

Writing Business Letters

One of the most professional ways to communicate in business is by writing letters. Letters need to be attractive and well organized in order to deliver their message in an effective manner. Therefore, letters need to follow a specific format that will allow the reader to interpret and understand the information thoroughly. A business letter is commonly composed of five major parts:

- **Heading:** this part of the letter includes the writer's full address. It is located at the very beginning of the letter. The writer's name is included in this section unless it is part of a letterhead. It is recommended that words such as *Street*, *Avenue* or *Drive* are not abbreviated. The date for the letter should go below the heading. Here is an example of what a heading should look like:

5632 Park Drive
El Paso, TX 79932
April 21, 20__

- **Inside address:** this is where the recipient's full name, title and address should be placed. It should be placed two to six lines below the date, aligned with the left margin.

Mr. Jeffrey Jones
Plant Manager
Computer Solutions Inc.
7886 Industrial Drive
El Paso, TX 79996

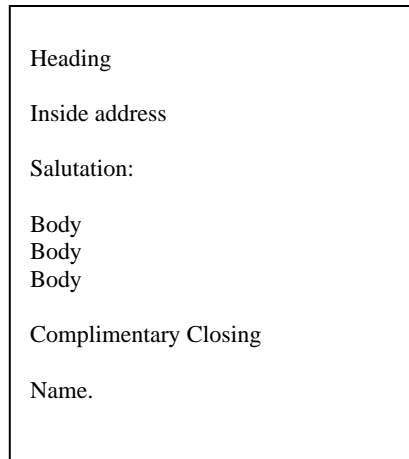
- **Salutation:** place the salutation (or greeting) two lines below the inside address. Salutations usually include the word *Dear*, followed by the recipient's title, last name and a colon. If you do not know the name or gender of the person, use a title appropriate to the context of the letter.

Dear Mr. Rogers:
Dear Dr. Sanchez:
Dear Sales Manager:

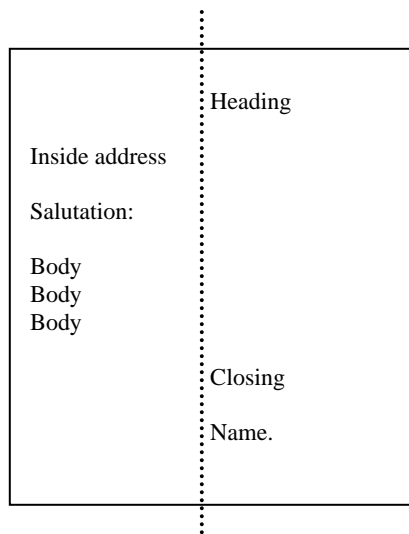
- **Body:** here is where the writer start writing the information he wishes to present to the reader. The body should be single spaced within paragraphs, and double spaced between paragraphs (depending on the writer's preference).
- **Complimentary closing:** it should be placed two spaces below the body. Some traditional closing phrases are *Sincerely*, *Yours Truly*, and *Respectfully Yours*. All of these expressions are followed by a comma. The writer must place his or her name four lines below this closing.

These are the general parts that make up a business letter; however, there are two different formats used in business. People decide which one to use based on their company's preference or their own. The two formats are:

- **Full Block letter style:** all parts of the letter are left justified.



- **Modified-Block letter style:** the heading and the complimentary closing are aligned from the center of the page to the right.



Samples of these two types of formats are kept on file at the Writing Center for student reference.

Some material taken from Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job, 7th ed.

Sample Full-Block Style Letter

700 Westboro Road
El Paso, TX 79907
October 16, 2002

Ms. Julienne Katz
Human Resources Director
TS Manufacturing Co.
526 Industrial Avenue
El Paso, TX 79952

Dear Ms. Katz:

Thank you for the informative review we had last Monday. I was favorably impressed by our conversation and your facilities.

I found the position of Computer Training Assistant to be very attractive, as it will surely help me improve my computer and working skills. I hope my experience with computers will allow me to obtain the aforementioned position.

If you have any further questions or comments you would like to discuss with me, please contact me at (915) 785-9359, or at [jbrown @aol.com](mailto:jbrown@aol.com).

Sincerely,

John Brown

Sample Modified-Block Style Letter

7590 Tolon Avenue
El Paso, TX 79985
November 12, 2002

Mr. Jason Lawal
Store Manager
H&M Computer Warehouse
564 Wilson Road
El Paso, TX 79900

Dear Mr. Lawal:

Last week I purchased a Hewlett Packard printer with serial number PK0056. I installed it and printed a couple of test pages as the manual recommends; however, as I started to print some documents, the printer would not respond, and the paper would get jammed inside it.

Please send me some information on how I can correct this problem. I would appreciate any help you can provide. You can reach me at (915) 562-4596, for any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Pat Simmons