

44c Business documents

For business documents, use white 8½-inch by 11-inch paper of good quality, black ink, and a standard 10- or 12-point font. Never use lined, colored, or odd-sized paper, and never use a font that looks like handwriting. You may, of course, use letterhead stationery, which is stationery preprinted with a company's name, address, and telephone/fax/e-mail information. Never use personal social stationery for business documents.

Business letters

The format of a business letter depends on whether you will use plain paper or letterhead stationery. Use the format of the sample letter on page 328, which is called *modified block format*, when writing a business letter on plain paper. When writing a business letter on letterhead stationery, use the format of the sample letter on page 329 (*full block format*).

You may write business letters by hand. Use the same format as you would if you were typing, and write or print legibly in black or dark blue ink.

Spacing

1. Write or type each letter so that everything is centered in the middle of the first page. This means that if your letter is very short, you should adjust the spacing so that the typing isn't all at the top of the first page. If your letter has a second page, you don't need to worry about centering it. Just be sure to leave a one-inch margin at the top of the second and all later pages.
2. Single-space both the writer's and the recipient's address and the date. Single-space each paragraph.
3. Double-space between paragraphs and between all other parts of the letter, *except* item (4) that follows.
4. Quadruple-space (four lines down) between the date and the recipient's address and between the closing and the writer's typed name.

Margins and indenting

1. Leave a minimum of 1½-inch margins on all four sides.
2. Indent the writer's address and the date, the closing, and the writer's typed name so that each one begins at the center of the page.
3. Don't indent the first sentence of each paragraph.

Writer's address and date

1. Use the U.S. Postal Service two-letter abbreviations for the states of the United States and the provinces of Canada. Write them in capital letters, and do not use periods.
2. Write the name of a foreign country on a separate line below the city and state or province.
3. Put commas between all parts of an address that appear together on one line *except* between a two-letter state/province abbreviation and a zip code. Don't put commas at the end of lines.
4. Don't abbreviate such words as *Avenue*, *Boulevard*, *Road*, and *Street*. Write them out.
5. Write the date in the order *month day year*. Don't abbreviate the names of the months. Write them out. Put a comma between the day and the year.

Recipient's name and address

1. Put a comma between the recipient's name and job title. If the job title is very long, write it on the next line.
2. Don't use *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, or *Ms.* in the address.

Greeting

1. Use a colon after the greeting.
2. Address your letter to a person if at all possible.

If you do not know the name of a person to write to, call the business or school and ask.

Address it to a job title, a department, or a company when you cannot find out a name of a person.

- ▶ Dear Marketing Manager:
- ▶ Dear Human Resources Department:
- ▶ Dear Telephone Company:

Use the title *Ms.* for a woman if you do not know whether she is married or single, or if you know that she prefers it.

Body

1. Use formal English. Don't use contractions or abbreviations.
2. Be direct, polite, and brief. State your main point quickly and courteously. Don't include comments about the weather, questions about the recipient's health, or compliments about the recipient's company. Such comments and questions are customary in some cultures, but not in American culture.

3. State the reason for your letter right at the beginning.
 - ▶ In response to your advertisement in the *Kansas City Star*, I am applying for the job of . . .
 - ▶ I am writing to call your attention to an error . . .
 - ▶ I am writing to request information about . . .
4. In the middle part of the letter, include information that will help the recipient respond appropriately.
 - In a job application letter, tell why you want the job and why you would be a good employee. Don't repeat information that is on your résumé.
 - In a complaint letter, explain briefly what your problem is.
 - In a request letter, be specific about what information or item you want. For example, if you want an application form for a school, say specifically which school or which program.
5. At the end of the letter, give instructions.
 - In a job application letter, tell the recipient how to contact you and when you are available for an interview.
 - In a complaint letter, state specifically what you want (a refund, a credit, a replacement, an apology, and so on).
 - In a request letter, tell where to send the information or item.
6. End the letter with a positive statement.
 - ▶ I look forward to hearing from you.
 - ▶ I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. (*stronger, but polite*)
 - ▶ Thank you very much.
 - ▶ Thank you for your assistance with this matter.
 - ▶ Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. (*stronger, but polite*)

Closing

1. Start the closing two lines below the body and in the center of the page, aligned with your address and the date.
2. Use a standard closing word or phrase. Notice that a comma follows the closing and that its first word is capitalized.
 - ▶ Yours truly, ▶ Very truly yours,
 - ▶ Sincerely, ▶ Sincerely yours,
 - ▶ Cordially, ▶ Respectfully, (*the most formal*)
3. Use an informal closing such as *Best regards* or *Best wishes* only if you know the recipient well.

