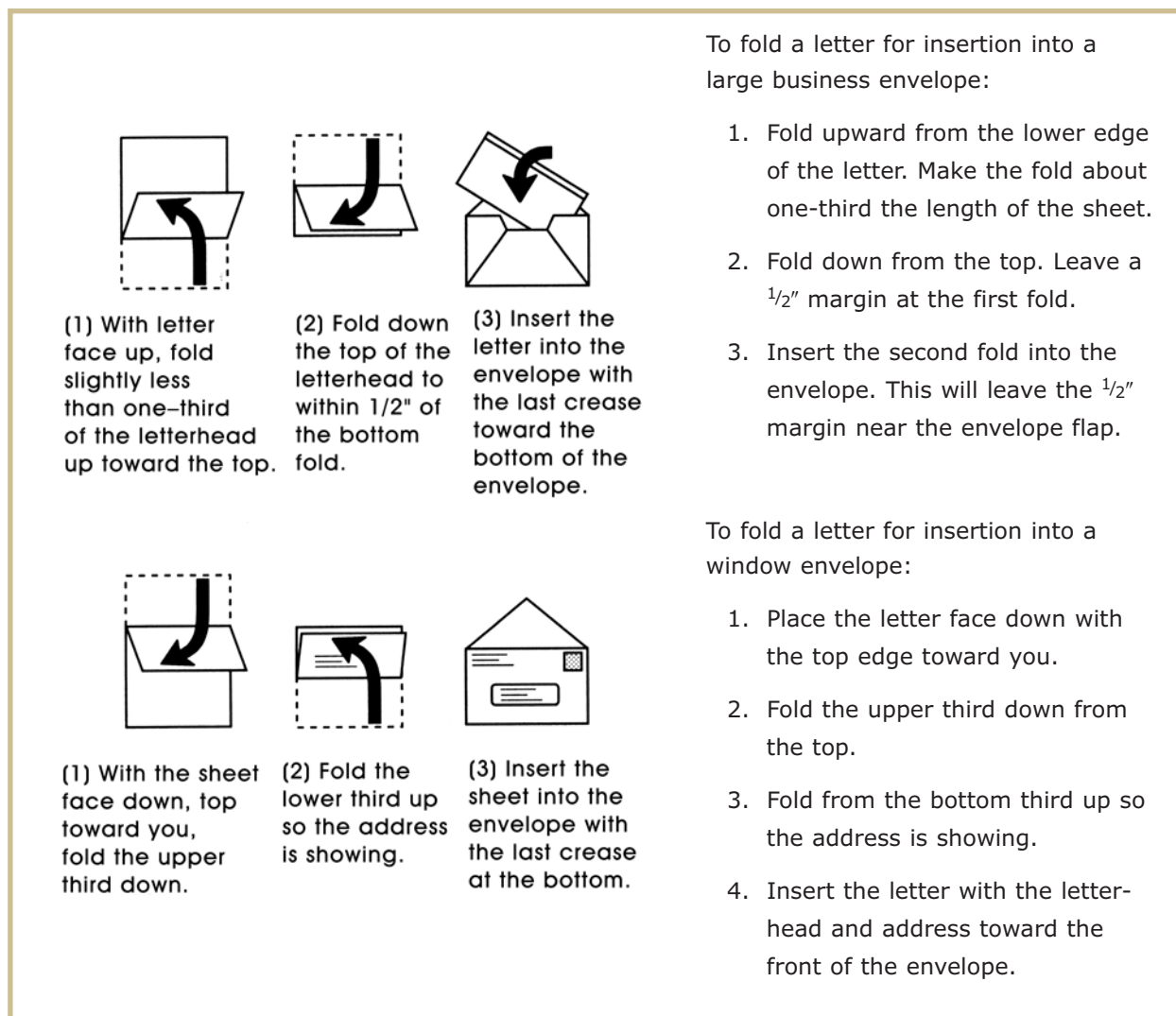


FIGURE 17—Properly Folding a Business Letter

Practice Exercise 5

Look at the envelope below that's addressed for OCR scanning and identify at least six errors.

S. Smith

John B. Jeremy, President and Chief Executive Officer
Masterson Co.
Philadelphia, Pa.

REGISTERED MAIL

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Check your answers with those on page 88.

Templates and Sample Letters

You'll frequently send out letters that you've written in response to a specific problem or situation. When you know that a letter will be used frequently, take a few minutes to make a *template*, or model letter. Edit and polish it so that you can use the same format and content whenever a similar response is needed. Then, if you've created it using a word processing program, save the file in a folder labeled "templates" so you can easily retrieve it. You'll be amazed at how quickly you'll collect sample letters. Eventually, you'll discover you have a template to fit nearly every situation. What a tremendous way to become more efficient while providing top-quality letters!

In the material that follows, you'll find some principles for writing the more common kinds of letters used in business, as well as examples of each kind. These will help you as you draft your own letters.

Letters of Inquiry

Letters of inquiry, which request information, are frequently needed in business correspondence. The subject of the inquiry may be the business standing of an individual or a firm, the price of goods, the price of some machine or device, or any other matter. An effective letter of inquiry makes it clear exactly what information is being requested and why. If a number of questions are being asked, it's a good idea to itemize them or put each in a separate paragraph. If the information is needed by a certain date, the fact is included in the letter (Figure 18).

Box 234
Dalton, Pennsylvania 18414
September 23, 20—

Sarah Morgan, Ph.D.
The Business College
8120 Fourth Street
New Brunswick, AZ 85691

Dear Dr. Morgan:

Your school was recommended to me by a guidance counselor at my former high school, and I am considering enrolling in your office management program. However, before deciding, I would like a little more information. Here are the questions I would like to have answered:

How much math is required in the course? I must confess I've never been a stellar math student.

How long would it take me to complete the course? Would it be possible for me to complete the course in six months or less if I devote all of my time to it?

Do you help your students find positions? Would it be unreasonable for me to expect to obtain a position within 20 miles of New Brunswick?

