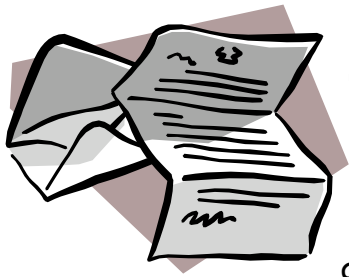


How to

...write a business letter

Letters in business are different from personal letters. They need to be laid out in a particular way and to use a more formal style of language. Since a business letter is usually from or to an organisation, it must be written correctly: it will create the wrong impression if it has errors in it.

As with any type of communication you need to think about:



its purpose. Why are you writing the letter? What information do you need to get across? Is the information sensitive?

your audience. Who is going to receive the letter? What do they know already? How will the information affect them?

Tips for writing business letters

Prepare

- Collect together any relevant details or information.
- Write notes on what you need to say first.

Plan

- Structure the information clearly for the reader.

Write

- Use the 'house style' of your organisation to lay out the letter.
- Use paragraphs.
- Use short, clear sentences.

Check

- Proofread your work.
- Check spellings in a dictionary, with the spell-checker or with another person.

You may not write letters as part of your current job, but you may need to write a business letter to apply for a promotion or new job. People are more likely to take you seriously if your letter is well written.



Here's an example of a business letter.



Rapid Repairs
Long Lane
Townley
Sussex
BR4 6HJ

13 June 20..

Mr R Powter
Bob's Bits
58 Home Grove
Townley
Sussex
BR3 9LK

Dear Mr Powter

Ford Escort parts

On the 12th of May I ordered what you advertised as a 'brand new, never been fitted pair of Bilstein Wolf Ford Escort (91) front struts damper assemblies complete with gaiters and 40mm inserts'.

I have received that package, but the 40mm inserts are missing. I have tried to phone you five times, but can get no answer.

Please phone me as soon as possible, as I need to get the work completed for a customer by the weekend.

Yours sincerely
Darron Kilter

Darron Kilter
Proprietor

Your COMPANY NAME AND ADDRESS go here. They can also go against the left margin. DON'T PUT YOUR OWN NAME AT THE TOP!

Put the DATE here, or against the left margin.

Put the name and address of the person to whom you are writing here.

Dear Mr [surname]/Sir

SUBJECT, if appropriate

The first sentence refers to any previous correspondence.

Use short sentences and clear paragraphs.

Final paragraph

Yours sincerely/faithfully

Signature and your name

Your position

If it's the first time you have corresponded with the person, use:

Dear Sir

Yours faithfully

INITIAL CAPITALS

CAPITAL 'Y' small 'f'

If you have had previous correspondence or have spoken, use:

Dear Mr [Name]

Yours sincerely

INITIAL CAPITALS

CAPITAL 'Y' small 's'

Open or closed punctuation?

You'll notice from the above example of a business letter that the paragraphs have space between them but are not indented, and that there are no commas after each line of the address or after 'Dear Mr Powter'. This type of punctuation is called 'open'. It is acceptable for you to use open punctuation when writing by hand or in the communication test, but make sure that you are **consistent**. Don't have some commas in, and leave some out. Choose your style and stick to it.

If you are writing by hand you may prefer to use indented paragraphs, as they show clearly where one paragraph ends and the next begins. If you prefer not to indent, make sure you leave two lines between paragraphs.

The important thing to remember when writing any business communication is that it must be **fit for its purpose**. This means that it must be appropriate for the situation.

The following examples show full (closed) punctuation (example 1) and indented paragraphs (example 2).

Your writing paper may already have the address printed on it

*Rapid Repairs,
Long Lane,
Townley,
Sussex,
BR4 6HJ.*

3 December 20..

Mr Smith,
25 Turner Street,
Townley,
Sussex,
BR1 6LP

Dear Mr Smith,

Thank you for your enquiry about refitting leather seats in your car.

I have attached my estimate for the job. If this is to your satisfaction, we could start the job at the beginning of February. We can remove and dispose of the old seats for you.

Please let me know by 15 December whether the quote is acceptable to you, so that we can book the work into our schedule.

Yours sincerely,
Darron Kilter
Darron Kilter
Proprietor

Example 1

RAPID REPAIRS
Long Lane
Townley, Sussex
BR4 6HJ

3 December 20..

Mr Smith
25 Turner Street
Townley
Sussex
BR1 6LP

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your enquiry about refitting leather seats in your car.

I have attached my estimate for the job. If this is to your satisfaction, we could start the job at the beginning of February. We can remove and dispose of the old seats for you.

Please let me know by 15 December whether the quote is acceptable to you so we can book the work into our schedule.

Yours sincerely
Darron Kilter
Darron Kilter
Proprietor

Example 2

Mr H Farrow
29 Tiverton Drive
New Elsdon
SE9 3KP

Dear Dave

I seen you advertisement in the local paper and
wood like some more information about your
range of hand tools could you also send a catalog
with some details about the other things that were
mentioned in the ad.

Yours faithfully



Saturday 14 December

ADVERTISEMENT
DAVE GRIMES LTD

Tools for the Trade

We can provide a wide range
of tools for all your motor
vehicle repair needs.

Hand tools
Power tools
Benches

Telephone 0208 822 1595
98 High St Old Elsdon
SE9 3MP

Try this!

- Read the advertisement and letter.
- Fill in the gaps with the correct information.
- Underline and correct the spelling mistakes.
- Cross out and correct any other errors.
- Rewrite the letter correctly.