Name and signature

1. Type your name (or print it clearly in a handwritten letter) four lines below the closing.
2. Put a job or professional title, if you have one, after your name.
 - ▶ William Smith, MD
 - ▶ John Knight
Accounts Payable
3. Don't use a title (*Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, *Ms.*, *Dr.*, *Pres.*, and so on) in front of your own name. (For exceptions, see Special Tips on page 327.)
4. Write your signature in the space between the closing and your typed or printed name.

Enclosures and copies

1. Indicate when you include something inside the envelope with a letter. The "something" is called an enclosure. With a job application letter, enclose your résumé. With a complaint letter about an error in a bill, enclose a copy of the bill.
2. Type the word *Enclosure(s)* or the abbreviation *Enc.* (with a period) at the left margin, two lines below your typed name. If you wish, you can state what the enclosures are or indicate how many there are, but it is not necessary to do so. The five options are
 - ▶ Enc.
 - ▶ Enclosure
 - ▶ Enclosure: résumé
 - ▶ Enc. (3)
 - ▶ Enclosures
3. Indicate when you send copies of your letter to additional people. Put the abbreviation *cc:* at the left margin, two lines below your typed name or one line below the abbreviation *Enc.* Use small letters (*cc:*, not *CC:*) followed by a colon. Then list the names vertically.
 - ▶ *cc:* Susan Smith
Richard Tyson

Envelope

1. Use a standard-sized, plain white envelope.
2. Type or print the recipient's name, title, and address exactly as it appears in your letter. Position it in the low center of the envelope.

NOTE: The U.S. Postal Service prefers but does not require printing on envelopes to be all capital letters. Capital letters make machine-reading easier.

Type or print your own name and address in the upper left corner.

Second page

If your letter is longer than one page, type the following information 1 inch below the top left corner of the second and all other pages.

- ▶ Thomas E. Brown (*recipient's name*)
- October 3, 2002 (*date of letter*)
- Page 2 (*page number*)

! *Special Tips*

1. The normal order for names in English is first name/middle name (or middle initial)/family name. Therefore, you may want to use this order even if you use a different order in your language. Doing so makes it easier for an English-speaking person to know whether to reply to *Mr. Chang* or *Mr. Kee* after receiving a letter signed *Chang Fook Kee*.
2. You may want to put *Mr.*, *Miss*, *Mrs.*, or *Ms.* in parentheses in front of your typed name if—and only if—an English-speaking person might not recognize from your name whether you are male or female. It is usually not correct to give yourself a title. In this case, however, it helps the recipient of your letter to know how to address the reply. Putting parentheses around the title shows that the title is for informational purposes only.

- ▶ (Miss) Chun-Yi Sun

Sample envelope

Writer's name
and address in
upper left corner

Chun-Yi Sun
6558 South Main Street, Apt. 6
Chicago, IL 42005



Center the
recipient's name
and address in the
lower half of the
envelope.

Thomas E. Brown
Department of English
Grandview College
6500 College Avenue
Houston, TX 77251

Sample business letter—modified block format

Writer's address and the date
Skip four lines.
Recipient's name, title, and address

1/2-inch margins on all four sides

6558 South Main Street, Apt. 6
Chicago, IL 42005
October 3, 2002

Start the address in the center of the page

Thomas E. Brown
Professor, Department of English
Grandview College
6500 College Avenue
Houston, TX 77251

Greeting

Dear Professor Brown:

Skip one line

Reason for the letter in first sentence

I am writing to ask you for a letter of recommendation. I am applying for admission to graduate school at three different universities and need a letter of recommendation for each. The schools are the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois.

Information to identify the writer

I was a student in your English 400 class in the fall semester, 2002. You may remember the research paper that I wrote for your class. It was a comparison of teaching methods in my home country, Taiwan, and teaching methods in the United States.

Specific request: what, when, where

If you are willing to write a recommendation for me, I would be very appreciative. Enclosed are three stamped, preaddressed envelopes, one for each school. The deadline for all applications, including the recommendations, is November 30. Kindly send your letters to the addresses typed on each of the three enclosed envelopes.

