

Letters, Email, Memos

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Letters

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Letters

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Uses:

- Cover Letters
- Acknowledgement Letters
- Inquiry Letters
- Response Letters
- Sales and Promotions Letters
- Complaint Letters
- Adjustment Letters
- Collection Letters
- etc.

Letters

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- Normally used for official business with people outside the company, such as new business associates or customers
- Company letterhead communicates formality, respect, and authority
- A written promise in an official letter by an employee with the proper authority will be binding to the company

Letters

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Typical Format:

- Heading
- Inside Address
- Salutation
- Subject Line (optional)
- Body
- Complimentary Close
- End Notations

Letters

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- The heading contains the writer's full return address—street or post-office box, city and state, postal code—or printed letterhead and the date
- Begin the heading one to two inches from the top of the page

Letters

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- Do not include the writer's name in the heading (unless it is part of the printed letterhead) because it will be at the end of the letter
- Do not use abbreviations (e.g. St., Ave., 1st, etc.)
- You may either spell out the state or use the standard abbreviation

Letters

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Acme Company
1638 Parkhill Drive East
Great Falls, MT 59407

Letters

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- The date goes two lines below the letterhead or beneath the last line of the address when there is no letterhead

Letters

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Acme Company
1638 Parkhill Drive East
Great Falls, MT 59407

April 1, 2010

Letters

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- The inside address is the recipient's full name, title, and address
- Place the inside address two lines below the date
- The inside address should be flush with (aligned with) the left margin, which should be at least one inch wide

Letters

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Acme Company
1638 Parkhill Drive East
Great Falls, MT 59407

April 1, 2010

Ms. Gail Smith
Production Manager
Docuform Printing Company
14 President Street
Sarasota, FL 33546

Letters

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- Place the salutation (greeting) two lines below the inside address, also flush with the left margin
- In most business letters, the salutation contains the recipient's title (Mr., Ms., Dr., and so on) and last name, followed by a colon
- If you are on a first-name basis with the recipient, include his or her title and full name in the inside address and use the first name in the salutation followed by a comma

Letters

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Dear Professor Smith:

Dear Gail, (on a first-name basis)

Letters

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- For a recipient who does not have a professional title, use Mr. or Ms.
- When you do not know whether the recipient is a man or a woman use a title appropriate to the context of the letter.
For example:
 - Dear Customer:
 - Dear Homeowner:
 - Dear Service Manager:

Letters

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- When a person's name could be either feminine or masculine, one solution is to use both first and last names. For example, Dear Pat Smith:
- In the past, writers to large companies addressed their letters to "Gentlemen." However, this style is dated.
- If you do not know the name or title of the recipient then address the letter to an appropriate addressee or department in the salutation, the attention line, or in a subject line in place of a salutation. For example...

Letters

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National Business Systems
501 West National Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55107-5011

Attention: Customer Relations

I am returning the defective product...

(OR...)

Letters

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National Business Systems
501 West National Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55107-5011

Subject: Defective Product

I am returning the defective product...

Letters

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- The body of the letter should begin two lines below the salutation (or below the inside address if no salutation appears)
- Single-space within paragraphs and double-space between paragraphs with the first line of each new paragraph at the left margin or indented five spaces from the left margin
- The right margin should be approximately as wide as the left margin

Letters

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- Start the complimentary close two lines below the body
- Use a standard expression such as Sincerely yours, Yours truly, or Respectfully yours
- If the recipient is a friend as well as a business associate, you can use a less-formal close such as: Best wishes, Sincerely, etc.
- Only the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized, and the expression is followed by a comma

Letters

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- Four lines below the complimentary close, and aligned at the left with the close, type your full name
- On the next line, place your business title. Then sign your name in the space between the complimentary close and your typed name
- If you are writing to someone with whom you are on a first-name basis, you may sign only your first name; otherwise, sign your full name

Letters

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Respectfully yours,

(Signature)

Peter Parker
Office Manager

Letters

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- Business letters sometimes require additional information—the initials of the typist (if other than the writer), an enclosure notation, or a notation that a copy of the letter is being sent to the named recipients
- Place additional information flush left with the margin, two lines below the last line of the complimentary close in a long letter, four lines below in a short letter

