

Week 15

Business Letter Module

Instructions:

Business letters differ from informal or personal letters in many ways. In an informal letter you do not write your address but you write the date. The style is very much like the speech. You can use short forms such as *isn't*, *didn't*, etc., which you would not use in a formal letter.



THE HEADING

- This differs in one important detail from the personal or an informal letter. The name and address of the person you are writing to must be included beneath your own address but against the *left*-hand margin. It may be indented or blocked. In business letters the block style of address is becoming more common and should be preferred.
- Whichever style you use, you must be consistent, i.e., do not block the sender's address and then indent the inside address.



- [The date is written beneath your own address and should be in one of these forms: 19 November, 20__, 19 November 20__, 19th November, 20__, 19th November 20__, (*USA* - November 19, 20__, November 19th, 20__, November 19th 20__ . The form 19/11/20__ is sometimes used, but may give rise to misunderstandings: in the USA the same date would be written 11/19/2001.)]



- If you are writing to a man, his name should appear as Mr E. Jones. However, if you wish to write to Mr E. Jones, and you do not know his address but, say, his publisher's address, then you will address the letter to: c/o Longman Group Ltd. (abbreviation meaning *care of*). When writing to ladies the usual title is used: i.e.: Mrs J. Robinson or Miss J. Robinson, although *Ms* - a blend of Miss and Mrs - has come to be widely used. Plural form reads *Mses* or *Mss*.



- Very often you will not know the name of the person who will read your letter. In this case you may direct your letter directly to the company concerned: e.g. Jones, Brown and Co. Ltd., ('Co.' and 'Ltd.' are the usual abbreviations for "Company" and Limited'). When you are writing to a particular person in a Company or other organisation and do not know his or her name, your letter may be addressed to 'The manager', 'The Principal', 'The Secretary', etc. as the case may be.



THE SALUTATION

- If the person you are writing to is known to you, you may begin “Dear Mr _____,” “Dear Mrs _____,” etc. In all other instances, you should begin ‘Dear Sir,’ ‘Dear Sirs’ or ‘Dear Madam,’ ‘Dear Mesdames’, i.e., ‘Dear Gentlemen’, ‘Dear Ladies’ in US letters. Note that *Dear Sirs/Dear Gentlemen* is used to address a company. The comma after salutation is optional. In US letters, you should use a colon. The form *Sir* alone is not used in business letters, though it is the usual form in letters from government offices.



THE BODY

- A business letter usually has four main parts:
- (a) *reference*;
- (b) *information*;
- (c) *purpose*; and
- (d) *conclusion*.



(a) Reference

You should begin your letter by referring to a letter you have received, an advertisement you have seen, or an event that has prompted you to write.

(b) Information

In the second paragraph it is sometimes necessary to supply more detailed information relating to the “Reference”.

(c) Purpose

Here you must give the reason why you are writing your letter. You should state clearly what you want. Take care to answer closely the question that has been set.



(d) Conclusion

- As in the 'Personal letter' it is customary to 'round the letter off' with some polite remark. Here are some useful phrases:
- *I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.*
- *I do hope I am not putting you to too much trouble.*
- *I sincerely hope you will be able to help me in this matter.*
- *I would greatly appreciate an early reply.*
- *I enclose the sample of materials you require.*
- *Please accept my apologies for the trouble this mistake has caused you.*



THE SUBSCRIPTION

- Where a letter is begun by Dear Sir/Sirs/Madam/Mesdames, you must end with the words ‘Yours faithfully’, ‘Yours truly’, or ‘Very truly yours’.
- When, however, you address a person by name – even if you barely know him or her – you must conclude with the words ‘Yours sincerely’.

THE SIGNATURE

- Sign your name clearly *in full*.
- If a manager or the head of a department signs for the firm he will do it like this:
*For Weavewell Woolen Co. Ltd. or
per pro Weavewell Woolen Co. Ltd.*
- *Per pro* or often *p.p.* means that the person is authorised to sign for the firm. *For and on behalf of* has the same meaning. Both forms are frequently used on cheques, bills of exchange and other documents



Here are some useful phrases when writing letters:

- Openings

Dear Sir / Madam

Dear Mr Evans

Dear Francesca

- Closings

Yours faithfully

Yours sincerely

Kind/Best regards



- Referring to previous contact
With reference to your letter of...
Further to our phone call of...
Thank you for your enquiry/email of...
- Requesting/Asking for information
I am writing to enquire about...
We would be very grateful if you could...
Would it be possible to...
Could you please...



- Giving information

Please note that...

I would like to inform you that...

I trust you will find the following points of Interest.

- Checking information

Please let me know as soon as possible.

Could you please confirm...

I would be grateful if you could confirm...



- Suggesting/recommending
May I suggest/propose...
We could/should
It is suggested/proposed that...
- Apologising
We apologise for...
We are sorry about...
We apologise for any inconvenience.



- Finishing a letter

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to seeing/meeting you on...

I look forward to hearing from you.