When would be the earliest that I might be able to start my course of study? My family and I are moving to Arizona next month and I would like to get started as soon as possible after that.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Very truly yours,
Albert K. Hall
Albert K. Hall

FIGURE 18—Letter of Inquiry

At some point, you or your office or company may be answering one of those letters of inquiry. The same principles that apply to the writing of a good letter of inquiry apply to answering such letters (Figure 19). Be clear, direct, and specific in supplying the information requested. If company brochures will help to answer the questions, be sure to enclose them. If there's a reason why you can't give the information needed, make sure to say so. Remember, any correspondence you send out in the name of the company or office you work for should attempt to create and maintain a positive image of the company.

8120 Fourth Street
New Brunswick, AZ 85691
September 30, 20—

Mr. Albert K. Hall
Box 234
Dalton, PA 18414

Dear Mr. Hall:

I am happy to know that you're thinking of studying with us. We assure you that we will be able to prepare you for a good position as an office manager if you're willing to do your share by working hard and dedicating yourself to success.

I have mailed you a copy of our new catalog, which contains a synopsis of the subjects required in the Office Management Program. You will find this program's outline beginning on page 24. As to your question regarding math requirements, while advanced courses such as calculus are not required, basic mathematical concepts and statistics are. I'm sure you can understand why a topnotch office manager would need to be proficient in those areas.

Our next semester starts January 4, but if you are intending to begin at that time you should know that our filing deadline for applications for the spring semester is November 30. I have enclosed an application form with the catalog. While most of our students require three semesters to graduate, it is possible to graduate in six months by taking extra courses each semester.

Although we have no employment department, recent graduates have secured good, local positions within three months of graduating.

Let me suggest that you read the entire catalog very carefully, and then if you have further questions, please contact me at my office phone (602) 333-3333 between the hours of 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. I will be glad to answer any other questions you may have and to assist you in any way I can.

Very truly yours,
Sarah Morgan
Sarah Morgan, Ph.D.
The Business College

P.S. Good luck to you and your family with your relocation. I'm sure you will find Arizona a beautiful state and the living conditions here excellent.

FIGURE 19—Letter of Reply to Inquiry

Complaint Letters

Probably the most challenging letter for anyone to write is a *complaint letter*. When a person writes a complaint letter, he or she has some problem. Often that person is upset, even angry, if he or she is taking the time to write a letter. The challenge, then, if you're in the position of having to write a complaint letter, is to address the problem without sounding irrational or insulting the person or company you're writing to. This is especially true in business when you're representing the company or office you work for. Belittling or calling the addressee names is hardly likely to get you positive action regarding your complaint and, perhaps even worse, will tarnish your company's or employer's reputation.

What you should do, then, is be *controlled*, *objective*, and *specific* about the nature of your problem.

In your letter, you should state what you ordered and when you placed your order. State what inconveniences, if any, have resulted for your company from lack of receipt of the goods. Also indicate what action you expect to have taken. Indicate if you would like to cancel your order. **Figures 20** and **21** are examples of the bodies for ineffective and effective complaint letters.

Dir Sir:

About three weeks ago I ordered some things from your company and asked that you ship them immediately. So far nothing has arrived and this has had a negative impact on my business. Please check my order and send it immediately if you have not already done so. Otherwise you can just cancel my order.

Sincerely,

Pam S. Smith

Pam S. Smith

FIGURE 20—Ineffective Letter of Complaint

Dear Sir:

Our oil order No. 307, acknowledged on January 16, hasn't arrived. In view of the usual promptness with which you've always filled my orders, I am surprised at the delay.

Will it be possible for you to fill my order by the end of the week?

Sincerely yours,

Pam M. Smith

Pam M. Smith

FIGURE 21—Effective Letter of Complaint

What if you're on the receiving end of a complaint letter? It takes as much skill and control to write a good response letter to a complaint as it does to draft a complaint. An effective response to a complaint letter will do two things:

1. It will address and correct the complaint, if at all possible. If the complaint can't be satisfied, a reason will be given.
2. The tone and content of the letter will attempt to maintain goodwill and business for the company or office.

Collection Letters

Unfortunately, not all individuals and companies pay their bills on time. It becomes necessary, then, to write to an individual or company to remind them that payment is due or overdue and to encourage them to meet their financial obligations. The usual approach is a series of letters that increase in forcefulness. The first letter usually extends the benefit of the doubt:

Everyone forgets things sometimes. Perhaps you've overlooked your monthly payment of \$_____, now overdue. If so, please send the payment now to keep your account current. If the payment has already been sent, please ignore this letter.

When that doesn't receive a response, a second letter might read:

Our records indicate that you still haven't made your payment of \$_____ for the month of June. In addition, your July payment is now due. We ask that you pay prompt attention to this matter and mail your two payments immediately in order to maintain your credit standing with our company. If you're having financial problems that are affecting your ability to pay these bills, please call our credit department at (717) 666-6666 during regular company hours to arrange a payment plan.

If that doesn't work, a third letter might be sent with a more threatening tone:

We still haven't received either your June or July payments and neither has our credit department received a call from you regarding a payment schedule. If we don't receive payment or hear from you in the next 10 days, we'll be forced to revoke your credit and turn your account over to a collection agency.

Letters of Introduction

Another kind of letter that one occasionally may be requested to compose is a *letter of introduction*. Before you consider writing such a letter, you need to look closely at both the person who's requesting the introduction and the person who will be receiving the letter. Is the person who wants the introduction someone who's trustworthy and honest? Are his or her motives for desiring the introduction ones that you can endorse? How will the recipient of the letter feel when he or she gets the letter? How will the letter affect his or her feelings towards you, the writer? Will he or she feel imposed upon? These are considerations that you should weigh before agreeing to draft such a letter. See [Figure 22](#) for a sample letter of introduction.

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Harry L. Wells, who plans to open a plant in Troy if he can find a building suitable for his button factory.

Mr. Wells has been a business associate and close personal friend of mine for more than ten years. He is an honest and progressive gentleman, of good character. Any help that you can provide him in this venture will be much appreciated—both by him and me.