Letters

- Initials are not used when the writer is also the person typing the letter
- If an assistant typed the letter, that person's initials should appear (all lowercase) two lines below the last line of the complimentary-close block either by themselves or following the author's initials (all uppercase and followed by a slash)

Letters

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- Enclosure notations, which indicate that the letter writer is sending material along with the letter (an invoice, an article, and so on), may take several forms:
 - Enclosure (for a single item)
 - Enclosures (2)

Letters

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- Even though you use an enclosure notation, make a reference in the body of the letter to the enclosed material
- Enclosures are described briefly if the letter is long and formal, or if the nature of the enclosed items is not obvious
- Enclosures are not described if the letter is short and the enclosures are obvious to the reader

Letters

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- Copy notations (cc:) tell the reader that a copy of the letter is being sent to one or more named individuals:
 - cc: Ms. Marlene Brier
 - cc/enc: Mr. Tom Lee (Lee receives both the letter and the enclosure)

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- A blind-copy notation (bcc:) is used when the sender does not want the addressee to know that a copy is being sent to one or more other recipients
- The blind-copy notation must not appear on the original letter, only on the letter to the blind-copy recipient:
 - bcc: Mr. David Drier

Letters

- If a second page is needed, carry at least two lines of the body over to page two
- The second page also should have a heading containing the recipient's name, the page number, and the date
- The heading starts one inch from the top edge of the page and may go in the upper-left-hand corner or across the page
- Never use letterhead for a second page

Letters

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Why is formatting important?

- Business letters communicate formality, respect, and authority.
- Just as the clothes you wear create an impression on others, the appearance of a business letter influences the recipient. A neat appearance alone will not improve a poorly written letter, but a sloppy appearance will detract from a well-written one.

Email

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Email

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- Used for people both inside and outside the company
- Typically text with no formal layout (though HTML emails with embedded images are often used to communicate with customers)
- Less formal than letters and memos, but may be legally binding on a company
- Speed of sending, ease of forwarding, group inclusion, and flexibility of attachments has both advantages and disadvantages

Email

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- Because email does not provide addresses and contact information (as found in company letterhead), many people include signature blocks
- Your signature block should include your full name, official title, department or division, and company information: telephone and fax numbers, mailing address and websites, etc.
- Separate the signature block from the message by two spaces, or a line of hyphens, underlines, etc.

Email

- When using email as a memo, you may omit the salutation and closing because both your name and the name (s) of the recipient(s) appear in the "To" and "From" sections of the message
- When sending email to someone outside the company with whom you have not yet corresponded, use a standard letter salutation (Dear Mr. Tucker: or Dear Customer:) and a slightly informal closing (Best wishes, or Sincerely,)
- When sending email as a personal note to a friend, use informal salutations (Hi Mike, or Hello Jenny,) and closings (Take care, or Cheers,)

Email

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- In quoting the message you're replying to, include only those parts relevant to your reply. Clearly indicate the difference between your response and the text quoted in the incoming e-mail message
- Always fill in the subject line with a concise phrase that describes the topic of your message. The recipient can then decide at a glance when he or she needs to read it. Subject lines also help your reader organize and file incoming messages

Email

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- As a general rule, set your email client to send plain text
- If you use HTML email, be aware that it may not display correctly to your recipient
- Avoid use of shorthand text conventions, such as all caps (shouting) or asterisks (emphasis)

Email

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- Do not overwhelm your reader with lengthy passages. If your message runs longer than a screen of text, consider sending it as an attached file along with a brief email message that functions as a cover memo for the longer attachment
- If you must send a document with tables and bulleted lists, do so in an attachment, making sure that the recipient has compatible software to view and save the attachment, as tables and lists do not always transmit well

Email

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- Consider the technical capabilities of your recipient. Check before sending large attachments that the recipient can't open or may download very slowly
- Put your response to someone else's email message at the beginning (or top) of the email window. Don't make the recipient scroll down to the end of the original message to find your response

Email

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- Remember that all messages sent electronically, no matter how personal, sensitive, or proprietary, can be intercepted by someone other than the intended recipient
- Email and instant messages are never truly deleted. Not only can the information be printed, circulated, and forwarded, but most companies back up and save all company email
- Employers can legally monitor email and instant messages. Some companies make this policy known, but others do not
- Companies can be legally compelled to provide email to a third party, such as in court, therefore...

