



THE PERFECT LETTER

By Bill Haining



How to...write a business letter

Business letters 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
- 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

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



information.

You may write business letters as part of your current job, in your personal life or in a future job. You may need to write your own 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.

Dansk Designs Ltd
Long Lane
Townley
Sussex
BR4 6HJ

13 June 20..

Mrs Garner
DCJ Ltd
10 Fulhern Road
Townley
Sussex
BR3 9LK

Dear Mrs Garner

Order ref: D/78765654

Thank you for your letter of 12 June, regarding the refurbishment you are planning in September.

I would like to confirm that we can supply the 'Sweden' office range as requested. This will include six desks and chairs, ten filing cabinets, two bookshelves and one meeting table with ten chairs.

The cost will be £3,500 plus VAT. I understand that you would like the furniture to be delivered before noon on Thursday 20 September. Delivery will be free of charge.

Yours sincerely

Darron Kitter

Darron Kitter
Showroom Manager

Your COMPANY NAME AND ADDRESS go here.
(They could go against the left margin instead.)

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...Mrs Garner/Madam

SUBJECT, if appropriate

First sentence refers to any previous correspondence.

Use short sentences and clear paragraphs.

Final paragraph

Yours sincerely/faithfully

Signature and your name

Your position

Punctuation Basics:

Punctuation Mark	Use to...
(.) Period	End a sentence: <i>Dinner was delicious.</i>
(?) Question Mark	End a sentence and denote inquiry: <i>What time is it?</i>
(!) Exclamation Point	End a sentence and denote excitement or emphasis: <i>Watch out for that tree!</i>
(,) Comma	<p>Denote a break within a sentence or direct address of a person or group: <i>Mary, listen to me.</i></p> <p>Separate any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two or more adjectives: <i>He is a charming, attentive listener.</i> - Items in a list: <i>Please buy eggs, milk, butter and flour.</i> - The name of a city from the name of a state: <i>I live in Salt Lake City, Utah.</i> - Two independent clauses: <i>The waiter still hasn't taken our order and the play starts in five minutes.</i> - Direct quotations: <i>Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."</i>
(;) Semicolon	<p>Separate two related but independent clauses: <i>I asked Anne to look at my computer; she has a knack for them.</i></p> <p>Separate a series of items that already contain commas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>For our wedding colours, I chose white, the colour of innocence; red, the colour of passion; and yellow, the colour of lemons.</i> - <i>I have lived in Detroit, Michigan; Paris, France; and Sydney, Australia.</i>
(:) Colon	<p>Introduce a list.</p> <p><i>For Christmas, I would like the following presents: a hula hoop, a hippopotamus, and my two front teeth.</i></p> <p>Introduce a statement that expands upon the clause before the colon.</p>

	<i>And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.</i>
(-) Hyphen	Add a prefix: <i>Trans-Atlantic flights are costly.</i> Create compound words: <i>Spider-Man is my favourite superhero.</i> Write numbers as words: <i>I have lived in this house for thirty-three years.</i>
(– or —) Dash	Make a brief interruption within a sentence or a parenthetical phrase: <i>Johnny asked me—with a straight face, I might add—if he could borrow the car for the weekend.</i>
(“) Double Quotation	Enclose a direct quotation: <i>“If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.”</i>
(‘) Apostrophes	Possessive; shows ownership: <i>I believe that is Allen’s pen.</i> Omissive; leave out: <i>I know it’s his because of the distinct monogram.</i> <i>He told me just last week, “I do enjoy this monogrammed pen. My wife said, ‘Allen, it isn’t like people go around mistaking your pens for theirs all day.’</i>
() Parentheses or brackets	Indicate clarification: <i>Please bring home some real butter (as opposed to margarine).</i> Indicate an afterthought or personal commentary: <i>Anyone can edit Wikipedia (not that there’s anything wrong with that).</i>

Sentence Structure

Summary

- A sentence is a group of words that are put together to mean something.
- A sentence to make sense, must include a **subject** and a **verb**, e.g. *Many customers enjoy the convenience of paying with credit.*
(Subject, usually a noun) **(Verb, a doing word)**
- A sentence may also have **adverbs**: these are words that describe a verb, e.g. many customers enjoy the **convenience** of paying with credit.
(Adverb) **(Verb)**
- A sentence may also contain **adjectives**: These are words that describe a noun, e.g. many customers enjoy the convenience of paying with credit.
(Adjective) **(noun/subject)**

Note: At this point, take into consideration your punctuation. Capital letter to start your sentence, full stop, question mark or exclamation mark to end it.