Very sincerely yours,

R.J. Keating

R. J. Keating

FIGURE 22—Letter of Introduction

Letters of Recommendation

As with a letter of introduction, you need to consider whether you can honestly recommend the person for what he or she is requesting. Sometimes it's difficult to say that you can't in good conscience write a letter of recommendation for someone and tell that person why, but certainly integrity requires that you do so. If you agree to write the letter, be truthful and don't exaggerate a person's attributes. Doing so may actually have a negative impact on the person's job quest. See [Figure 23](#) for an effective letter of recommendation.

Letters Accepting and Declining Invitations

In accepting an invitation, the writer of the letter should express his or her willingness to comply with the request of the person extending the invitation and should show appreciation for having received it. In declining an invitation, the writer needs only to state regret that the invitation can't be accepted and to give a reason if the writer thinks it's advisable to do so ([Figures 24 and 25](#)).

Dear Mr. Ambrose:

Ms. Joyce J. Allison has informed me that she has applied for a position as teacher of mathematics in the Allegheny High School. She asked me to write you a word of recommendation on her behalf, and I am certainly pleased to do so.

I have worked closely with Ms. Allison for the past three years since she has served as my teaching assistant while she was working to fulfill requirements for a master's degree in mathematics at Sutler University, where I am a Professor of Mathematics. Every semester Ms. Allison taught a section of freshman mathematics and conducted study sessions for several of my classes. Therefore, I had an excellent opportunity to observe her as a teacher.

Without exaggeration, I can say that she is a most thorough mathematician and a conscientious teacher who is able both to inspire and challenge the able mathematical student and make difficult mathematical concepts clear for the less able student. In addition, she has been involved in some research projects with me and I can assure you that, in addition to being an able mathematician and teacher, she is also a researcher of the first order, eager to keep abreast of innovations in her field and to make a contribution herself. Certainly the school or college that secures her services will be most fortunate.

Personally, I shall be sorry to lose Ms. Allison's services as my assistant. Nevertheless, I heartily wish her the success and advancement she so well deserves, and I take pleasure in recommending her to you.

Sincerely,

C. L. Dodgson

C. L. Dodgson
Professor of Mathematics
Sutler University

FIGURE 23—Letter of Recommendation

Dear Ms. Warren:

I am glad to accept your invitation to hear Professor Wainwright speak on the property tax next Wednesday evening.

The subject of property tax is one of keen interest these days, and when it's discussed by as capable a speaker as Ms. Wainwright, her listeners will enjoy a definite treat. I appreciate your remembering me and shall be at the Board of Trade Building promptly at eight o'clock.

Yours truly,

Richard Sloan

Richard Sloan

FIGURE 24—Letter Accepting an Invitation

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I am sorry I can't join you at the reception for Dr. Gray on the evening of November 16. If it were not for a previous out-of-town engagement, I would be glad to accept your invitation.

I know you'll have an enjoyable evening and expect you to tell me about it later.

Very sincerely yours,

Richard Sloan

Richard Sloan

FIGURE 25—Letter Declining an Invitation

Letters of Application

At some point in most people's careers, they find it necessary to draft a *letter of application* for a job. Perhaps you've become dissatisfied with your job, or there's no place to advance within the company. You may then find yourself reading the want ads online or in the local paper. If you find a position that interests you and that you feel qualified to fill, you'll want to write a letter of application. That letter will usually be sent along with a résumé. (Never send a résumé without a cover letter.)

Keep in mind that the letter of application is often the very first encounter that a company has with you, so make sure that your letter is neat and correct in format, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. The tone of your letter should be professional and confident, but not cocky. In the letter, you should present evidence that your background and experience meet the needs of the employer. You may highlight or call attention to particulars from your résumé that you think qualify you for the advertised position. Remember that the ultimate purpose of the letter is to get you an interview so that you may then sell yourself in person. An effective letter of application is given in [Figure 26](#).

5400 Springfield Street
Dana Point, California 92629
May 6, 20—

Mr. Arthur Barnes, Personnel Director
The Howland Publishing Company
789 Commonwealth Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92547

Dear Mr. Barnes:

In Monday's *Register* I reviewed your advertisement for an Executive Secretary. Please consider me as an applicant for the position.

I am a graduate of Garden Grove High School and Saddleback Community College. In high school I took the regular business course and was in a special advanced-speed class for persons passing a shorthand test at 120 words a minute. In junior college I majored in business administration and took two years of creative writing as an elective.

Since receiving my Associate in Science degree three years ago, I have been secretary to Mr. Martin K. Topper, Treasurer of the Universal Printing Company in Anaheim. My duties have included taking dictation up to 140 words a minute, using a word processor to create a company newsletter, and supervising the work of several clerks. I have had the responsibility of composing many of Mr. Topper's letters and handling confidential matters for him. I can key in straight copy at 75 words a minute and transcribe my shorthand at 40 words per minute.

Recently, I learned that I have reached the maximum salary for my position. I have decided, therefore, to seek employment with a larger firm—one engaged in work in which I have a special interest—writing. Because of my secretarial experience, as well as my training in creative writing, I am confident that I can do an outstanding job for you.

Mr. Martin K. Topper has permitted me to use his name as a reference.

May I have a personal interview at your convenience? If you wish to telephone me, my number is 555-9877.

Sincerely,

Virginia R. Smithson

Virginia R. Smithson

Enclosure: Résumé

FIGURE 26—Letter of Application

Letters of Resignation

If at some point you decide to change companies, you should send a brief, courteous *letter of resignation* to your current employer. The letter should mention your reason for resigning and the date when the resignation is to become effective. It's a good idea to express appreciation, or even regret. Most importantly, make sure that the letter is one of goodwill. The letter of resignation isn't the place to express all your complaints about the company. Besides, you never know when a letter like that might come back to haunt you. An effective letter of resignation is given in **Figure 27**.

Dear Ms. Thone:

I'm sorry that I must resign my position as bookkeeper for your firm. An unusually good position has been offered me, and I feel that I must take advantage of such an excellent opportunity for advancement.

Since my new duties begin July 1, I ask that my resignation take effect June 30.

I have enjoyed my work with you and appreciate the kindness you have shown me. My interest in your firm will continue, and I wish you and your associates continued success.

