Letters

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[Video](https://linnbenton.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=5aec9a00-7836-4e56-9e38-b01b0140b8b8&start=0)

[Slide Deck](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1cGqW8rUgZUcF-OUdSJr-8XXEdkU0GGODAT-NQpepOjQ/edit?usp=sharing)

# Goals

In this presentation, we will be discussing professional letters, and answering the following questions:

* What are letters?
* How do I write an effective professional letter?

# Professional Letters

First, professional letters are external documents. Whereas memos are for internal communication, letters are for external communication, such as sending to another company or a customer. They require a higher level of professionalism and attention to detail.

Let’s first watch another video, “How to Write a Business Letter.” This video breaks down the parts of professional letter writing, showing an example of where each part goes. After the video, we will dive into each part separately and in more detail.

# Video

Now that we have a better idea of what a professional letter looks like, let’s look at each part a little more closely.

# From the Top

When writing a letter, you may need (or want) to use your company’s letterhead. Otherwise, you will put your address in the top left corner. You will skip one line, and then write the date. Unless you are told otherwise, use the standard format of month, day, and year with the month written out. Then skip another line, and write the receiver’s address.

# Salutation

You will write “dear” and then the person’s name. In professional letters, use a colon after the name. When it comes to names, be careful that you use the correct and preferred address, such as Mr., Ms. and so on. When in doubt, spell it out; that is, use the whole name. This is always the safest option.

What if you do not know who exactly is receiving the letter? First, try to do some research to find who the receiver will be. A simple phone call can help. Sometimes it may even be a group or committee, which you can use as the receiver. If you still cannot find an exact receiver, do not write “To whom it may concern” or anything like that. Simply skip the salutation and just begin the letter.

# Body

In the first paragraph, state your purpose. Be clear about why you are writing the letter.

In the middle paragraph or paragraphs, provide details and explanations. Be clear yet concise, and make it easy to read. (If it is a long letter, consider using headings for major sections.)

In the last paragraph, close by stating what action needs to be taken and the best way to contact you.

# Sign Off

Be respectful and appropriate. You do not want to use syrupy or inappropriate sign offs, such as *sincerely yours* or *love*. A couple good ones are *sincerely* and *regards*.

Leave four spaces between to add your signature. Then type your name. Once you print the letter, sign your name, preferably in blue ink.

# Final Tips

## Enclosures

If using enclosures, that is any documents included, write *enclosures* at the bottom and list any documents that the receiver should find along with the letter. For example, along with a cover letter for a job, you will be including your resume and other documents requested.

## Formatting

When it comes to formatting, use block paragraphing and single space. Be simple and concise, and use headings if needed. Keep fonts professional as well.

## Reminders

Remember to keep your audience in mind. What do they need? What do they expect from you? If from another country or culture, what are the expectations when writing letters? Always make sure you revise and edit, and if possible, have someone else look over it before you send it.

# Conclusion

I hope this presentation helped you in having a better understanding about what is expected when writing professional letters.