Also, remember the relationship of the “comma” within your sentence and the use of apostrophes, remember! 2 Types: Ommisive (leave out) and Possessive (ownership)

There are 3 types of sentences:

- 1. Simple:** A simple sentence consists of only 1 thought or 1 idea: **this is known as a “CLAUSE,”** e.g. *Many customers enjoy the convenience of paying with credit.*
- 2. Compound:** A compound sentence consists of 2 x **simple sentences** joined by a **connecting word or punctuation, comma, colon etc.** e.g. *Many customers enjoy the convenience of paying with credit, this has led to an increase in debt for many households.* **Please note:** That as 2 simple sentences are joined to create a compound sentence it now consists of 2 x “CLUSES.”
- 3 Complex:** A complex sentence consists of: **three or more “CLUSES,”** e.g. *Since a business letter is usually from or to an organization, it must be written correctly: it will create the wrong impression if it has errors in it.*

Planning a paragraph

Paragraphs are made up from groups of sentences which are linked by one general topic or theme.

Paragraphs help to break up a longer text into smaller bits so that it can be read and understood more easily.

Paragraphs often start with a topic sentence.

This is a way of planning a paragraph:

1	main point	People say the lottery brings hope.
2	explanation	It gives people who are poor the chance to become rich.
3	examples	A mother living with young children in one small room can move to a proper house if she wins the lottery. People can do things they've always dreamed of, like sailing round the world or owning a restaurant.

Building a text

(Telling a story)

Build up a text by writing a number of paragraphs, which follow each other in a logical order and finish with a conclusion.

Paragraph order	Topic sentence of each paragraph
Introduction	Whether you want relaxation or fun, Silverdale and nearby Scarborough offer both at affordable prices.
Paragraph 2	Silverdale is set in the peaceful beauty of the Yorkshire Dales.
Paragraph 3	For entertainment, Scarborough is second to none.
Paragraph 4	You can choose accommodation to fit your needs.

Conclusion	Altogether, Silverdale offers the perfect weekend break.
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Features of text

Different **features of text** help readers to gain information quickly and easily. A page of text may contain all or some of the following features:

A heading or title	Headings and titles tell you what the text is about in a word or short sentence. The title is often at the top of a page and stands out from the rest of the text.
Colour	Colour catches your eye more than black and white. Colour can be used to draw attention to important words or pictures.
Bold print	Bold print draws the reader's attention to a particular word or words.
Images	Images are pictures. Images add to words in order to give information. Sometimes an image is used instead of words. Images help people who are skimming or scanning a text to find the information they need.
A logo	A logo is an image which is like the badge of an organisation. When you see a logo on the page, you know who has written or sent you the text.
Speech bubbles	Speech bubbles report what someone says. You often see speech bubbles with pictures. They show the words coming out of a person's mouth.
A list, bullet points, numbers, letters. Dashes, etc.	A list separates different pieces of information so that they are easier to read. Each new item in a list may be shown by a bullet point, a dash or a number.
A map	A map shows you where a place is located, as if you were looking down from an aeroplane. It can provide important information as you find your way around.

You can find information in a book by using one of the following features:

Contents page	A contents page lists information under headings. It gives the page number for each section listed
Index	A book index lists words or subjects you can find in a book. The words are given in alphabetical order. The index gives the page numbers on which you can find each key word or subject in the book.
A Web Page	A web page may contain certain unique features, e.g. A

	search box, an address bar or links to other webpages or sites.
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Purpose of Text

Informative (Advise)	This type of text is used to inform or advise, for example, "How to write a business letter."
Instructional	Used to give instruction, e.g. A recipe, signs in the event of a fire, etc.
Descriptive (Entertain/Amuse)	Text you would read as leisure, e.g. Novels, magazines, etc.
Persuasive	Text used to persuade you to: buy a product or service, change your views or opinion, etc.

Proof-reading

Always proof-read your text before considering it finished. **Proof-read** for:

- **Spellings**
(check unusual or difficult words in a dictionary: check spelling rules)
- **Sentence Structure.**
(Simple, compound or complex.)
- **Verb tenses**
(keep mainly to one tense throughout)
- **Subject/verb agreement**
(she was going; they were going)
- **Punctuation**
(full stops (.), questions marks (?), exclamation marks (!), commas (,), colons (:))
- **Expression**
(does it make sense? could you add words to make vivid description?)
- **Paragraphs.**
(Are they in a logical sequence, do they tell a story?)

1st draft for proof reading

As well as tennis courts, a bowling alley and gardens for all seasons, the High Hill Hotel has a hot house where cacti, giant water lilies and other tropical **plarnts** is grown. A swimming pool **backed** on to the bar, from which drinks and snacks can be purchased between 8am and midnight, **sports** and other activities are provided children near the wild area of the garden.

Edited text

As well as tennis courts, a bowling alley and gardens for all seasons, the High Hill Hotel has a **huge** hot house where cacti, giant water lilies and other tropical **plants are** grown. An **outdoor** swimming pool **backs** on to the bar, from which drinks and snacks can be purchased between 8am and midnight. **Sports** and other activities are **provided for** children near the wild area of the garden.