Very truly yours,

Jill Jones

Jill Jones

FIGURE 27—Letter of Resignation

Practice Exercise 6

A. A customer sent your company the following letter:

I'm having trouble with the Kutzit gasoline-powered lawn mower I bought from you this spring. It sticks when I start it, and it doesn't cut the grass close enough. I can't find any way to adjust the blade.

A very poor customer service representative responded with this:

We're sorry you're having difficulty with the Kutzit mower. This is an excellent item, but intelligent care is necessary for its successful operation. We sent you a booklet that tells you just how to care for the mower. Apparently you either failed to read it, or you didn't follow the instructions. We're sure you'll have no more trouble after you start caring for the mower as it should be taken care of.

Write a response that's more likely to please and keep the customer.

B. In the following letter, there are at least 10 expressions that can be considered offensive. Cross out the offensive expressions, and substitute better ones. Make any other changes that you feel can improve the letter.

Your complaint concerning our service has just come back to my desk. If you'll take time to look through the catalog we sent you, you'll see that it was due to your own ignorance that the machine didn't perform as you wanted it to.

It's quite evident that either you misunderstood the directions, or you haven't carefully followed those directions. You imply that it was our fault that the tripper on the machine broke. This is untrue. It seems to me that you simply were excited and didn't give the machine a fair trial.

I also call attention to the fact that you promised to let us have your check for the last month's payment before the end of the month. Please follow the directions in the catalog we've already sent you. We would also appreciate your check by return mail.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 6

C. Now write a revised response to the letter in B, one that's more customer-friendly.

D. Devise a better opening sentence than those given below.

1. I know that you're extremely busy at this time of year, and that you're bothered by many persons trying to interest you in fall fashions.

2. We beg to advise you.

3. Sometimes employees who work long hours become discontented.

4. It's contrary to the policy of our company to accept any returned merchandise.

5. We received your order of July 17, but regret to state that we can't fill it.

Check your answers with those on page 88.

Writing Tips

Here are a few tips to remember when you're writing business letters or memos:

- Remember that written communications can be seen by more people than you may intend. You should assume that the recipient of any memo or letter you write may jot a note on it and forward it to someone else to look at or handle. Be particularly careful if you're angry or feeling negative when you're writing. Edit your letter or memo closely. Remember that facts are difficult to refute but negativity is easy to attack.
- Personnel-related memos have a long life. They may remain in an individual's personnel file for years. A hastily written, poorly crafted memo that's intended to provide constructive criticism may, in fact, haunt the recipient for a long time. Be sure any such memo says precisely what you intend both in words and in tone.
- Don't resort to writing memos because you want to avoid confronting coworkers about problems. Memos can never replace open discussions. Conversely, if your boss usually communicates with you in person or by phone but suddenly starts communicating by memo, he or she may for some reason be uncomfortable around you. Take the initiative to determine what the difficulty is and get it resolved before it balloons into a major problem.
- Are you having trouble beginning a letter or a memo? Pretend that you have one minute to explain the subject to your boss as she or he passes by on the way to catch a taxi to the airport. What are the two or three points you would stress? Quickly write these down on a piece of paper. You now have the topic sentences or main points you wish to make in your letter or memo. Add the supporting arguments or details, and your rough draft is completed.

- Here's another trick for getting started. Close your eyes and picture the person to whom you're writing. How would you approach the subject about which you're writing if you were to discuss it in person? Write your opening sentences that way—quickly, before the thoughts escape. If the writing seems too casual, you can always edit to get it right. But you'll have quickly gotten the rough draft on paper, with minimum difficulty.
- Don't fall into the institutional writing trap. Although most memos and letters need to be somewhat more formal than spoken communication, you're still communicating with other people. Don't let your writing sound as if it's developed by a machine or, worse yet, by a committee.

Too stiff: It's important to note that the fully costed proposal in final form must be received by 3:00 P.M. Friday.

Less formal: It's important that I receive the fully costed proposal in final form by 3:00 P.M. Friday.

This subtle change makes the message less threatening and more motivating.

- Memo and letter writers sometimes fail to specify what action should be taken or to ask that the action be completed by a specific time or date. Don't be shy. After all, there's a reason you took the time to write the letter or memo. Requesting certain actions by a specific deadline is reasonable.
- Remember the ABCs of business correspondence:

Accuracy

Brevity

Clarity



Self-Check 4

Underline the one *best* answer to each question.

1. Which of the following salutations is *not* considered acceptable form?
 - a. Dear Dr. Smith, M.D.:
 - b. Dear Mrs. Scott:
 - c. Dear Sir or Madam:
 - d. Dear Students:
2. If your company has letterhead paper, you should
 - a. use it for correspondence required in the department.
 - b. type the company's address below the letterhead.
 - c. omit the inside address.
 - d. type the date below the letterhead.
3. The attention line of a letter is usually placed
 - a. above the inside address.
 - b. above the salutation.
 - c. after the secretary's initials.
 - d. on the second line of the inside address.
4. The inside address of a letter
 - a. can be abbreviated.
 - b. contains the town and state only.
 - c. should be the same address as on the envelope.
 - d. is the same as the return address.
5. When you're directing your letter to one particular person within a company, it's *best* to
 - a. use enclosures.
 - b. put the person's name in the address.
 - c. put the person's name in an attention line.
 - d. put the name in a copy notation.

