

How to write a professional business letter

 By [Sophie Baker](#)

29 May 2015

Most of our communication nowadays is conducted via email. The speed, convenience and low cost make it the logical choice when compared to traditional forms of communication like letters or even phone calls. However, there are still some instances where you are required to make contact via a business letter. Here is some help to make sure you don't commit an etiquette faux pas.



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These tips will assume that you are using a block format for your letter, which is probably the most common and popular format of the many you can choose from. This type of format has all text aligned left with no indentation. If possible, type your letter on headed paper. It looks neat and professional. However, if you don't have this, there is no need to worry!

- First, let's go over the format. All text should be flush left with one inch margins all round. Begin with your address. If you don't have a letterhead, put this on the left side. Next, you have to write the date. This should go one line under your address. If you do have headed paper, write the date underneath the letterhead. Either the right or the left is fine. After your address comes the address of the recipient. This is also on the left hand side of the paper.
- You then have to address the letter to the recipient. If it is a person you know and call by their first name, it is normally acceptable to address the letter as such. If not, stick to using their formal title. If you aren't sure who the letter is being addressed to, the safest option is to use 'To Whom It May Concern'. However, if it all possible, find out the name of the recipient even if you have to phone the organisation in question to ask. Be sure to use a colon after the name - a comma is for informal letters.

- Now comes the body of the letter. This is the most important part, as it is where you will including the main point of your letter. It is difficult to give specific advice on this part of your letter, as the structure will depend upon what your letter contains. However, as a general rule, make sure the body of your letter is clear, concise and polite. Try not to ramble or go into unnecessary detail. Be aware of how you are writing and do not fall into the trap of writing in jargon or using complicated language. For formatting, use a blank line between paragraphs (not an indent) and keep all text single spaced.

- Finally, close the letter. For this, first choose an appropriate closing phrase. Etiquette normally dictates that if you know the name of the person you are writing to then 'Yours sincerely' is used and if you do not know the name that 'Yours faithfully' is used. These may sound outdated and overly formal, but they are the correct ways to close a letter. However, if you already know the person, you can also opt to use 'Best regards' 'Kind regards' or similar. Whichever phrase you choose, end it with a comma, three spaces and then your name. These should all be left aligned. If you want to, you can put in your job title and/or company name underneath your typed full name.

Before you print, be sure to proofread your letter for any grammatical or spelling errors. After you are happy and have printed the letter, remember to sign underneath the typed name. Congratulations! You now have a very professional-looking business letter!

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