Email

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- Use company email only for appropriate business
- Do not send or forward jokes or humorous stories, use biased language, or discuss office gossip
- Do not flame (email that contains abusive, obscene, or derogatory language)
- Do not send to global distribution lists unless appropriate
- Respond to incoming messages promptly
- Double-check addresses and names to ensure that intended recipient receives the message—and no one else

Email

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- Do not send to global distribution lists unless appropriate
- Send an attachment only after verifying that your recipient wants or needs the file and that your recipient's software will accept it
- Consider posting a large file on a server and sending a link
- Observe memo protocol for courtesy copies and blind copies
- Avoid shortened text (btw) and emoticons ;)

Memos

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Memos

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Uses:

- Announce policies
- Request information
- Confirm conversations
- Transmit documents
- Exchange information
- Instruct employees
- Delegate responsibilities
- Report results

Memos

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- Typically used for communicating to people inside the company
- More informal than a letter
- Binding on the company
- Flexible format allows for a wide variety of uses, from official policy announcements to sports leagues sign-ups

Memos

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- Memos on company stationery or attached to an email are appropriate for internal communications. These in-house communications have many of the same characteristics of letters, but memos are convenient for a wider variety of functions
- Memos eliminate features common to business letters, such as letterhead, an inside address, a salutation, goodwill paragraphs, and formal closing elements

Memos

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Typical Format:

- MEMORANDUM or MEMO
- (2 spaces)
- To:
- From:
- Date:
- Subject:
- (2 spaces)
- (Body)

Memos

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Remember...

No salutation

and

No closing

Memos

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- Each memo should address only one subject. If you need to cover two subjects, write two memos. Multi-subject memos are not only difficult to file but also confusing to a hurried reader
- The subject line in a memo is very important. It functions like a title in a report: it announces the topic and it's used as an important aid to filing and later retrieval
- Not only should the subject line should be accurate and complete, but the memo should deal only with the subject announced in the subject line
- Capitalize the first letter of all major words in the subject line

Memos

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Vague subject line:

"Tuition Reimbursement"

Good subject line:

"Tuition Reimbursement for Time-Management Seminar"

Memos

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- If appropriate, use lists and headings in the body of the memo to highlight important information
- Lists are an effective way to highlight your points. Lists can be read and their meaning grasped more quickly than a paragraph that says the same thing. However, a memo that consists almost entirely of lists is difficult to understand. The bottom line? Don't overuse lists
- Headings help to divide material into manageable segments, call attention to main topics, and signal a shift in topic. Headings also allow the reader to scan the memo and read the most appropriate section first

Memos

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- When addressing and sending memos, you should adhere to proper protocol based on lines of authority. For example, you normally do not send memos directly to executives above your immediate manager. Doing so puts your manager in an awkward position
- Also, when listing names in the "To" line, the most senior managers are usually named first. However, with a long list of names in the "To" line, alphabetizing is usually acceptable

Memos

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- Company policy will state whether memos are signed or initialed by the sender, which indicates approval of and responsibility for a document's content
- If it is appropriate to sign or initial the memo, you do so after your name on the "From" line
- Signatures or initials are unnecessary for memos sent as or attached to emails

Memos

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- The person listed on the memo's "To" line is the primary recipient. To share the same message with others, the sender provides each of them a separate or courtesy copy (cc:). This notation (cc: Jane Doe) appears in the memo heading and informs all the recipients who else has received the message
- Use blind-copy notation (bcc:) when you do not want the addressee to know that a copy is being sent to someone else. A blind-copy notation appears only on the copy, not on the original (bcc: Jesse James)

Memos

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- Send courtesy copies only to those who need the information, especially when the message contains confidential personnel, medical, or financial information
- As with the "To" line, be aware of lines of authority when you copy recipients