(Continued)



Self-Check 4

6. When more than one person is to receive a copy of the letter, this can be indicated by one of the following:
- | | | | |
|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| a. pc: | Jim Crossen | c. At/SM: | Jim Crossen |
| | Bob Granger | | Bob Granger |
| | Bill Hart | | Bill Hart |
| b. Enc: | Jim Crossen | d. To: | Crossen |
| | Bob Granger | | Granger |
| | Bill Hart | | Hart |
7. When using the simplified letter format, which parts are omitted?
- The typed name and title of the sender
 - The salutation and complimentary close
 - The complimentary close and the date
 - The typed name of the sender and the salutation
8. The four sentences below were part of the same letter. The letter can be made more concise by eliminating which sentence?
- I am writing this letter because my wife and I are planning a trip to your area in the near future to attend a convention of my company.
 - Please send me your rates for a double room and bath.
 - Also include any information on available transportation facilities.
 - I am interested in reservations for the last two weeks in July.
9. You're writing a letter to let a company know that you're interested in a job now open with the company. The *best* wording would be
- I think I may be interested in your job. Please let me know more about it so I can decide.
 - I am definitely the most qualified person for the job now open with your company.
 - I desire to state that your offer appeals to me and I am prepared to offer my services.
 - I am interested in applying for the job as a secretary now open in your engineering department.
10. You, Susan S. Smith, have typed a letter for your employer, Mr. George S. Shinn. Which of the following identifying initials are *correct*?
- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. GSS/susan | c. gss/susan |
| b. GSS/ss | d. susan/GSS |

(Continued)



Self-Check 4

11. Which address is formatted correctly for OCR scanning?
- | | |
|---|--|
| a. <i>Mr. Jonathan Cardoni</i>
<i>504, Warford Drive,</i>
<i>Syracuse, New York 13224</i> | c. MR. JONATHAN CARDONI
504 WARFORD DR
SYRACUSE, NY
13224 |
| b. Mr. Jonathan Cardoni
504 Warford Dr.
Syracuse, NY 13224 | d. MR JONATHAN CARDONI
504 WARFORD DR
SYRACUSE NY 13224 |
12. The memo format may be used for
- any type of short, professional business communication.
 - interoffice communication within a company.
 - informal communication with other companies.
 - informal notes and rough drafts.
13. The date you type at the beginning of a letter or report should be the date that the document is
- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| a. filed. | c. dictated. |
| b. typed. | d. mailed. |
14. The format of a business letter helps both the writer and the reader
- do their jobs effectively and efficiently.
 - become familiar with each other.
 - learn to enjoy writing and reading.
 - function creatively to make everyday letters more interesting.
15. Which one of the following statements is the *best* reply to a customer complaint about the high price of an item?
- Your letter of the twelfth stated that you didn't like our price.
 - Your complaint about our high price is hard to believe.
 - We can't understand why you think the items are overpriced; no one else has ever complained.
 - Your last shipment was priced slightly higher because we've replaced the item you ordered with a new, improved model.

Check your answers with those on page 93.

FORMS

While order letters and handwritten requisitions were once an important part of business writing, for the most part, they've gone the way of carbon paper and white-out. Many everyday transactions now take place through standardized paper or electronic forms. Employee preferences for benefits packages, orders for office supplies or production materials, and even petty cash purchases all require documentation. But instead of letters, memos, and the occasional scribbled note, today's businesses rely on preprinted forms, Portable Document Format (PDF) files, interactive online forms, and email forms, which efficiently provide the necessary information, multiple copies, or long-term records they require.

Purpose of Forms

Whether you work in an office full-time or spend most of your day selling products or providing a service to clients, you're bound to encounter business forms. Some common forms are employment applications, insurance claim forms, expense account reports or travel reimbursement forms, purchase orders (Figure 28) and requisition forms, time sheets, activity logs, accident reports, invoices, work orders, and client or patient record forms.

Forms are designed to improve workflow and make office procedures more efficient. With specific headings and spaces for the needed information, they ensure consistency and help prevent omissions. Of course, unless the information entered on a form is complete and accurate, it isn't useful or efficient. Make sure that you double-check each entry before submitting a form. Imagine the confusion that could result if "Bill to" and "Ship to" information were reversed on a purchase order or if someone accidentally entered two weeks of paid vacation time as unpaid leave. It's also important that dates are entered correctly, since business transactions are time-sensitive and employee attendance records must be accurate.

PURCHASE ORDER

Mayfield Valley Municipal Hospital
2067 Washington Boulevard
Mayfield, OR 00000
123-555-6000

P.O. Number	DATE	Vendor Number	Account Code	Requested by	Department/ Budget Number

Product ID	Description	Quantity	Price Each	Amount
Subtotal				
Shipping				
Total				

Approved (Manager) _____ Date _____

Approved (Director) _____ Date _____

FIGURE 28—Most larger companies use purchase order forms to ensure proper approval and documentation of items they buy.

It's most important to double-check any numbers you've entered on a form. While spelling errors are never desirable, information is usually still readable even if it's misspelled. However, entering 0 when you meant to hit 9 or transposing two numbers on a form can completely change the result. For instance, if you need part number 03476901 but you accidentally write 03476991 on the order form, it's guaranteed you won't get what you expected, even if they both happen to be replacement gaskets or electric pencil sharpeners. It's much more serious if you make a mistake on a client's identification number or a refill number for a patient's medication. Quantities of items, department numbers, client and patient identification numbers, billing hours, and dollar amounts all must be precise and correct every time.

Types of Forms

Most businesses use a variety of forms and may choose paper or electronic types, or use some of both. The choice often depends on the size of the business and the owner's access to and comfort with technology. While paper forms are fine, they must be kept in files, which can take up considerable space if there are hundreds or thousands of them to be stored. In the event of a fire or other catastrophe, paper records could be ruined or lost. Computer forms, which can be produced in several formats, may eliminate some problems, such as storage space, poor handwriting, misplaced papers, and delayed mail delivery. On the other hand, computer files can be damaged or destroyed, too, although backup systems are usually in place. A breach in security is another threat to files stored on computers and could mean a loss of confidential records, trade secrets, and private financial information.

Here are several kinds of forms you may be working with.

Paper Forms

Some forms are simply single sheets of paper printed with spaces in which to write specific information. Others consist of several duplicate pages bound together, usually to provide copies for the customer, salesperson or technician, billing

department, and files. Some are generic and some are custom-made for a specific business and purpose. Many are numbered and some come in books with bindings of wire or glue, which hold the copies together to keep them in order and prevent them from getting lost.

Portable Document Formats (PDFs)

A PDF is a computer format that saves all the information related to a document, such as fonts and graphics, as well as the text. The most common program used to access PDFs is Acrobat Reader, which may be downloaded free from the Internet. Microsoft has its own format, XPS, which works in a similar way. Forms created in these formats may be printed out and filled in by hand, the advantage being that potential customers or employees can access the forms instantly via the Internet, rather than having to visit the facility or request forms by phone or mail.