Final sentence

Thank you most sincerely.

Closing
Signature

Very truly yours,

Chun-Yi Sun

Align with writer's address and the date

(Miss) Chun-Yi Sun

Skip four lines

Typed name
Enclosure information

Enc. (3)

Sample business letter—full block format

The following business letter uses *full block* format. Full block format is the most formal format for business letters and is used on letterhead stationery. Full block and modified block are the same *except* for the following.

- It is not necessary to type the writer's address. Just type the date about two lines below the bottom of the printed address information.
- Lines are not indented. Every line begins at the left margin.

	<p>Adventure Travel, Inc. 64 First Street, Newton, MA 02495</p> <p>(413) 222-2222 FAX: (413) 222-2223 E-mail: goforit.com</p>
Date	June 12, 2002
Recipient's name and address	Robert Webster Accounts Receivable Webster Printing Company 125 Second Street Newton, MA 02454
Greeting	Dear Mr. Webster:
Reason for letter	I am writing to call your attention to an error in your most recent statement to us.
Explanation of problem	Your statement dated June 1, 2002 (copy enclosed), shows a balance due of \$1,356.19. However, we paid this bill on May 15, 2002. Enclosed is a copy of our canceled check 3509 for this amount as proof of payment.
Specific instructions	Kindly correct your records and credit our account. If you have any questions, please call me. I am generally available during normal business hours.
Final sentence	I look forward to your prompt attention to this matter.
Closing	Very truly yours,
Signature	<i>John Knight</i>
Typed name and job title	John Knight Accounts Payable
Enclosure information	Enclosures: Statement dated 6/1/02 Canceled check 3509 (front and back)

Résumés

A résumé is a summary of your qualifications for employment. The best résumés are short (one page, if possible), well-organized, attractive to look at, and easy to read.

A résumé usually contains the following information.

Name, address, telephone number

Type your name, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address at the top of the page.

NOTE: It is illegal for employers to ask job applicants for certain personal information such as age, sex, marital status, race, and religion. Include this information only if doing so might help you get the job.

Employment objective

State in a few words what kind of job you are looking for.

Education

List each college or university you attended, the years attended, your field of study, the degree received, and any awards or special honors. Begin with the most recent college. You may list your high school, especially if you are applying for your first job.

Experience

List all the jobs you have had, beginning with the most recent one.

Give each job title, the name and location of each employer, the dates of employment, and a short description of your duties. Tell about promotions or any special recognition, but do not give salary information.

Special skills, activities, and interests

List any special skills, activities, and interests, such as computer or foreign language skills, club memberships, and community service. Include hobbies such as photography or model building if they are relevant to the job you are seeking or if you need to fill out an empty page.

References

You may say "Available on request" or you may list the name, address, and telephone number of people who are willing to recommend you. Always ask a person's permission before you list him or her as a reference.

Sample résumé

Name in **boldface** type
Name and address lines can be centered or aligned.

Headings in **boldface** type make them stand out.

Most recent experience first

Minimum 1½-inch margins on all four sides

Emilia H. Richardson
2230 La Cienega Boulevard, Apt. 4
Los Angeles, CA 92222
(818) 566-7809

Objective To obtain an entry-level position with an architectural firm.

Education 1996-2002
California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, California

- Bachelor of Architecture, June 2002
- G.P.A. 3.5 out of a possible 4.0
- Dean's List 12 out of 15 quarters
- Architecture Students' Honor Society

Summer 2000
University of Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico
Summer Spanish language program, combined with study of Spanish colonial architecture

Experience June 2002–present
Smith and Bell, Architects, San Luis Obispo
Junior draftsman. Drafted interior stairwell details using CAD for large office building project

Summer 2001
Kobayashi Associates, Architects, San Francisco
Summer internship. Helped librarian organize catalogs and material samples. Performed general office duties.

