

## BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

### Introduction to writing letters

As Hollet (1994) claims written business communication can take the form of a letter, but, in recent years, it has often been replaced by a fax or an e-mail. An internal letter, called a „memo“, can be used within an organization.

### LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

The parts of a business letter are as follows:

1. **Sender's address**
2. **Date**
3. **Inside address**
4. **Attention line**
5. **Salutation**
6. **Body of the letter**
7. **Complimentary close**
8. **Signature**
9. **Enclosures**

1. Sender's address is usually given in the letterhead, but if there is none, the address can be typed in the top right- or left-hand corner of the letter.
2. The date is written below the sender's address. The month is usually not written out as numbers – it could be confusing (different sequences):  
20 December 2004                      20th December, 2004
3. The inside address begins with the name of the company or – if you know the name of the person you are writing to – you can begin with his / her name. Courtesy titles are used before names: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Messrs, M.Sc, Dr, Prof., Capt., Maj., Col., Gen.

Abbreviations may be used with or without a fullstop, but we must remain consistent throughout our correspondence.

The address can also begin with a job title or a department (if you do not know the name): The Sales Manager, The Accounts Department.

The items that follow are:

- the name of the house or building
  - the number of the building and the name of the street
  - the name of the town and the postcode
  - the name of the country
4. Attention line is an alternative to putting the recipient's name in the address.
  5. The salutations are as follows:
    - Dear Sir – to a man whose name you do not know
    - Dear Sirs /Gentlemen – to a company
    - Dear Madam – to a woman whose name you do not know

- Dear Sir or Madam – to a person whose name and sex you do not know
- Dear Mr Smith – to a person whose name you know, but you do not know the person very well
- Dear John – to a person you know well

The British like to use the comma after the salutation: Dear Mrs Jones, but the Americans prefer a colon - Gentlemen:

6. The body of the letter is usually written in the blocked style. A line of space is left between the paragraphs.
7. The complimentary close is related to the salutations:
  - If the letter begins Dear Sir / Sirs / Madam / Sir or Madam, the complimentary close should be Yours faithfully
  - If the letter begins with a personal name, e.g. Dear Mr James, it should be Yours sincerely
  - A letter to someone you know well may end with Best wishes or Kind regards.

A comma after the complimentary close is optional.

8. Signature – always type your name and possibly your job title below your handwritten signature (the so called signature block).
9. Enclosures – If there are any documents enclosed with a letter, although they might be mentioned in the body of the letter, it is common to write Enc. or Encl. below the signature block.

19 Port Street
Cardiff
2nd April 2014
<p>Travel Grant Foundation</p> <p>Sussex Gardens</p> <p>York YO3 9HE</p> <p>Dear Sir or Madam,</p> <p>My name is Kelly Peterson and I am studying English, French, German and History. My favourite subject is French and I am really good at languages.</p> <p>I am writing to apply for a grant to visit France and Germany because I would like to improve my knowledge of these two languages.</p> <p>When I leave school, I am hoping to work as an interpreter or as a tourist guide and such experiences could help me get a better job.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing from you soon.</p> <p>Yours faithfully,</p> <p><i>Kelly Peterson</i></p> <p>Kelly PETERSON</p>

## TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

### ENQUIRY - **Pridobivanje informacij**

In the opening tell your supplier what kind of organization you are; if applicable, state the references.

You can ask for catalogues, price lists, brochures, samples, patterns and demonstrations; point out any particular items you are interested in.

When asking for goods or services, be specific and state exactly what you want. Quote the reference (catalogue, brochure, advertisement).

A company may write circular letters to several suppliers, inviting offers to do a certain job or supply a certain item.

The closing of an enquiry is usually a simple »thank you«. You may mention that a prompt reply would be appreciated or indicate further business.

### QUOTATION - **Ponudba**

In the quotation, the following subjects should be covered:

- a) Prices: say if the price includes the costs of transport, insurance and purchase tax , e.g. VAT (gross price) or none of them (net price); state if the price is firm or subject to change.
- b) Transport and insurance costs: state the terms exactly, so that the customer knows which price was stated to him.
- c) Discounts: state the possible discounts – trade discounts to sellers in similar trades, quantity discounts, cash discounts, loyalty discounts.
- d) Methods of payment: require or suggest the method of payment, e.g. letter of credit, bill of exchange.
- e) Delivery date: confirm the proposed delivery date or suggest an alternative date which you will be able to meet.

### ORDER - **Naročanje**

Orders are usually written **on a company's official order form**, accompanied by a **covering letter** where the following points should be mentioned:

- a) In the opening mention that an order is enclosed;
- b) confirm the terms of payment;
- c) confirm the agreed discounts;
- d) confirm the delivery date;
- e) advise the company on how you want the goods packed and sent;
- f) close with a promise for further orders.

## COMPLAINT - Pritožba, napake in reklamacije

A letter must be used for large and more serious complaints whereas a fax or an e-mail may suffice for minor ones. Write the complaint as soon as you notice the mistake. The letter of complaint should include the following items:

- a) state the mistake; it should be explained politely;
- b) if you think you know how the mistake was made, politely point this out to your supplier
- c) if you know how the mistake could be corrected, let your supplier know.

### The following factors are important when writing a formal letter:

**Layout** - the letter should be attractive for the reader with plenty of white space.

**Organisation of information** - include only relevant information. Deal with topics systematically and link your ideas clearly.

**Organisation on paragraph / sentence level** - do not write too short or too long paragraphs, sentences should not be too long or incomplete.

**Language** - Keep It Short and Simple - KISS. Take care of word order, verbs, prepositions, punctuation and spelling. DO NOT use short forms (e.g., „don“t“) or telex abbreviations (e.g. reps).

**Formal vocabulary**

### Read a checklist of useful phrases.

<b>Starting</b>	We are writing to: advise you of/confirm/enquire
<b>Stating a reference</b>	Thank you for your letter of February 16. With reference to: our telephone conversation/your fax of May 6th; Further to
<b>Giving good news</b>	I am delighted to tell you that ... You will be pleased to hear that ...
<b>Giving bad news</b>	We regret to inform you that ... Unfortunately ... I am afraid ...
<b>Making a request</b>	We would be grateful if you could ... I would appreciate if you could ... Could you possibly ...?
<b>Offering help</b>	If you wish, we would be happy to ... Please do not hesitate to ask.
<b>Apologizing</b>	I am sorry about the delay in replying. I would like to apologize for ... We are sorry for ...
<b>Enclosing documents</b>	I am enclosing ... Please find enclosed ...
<b>Closing remarks</b>	If you have any further questions, ... If we can help in any way, please contact us/Thank you for your help.
<b>Referring to future contacts</b>	I look forward to meeting you next week.