Email

Many businesses use the forms feature of their email program to create communications shortcuts for everyday tasks such as requesting time off (Figure 29) or processing work orders. With a few keystrokes, a brief form can be completed and sent on its way to the correct individual or department.

Online Enrollment

The websites of some colleges and universities offer online enrollment forms, which can be filled out and sent back electronically. Various government websites allow individuals to enroll in programs that way, and many lending institutions encourage customers to apply for loans electronically. Consumers appreciate the convenience and speed of these forms, as long as the forms are user friendly and function properly.

FILE MESSAGE INSERT OPTIONS FORMAT TEXT REVIEW

Manager: [Broun, John]
 Dept. Admin: [Southworth, Elizabeth]
 Subject: [Paid Time Off Request - Fern Foster]

This form is to be used to request time off for your manager's pre-approval only..

Employee ID: [7906200] Employee Name: [Richard Adams]
 Absence Type: ☒ Vacation ☐ Sick ☐ Other []
 Date of First Day Out of Office: [Monday, February 24, 2014]
 Date of Last Day Out of Office: [Friday, February 28, 2014]
 Total Hours Taken (Past Days): [45.00]
 Employee Comments: []

Submit this form to your supervisor for approval.

FIGURE 29—Email forms offer employees an efficient way to complete everyday tasks, such as requests for time off.

Using Forms

Electronic forms have streamlined record keeping in several ways. It's much more efficient to have employees, clients, and customers key their own information directly into the computer than to have them hand-write the information on paper forms to be keyed into the computer later. Not only does it involve less effort, but there's also less likelihood of spelling or numerical errors.

You'll find that each business has its own assortment of forms. The best way to become acquainted with them is to simply ask your supervisor or a coworker to show you the forms you'll be working with and explain the procedure that goes with each one. You might want to take notes, in case it's several months before you have to use a certain form, and keep a file of samples along with your notes.



Self-Check 5

Underline the one *best* answer to each question.

1. Electronic forms streamline office records by
 - a. providing several copies of each form.
 - b. making records easier to find in files.
 - c. allowing customers to key in their own information.
 - d. reaching potential clients in their offices.
2. It's *most* important to check on the accuracy of the _____ on a form.
 - a. names
 - b. numbers
 - c. headings
 - d. spelling
3. Electronic records are no safer than paper files unless they're protected by both _____ and _____ systems.
 - a. domestic, public
 - b. physical, electronic
 - c. encryption, security
 - d. security, backup
4. The *best* way to become familiar with your company's forms is to
 - a. study a variety of forms on the Internet.
 - b. visit an office supply store and look at its selection of forms.
 - c. seek advice from a friend who works in an office.
 - d. ask your supervisor for samples of forms they use.
5. To make use of a PDF form, you must have _____ on your computer
 - a. Microsoft XPS
 - b. Acrobat Reader
 - c. Portable Document Facility
 - d. Windows Media Player

Check your answers with those on page 93.

NOTES

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Practice Exercise 1

The assistant's letter manages to be unclear, wordy, incomplete, rude, and full of errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. It also lacks unity and coherence.

In addition to the bad writing and poor customer service, there are at least 12 technical errors, which are marked below. How many did you find?

Dear: ^ Mr. Kimmel, ^

At this time I have no reason to believe it is ~~is~~ damaged or defective. You mean you think the Shuttle Hook and ~~Bobbin~~ assembly is out of synchronization with the Motor, which is impossible. It seems to me that the problem is not with the machine but rather with the operator. There can be no doubt about it that if you thread it right it will work without bunching up the thread like that. Or if you need to adjust the tension. I make the assumption that you have already gone ahead and read the instructions as anyone should do when they ~~get~~ a new piece of equipment like this. If not than do so immediately.

You may have to look under troubleshooting. This happens alot.

~~I~~/have Enclosed please find copies of the warranty, which you may perhaps should of also read before final completion of the sale. You'll notice it doesn't cover this type of problem.

Yours truly,

Ⓟ Alex Cleaver

Answers

CS Rep

Your response to the dissatisfied sewing machine owner might look something like this:

Dear Mr. Kimmel:

I'm sorry that you have been unable to use your new Swinger/3000 sewing machine. Based on your description of how the thread is looping and knotting on the underside of the fabric, our technicians believe there is no defect in the machine, but a problem with the tension—a rather common concern with sewing machines. The solution may be in adjusting the tension or reviewing the way the machine is threaded. Here are some suggestions that may help you make the proper adjustments:

- See page 2 of the Swinger/3000 Instruction Manual for a diagram showing the proper threading of the machine.
- See page 19 of the Swinger/3000 Instruction Manual for guidelines on tension adjustment.
- Check the Troubleshooting section of the Swinger/3000 Instruction Manual for additional information on tension settings for specific fabrics, correct positioning of the bobbin, types of thread, and related topics.

I hope this information helps you to resolve the problem with your Swinger/3000. If these adjustments don't result in improved stitching, please call me at 555-3498 and I will do my best to assist you in identifying what may be causing the loose thread.

Yours truly,

Andy Elpert

Andy Elpert
Customer Service Representative

Practice Exercise 3

A.

1. Heading should be centered on page.
2. The date is missing after the heading.
3. Illinois is incorrectly abbreviated by postal standards.
It should be IL.
4. A title is missing from the name in the inside address.
It should say Mr. (if the person has no other title like Dr. or President).
5. The zip code is missing from the inside address.
6. There should be a double space between the inside address and the salutation.
7. Since the person's name is known, the letter should be addressed to Mr. Taylor, not Dear Sir.
8. The salutation should be followed by a colon rather than a comma.
9. RE should be followed by a colon.
10. RE should be placed above the salutation.
11. "Wishing you best regards" isn't a suitable complimentary closing.
12. Marcia Miller didn't sign her name.
13. MM, the initials of the composer of the letter, should be capitalized and a slash without space used before the typist's initials.
14. The P.S. should be the last thing mentioned.
15. *Enc.* should begin with a capital letter and be moved above the P.S.