Summer 1999
Los Angeles School District

- Tutored math and science in a summer program for high school students
- Mentored three girls from low-income families interested in studying architecture

Skills and Activities Fluent Spanish
Exhibitor, Los Angeles County Fair, model-building competition

- Blue ribbon, 1999
- Honorable mention, 1997 and 1998

References Available on request

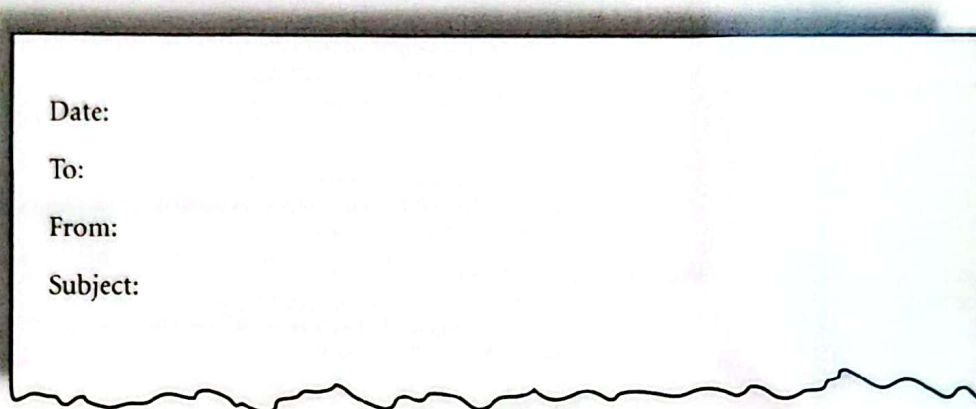
! *Special Tip*

Some computer word processing programs have résumé formats. You simply type in your information, and the program puts it in an attractive format for you.

Memorandums

A memorandum, or memo, is a form of written communication from one person to others in the same company. A memo is usually short and about one topic. It is a quick way to give information, to make a request, or to make a recommendation in writing.

Companies usually have their own format for memos, and they often have preprinted memo forms or a memo template on their computer system. The following lines normally appear at the top of a memo. Notice that each word is followed by a colon.



Date:
To:
From:
Subject:

List the names of people or departments who will receive the memo after the word *To*. Use the abbreviation *cc* to list names of any other people (besides the main recipients) who will get a copy. If the list of recipients is long, you may put it after the word *Distribution* at the bottom of the page, as in the sample memo on page 333.

Sometimes the word *Subject* is replaced by the abbreviation *Re*. Busy working people want to know immediately the topic of a memo, so the subject should stand out. Make it the last line before the body, and print it in bold type.

The body of the memo is very short and to the point. Since its purpose is to communicate information as efficiently as possible, state the main point right at the beginning, and make your explanations brief.

Sample memorandum

**HAWAIIAN PARADISE HOTELS AND RESORTS
MEMORANDUM**

Date: October 4, 2002
 From: Laura Montgomery
 To: Distribution
 Re: **Employee Name Badges**

The subject is in **boldface** type.

The body of the memo is as concise as possible.

Hawaiian Paradise Hotels and Resorts has purchased a name badge for each employee (full-time and part-time) as a security measure. Enclosed are badges for you and the employees in your department. Please give employees their badges with paychecks on October 6 and ask employees to begin wearing them as part of their daily uniform.

The list of recipients has other information beside each name, so it is at the bottom of the page.

Distribution:

Matt Maheshwaran	Housekeeping
Faye Su	Front Desk
Ann Medeiros	Guest Activities
Charles Horner	Maintenance
John Nishikawa	Grounds
Silvia Fernandez	Accounting
Ed Blum	Security

44d E-mail

E-mail (electronic mail) has changed the way people communicate with each other. Like other forms of written communication, e-mail has customary rules for format and content.

Format

1. Always fill in the subject line with a short phrase that tells the topic of your message.
 - ▶ Lab report due next week
 - ▶ Meeting scheduled for 3/15/03
2. Begin with a greeting and end with a closing, just as you would in a letter. Use a formal greeting for people you don't know well. Use informal greetings and closings only with friends.

Formal

- ▶ Dear Mr. Duncan,
- ▶ Sincerely,

Informal

- ▶ Hi, Laura,
- ▶ Ciao,

3. Don't write in all capital letters or all small letters. Follow the rules for capitalizing in English.
4. If your message is too long to fit on one computer screen, it is helpful to your reader if you break the message into sections. Give each section a heading.

Content

1. As with other business correspondence, be brief, clear, and direct. State your main point right away—in the first sentence if possible.
2. Use formal English in business messages.
3. Always proofread a message before sending it. Use a spelling checker if your e-mail program has one.

Sample e-mail message

