

Specific Guidelines for Writing a Business Letter

By: Gail Palmer

Business communication should be simple, direct, brief, and courteous. Business letters should conform to the following format:

- **Heading:** Type the sender's address (but not the sender's name) and the date single-spaced, six to ten line spaces from the top of the first page. Spell out street and city names and months in full. Abbreviate state names using standard postal abbreviations. Include the zip code. With letterhead stationery, type the date one line spaces below the letterhead address.
- **Inside address:** Type the recipient's address two to three line spaces below the heading. Include the person's full name (and title, if appropriate), followed by his or her position (if needed); the name of the department or division within the company; the company's name; and the full (street, city, and state) address.
- **Greeting:** Type the opening salutation (*Dear Dr. Jones*), one line space below the inside address, followed by a colon. If the sender and the recipient are on a first-name basis, use only the recipient's first name.
- **Body:** Begin the body of the letter one line space below the greeting. Single space within paragraphs; double-space between paragraphs. If the reason for writing is clear and simple, state it in the first paragraph. If details are necessary, provide them in the first paragraph and then move on to state the purpose of the letter. If the letter is more than one page, type the addressee's last name, the date, and the page number flush with the right margin of each subsequent page.
- **Closing:** Type the complimentary closing (*Sincerely, Cordially, Yours truly, Respectfully yours, Best regards,*) two spaces after the last line of the body of the letter.
- **Signature:** Type the full name of the sender, including any title, three line spaces below the closing. Sign the letter with the sender's full name (first name only if the recipient has been addressed by his or her first name) in blue or black ink in the space above the typed name.
- **Additional information:** Additional brief information may be provided below the signature, flush with the left margin. This information may include a list of the recipients of copies of the letter (*cc John Doe*), the word *Enclosures* or the abbreviation *enc.* to indicate that additional material mentioned in the letter is enclosed. If someone other than the writer typed the letter, the writer's initials and the typist's initials are shown as *GB/gop [1]*.

(6-10 line spaces depending on whether a letterhead is used)

1234 Kennesaw Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30332
August 24, 2004

(2-3 line spaces)
Captain James T. Kirk
Starship Enterprise
Crab Nebula, Sector 031-P29
(1 line space)

Dear Captain Kirk:
(1 line space - new paragraph)

I appreciate the privilege of continuing to supply your starship with affordable photovoltaic modules. Enclosed you will find my proposal to reduce cost through the systematic optimization of the substrate resistivity.

(1 line space - new paragraph)
While the resistivity dependence of the bulk lifetime (τ_b) and surface recombination velocity (S) of high-cost float zone silicon is well established, inexpensive multicrystalline substrates have yet to be thoroughly characterized. I propose to investigate the resistivity dependence of τ_b and S in order to optimize bulk resistivity.

(1 line space - new paragraph)
Since resistivity can be adjusted with little impact on module cost, the savings resulting from accurate optimization is expected to be substantial. As you will read in my proposal, the anticipated outcome of the optimization is a relative efficiency increase of 7%. Thus, the price of a 15-megawatt (MW) array currently available for \$2/W would be reduced by \$470,000.

(1 line space - new paragraph)
I enjoyed the opportunity to give you and Mr. Spock a tour of the facilities last summer. All of your terrestrial support engineers would like to express heartfelt admiration for the unwavering bravery of the entire crew of the Enterprise in its quest to go where no one has gone before.

(2 line spaces)
Best regards,
(3 line spaces)

George P. Burdell
(2 line spaces)

Enclosure

Block Style: Everything is aligned along the left margin.

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Atlanta, Georgia 30332
August 24, 2004

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Modified Block Style

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Atlanta, Georgia 30332
August 24, 2004

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Best regards,
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George P. Burdell
(2 line spaces)

Enclosure

Modified Block Style with Paragraph Indentations