B.

1. Heading
2. Inside address
3. Salutation
4. Subject/attention line
5. Body

6. Complimentary close
7. Signature block
8. Reference initials
9. Postscript
10. Enclosure notation

Practice Exercise 4

1. full-block
2. modified-block

Practice Exercise 5

You should have listed at least five of the following:

1. The return address of the sender isn't given.
2. The title of Mr. Jeremy is too long—it should be on a separate line.
3. The street address of the Masterson Company isn't given.
4. Pennsylvania should be abbreviated PA.
5. No zip code is given.
6. The address should be in all capitals
7. Punctuation should be eliminated.
8. The address isn't in the OCR area.
9. REGISTERED MAIL should be under the stamp.

Practice Exercise 6

- A. Your rewritten version of the letter should be similar to this:

Thank you for taking time to let us know about your troubles with Kutzit. Sometimes a new mower may need a little adjustment, particularly if the terrain is rough or if the grass is new. I notice you live in that new development in Meshoppen, so if you have new grass, that may explain some of the difficulties you're having.

In case your Kutzit instruction manual isn't handy, I'm sending you another one. On page 88, there's a diagram showing an enlarged section of one of the two screws that have to be adjusted on each side of the cutters. These screws drop the cutters closer to the grass.

We're also sending you, at our expense, a newly developed lubricant especially made for Kutzit. You'll notice the container has an applicator designed to keep you from getting your hands covered with oil.

Apply the oil at the oil ports shown on page 92 of your instruction manual. These lubrication points will assure you of clean, fast starts.

We hope that this information will help get your Kutzit into top working order, and we apologize for any inconvenience your difficulties with the machine may have caused you. If there's any other way we may serve you, please let us know. We look forward to continuing to meet your lawn servicing needs.

- B. The following expressions are poor examples in a reply to the customer. Notice how many of them have an accusatory "you" tone to them.
1. Your complaint
 2. If you'll take time
 3. your own ignorance
 4. you misunderstood
 5. you haven't carefully followed those directions
 6. You imply
 7. our fault
 8. untrue
 9. you simply were excited
 10. didn't give the machine a fair trial
 11. I also call attention to the fact
 12. you promised

- C. Your rewritten version of the letter should look something like this:

Immediately after receiving your letter of August 8, I sent you a copy of our catalog in case you had misplaced or didn't receive the first one we sent you. Will you compare these points on page 43 in the catalog with your machine? Part I must reach Part B. The tripper must fit beneath and between Parts A and B.

If for some reason the tripper on your machine shouldn't be in the position shown and described in the catalog, you may have a defective machine. If this is so, a replacement will be shipped as soon as I hear from you again. But before you return your machine, take a careful look at Parts A and B. It may be that they weren't in the required position, which would explain the poor tripper action. When you send your March payment, please include a note telling me whether your machine is now working satisfactorily.

D.

1. You're eager, I know, to see our new fall fashions that are already so much in demand.
2. You'll be pleased to know . . .
3. Too much overtime may lead to exhaustion and inefficiency.
4. We can't accept returned merchandise.
5. Because of overwhelming demands for the lead crystal goblets, we can't fill your July 17 order until August 15.

SELF-CHECKS

Self-Check 1

1. Conciseness
2. Correctness (The word group is a sentence fragment.)
3. Clarity (Who's turn was next, the speaker or the person to whom he's speaking?)
4. Courtesy (The tone is insulting and makes the customer's problem sound unimportant.)
5. transition
6. beginning, end
7. unity
8. The tone should be professional, courteous, and objective.
9. False; the writer must put him or herself in the place of the recipient and write with the reader in mind—how will he or she receive the information and how will it affect him or her?
10. False; it also applies to “customers” within your own company.
11. True
12. True

Self-Check 2

1. Email may inadvertently be sent to the computers of people who weren't intended to receive them, thereby compromising organizational plans or policies. Email may also bring unwanted information to a computer, including computer viruses. Because email messages may be stored on hard drives for an indefinite period, rash, emotional messages may end up as part of your permanent employee record. It's also the case that email correspondence is often actively monitored within an organization.

2. You should have listed four of the following:
 - a. Keep emails concise and to the point. They shouldn't exceed three screens in length.
 - b. Carefully write messages intended for external parties. Make them a bit more formal than those directed to people within your organization.
 - c. Carefully check electronic addresses before you send a message. Store frequently used email addresses in your online address book.
 - d. To protect yourself, don't send anything you wouldn't want published.
 - e. Be careful about expressing your emotions in a reply to an email. Angry messages in particular may cause you problems.
 - f. When the message you need to compose demands thought and reflection, compose it offline. Write and revise it in your word processing environment. Use your spell checker and your grammar checker or thesaurus.
 - g. Make sure your subject line is actually about the subject. Busy people may simply delete emails with subject lines that don't seem relevant.

Self-Check 3

1. To:, From:, Date:, Subject:
2. headings
3. bad news
4. first-level
5. message
6. initial
7. guide
8. fourth-level
9. True
10. True

Self-Check 4

1. a
2. d
3. b
4. c
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. d
10. b
11. d
12. b
13. c
14. a
15. d

Self-Check 5

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. d
5. b

NOTES

Types of Business Writing

FINAL EXAMINATION NUMBER

02800601

Whichever method you use in submitting your exam answers to the school, you must use the number above.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Read and complete the requirements for this examination only after you've completed the previous study units.

1. Refer to your previous study units, the practice exercises, the Writing Process Review, and the self-checks as you write your exam paragraphs.
2. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria to ensure your exam paragraphs meet the criteria to the best of your ability.
3. For this exam, you should submit one document. Prepare a cover page that includes your name, address, and email address, as well as your student ID number and the exam number. Then include your letter, memo, and email on separate pages. To insert a page break, click on the **Insert** tab, and then click on the **Page Break** button.
4. Follow the appropriate formatting for each type of business communication. After preparing a rough draft, read the evaluation criteria and revise your work carefully, correcting any errors you find. Make sure to spell-check and grammar-check your work, too. Submit only your final drafts. *Do not* include your prewriting, drafting, or revising work.
5. Save your document as a Rich Text Format (RTF) file using your name, student number, and exam number (Example: Jane Doe 12345678 028006).



6. Submit your examination in one of these two ways:

- Submit the exam online. To do so, go to your student portal and click on the **Take Exam** button for Exam 028006. On the next page, click **Browse** and locate your saved file on your computer, then upload.
- Mail the exam in the envelope provided or your own business-size envelope. From your computer, type or print the exam on 8½-by-11-inch white paper. Send your exam to the following address:

**Penn Foster
Student Service Center
925 Oak Street
Scranton, PA 18515**

ASSIGNMENT

Purpose

The objective of this examination is to give you an opportunity to effectively apply (1) the writing process as covered by all six study units and (2) the formats presented in this study unit. To do this, you'll produce the following three types of business writing using standard written conventions for American English. You'll create all of these items in Word, without the use of templates or email programs, and submit the three required items in ONE document:

- One business letter
- One interoffice memorandum
- One email

Background

Assume that you've worked for the last five years as an administrative assistant for the Human Resources Department of Broadworth General Hospital. The Director of Human Resources, Miriam Hopkins, has charged you with organizing a two-hour training seminar to be attended by the hospital's 20 office supervisors. The seminar should cover sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

For the last 20 years, the hospital has contracted all training through the nationally acclaimed Wydade Consulting Services. Jeremy Dittmer, employee relations specialist, is manager of the local branch of Wydade. He requires a three-month advance notice regarding any training Broadworth needs so he can supply an appropriate trainer and any materials that may be required. This is the first time you've dealt directly with Mr. Dittmer.

You must also make all necessary arrangements for the seminar, including time, date, a room at the hospital for training, any resources the trainer needs, any materials those who attend might need, and light refreshments for a 15-minute break.

Process

Adhere to the following outlined process when writing your exam.

Planning

1. Brainstorm to create the necessary details you'll need to include your letter, memo and email; for example, the mailing addresses for the hospital and consulting firm, the dates, the kinds of training materials, the seminar schedule, and so on.

Drafting

2. Using either full block or modified block, draft a letter to Mr. Dittmer to set up the seminar. Your letter must have at least two paragraphs and at least eight complete sentences. Include the following items in your letter:
 - a. Thanks for the company's reliable support
 - b. An explanation of the training need and any special topics to cover
 - c. A request for a trainer to teach the seminar
 - d. A request for a list of resources the trainer will need
3. Draft an interoffice memorandum to Miriam Hopkins, the Director of Human Resources:
 - a. Assume that you've received confirmation from Jeremy Dittmer for the date, time, and materials needed. The trainer he has assigned is Deb Walker (email: Deb.Walker@wydadecs.com).
 - b. Outline the arrangements you've made, providing explanations as needed. Your goal is to assure her that you've covered all of the details.
 - c. Invent any additional details as needed.
4. Using your word processing program, draft an email of at least four complete sentences to Deb Walker, the designated trainer:
 - a. Confirm the arrangements for the seminar, providing only the information she needs to arrive at the right place at the right time.
 - b. Copy both Mr. Dittmer (Jeremy.Dittmer@wydadecs.com) and Ms. Hopkins (m_hopkins@BroadworthGH.org).
 - c. Create an appropriate email business address for yourself and include it after the signature block.
5. Set all three items aside for at least 24 hours.

Revising

6. Review the letter, memo, and email as you answer the following questions:
 - a. Have I applied the revision, editing, and proofreading strategies taught in this and previous units?
 - b. Do my letter, memo, and email include an appropriate beginning, middle, and end?
 - c. Have I used the formats shown in the study unit for each type of correspondence?
 - d. Have I included all of the necessary parts, like company letterhead, a simulated signature in the letter in italics or a script font, a heading for the memo, To/Cc/Subject lines for the email, and so on?
 - d. Have I used either the full block or modified block format for the letter?
7. Make sure your work matches the evaluation criteria below.
8. Edit and proofread your work at least one more time before submitting it for evaluation. Use your computer's grammar and spell checks cautiously. Not everything the computer suggests is correct, particularly for the purpose and audience.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The school will use the following criteria to evaluate your two paragraphs. Be sure you've revised and edited your work after reviewing these guidelines.

- **Content and Development** (50 points)

The student has effectively combined information from the background material with insightful details of his/her own to communicate to the designated audience for the required purpose. Those details are knitted together with reasonable, concise explanations. If the student used bullet points as an organization tool, he/she has provided a sufficient introduction to make the purpose and information of the list clear.

The student has developed the main idea of each paragraph in a logical direction. Each paragraph flows naturally into the next without blurring the main ideas. Details fit naturally where placed. The student effectively used connective wording to weave information and explanations into a cohesive whole.

Letter:	20 points
Memo:	20 points
Email:	10 points

- **Voice and Word Choice** (15 points)

The student's letter, memo, and email maintain a single point of view with appropriate pronouns and verbs in active voice. The student used a formal tone in my communications with Mr. Dittmer and the trainer. The student's tone and voice give an engaging flavor to the message; they're appropriate for both the audience and purpose.

Each word works smoothly with the other words to convey the intended message in a precise, appealing, and original way. The words the student has chosen are specific, accurate, and energetic. The student didn't use slang, clichés, or jargon.

Letter:	5 points
Memo:	5 points
Email:	5 points

- **Conventions and Sentence Fluency** (15 points)

The student has demonstrated a skillful grasp of standard writing conventions for American English, using correct grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The student's sentences are well written with varied length, type, and structure to give each paragraph a sense of controlled yet graceful movement. When read aloud, the student's writing exhibits a natural, pleasant rhythm.

Letter:	5 points
Memo:	5 points
Email:	5 points

- **Format** (20 points)

I've correctly applied the formats shown in the study unit for a letter, memo, and email, along with the standard formatting requirements for the course.

Letter:	5 points
Memo:	5 points
Email:	5 points
Header and general format:	5 points