

Business Letter Components
UWF Writing Lab

1. Letterhead or Return Address
 - a) Company name*
 - b) Street address or post office box number
 - c) City, state, ZIP code
 - d) Area code and phone number*
 - e) Cable address or fax*

*Letterhead only (Do not include your name or phone # in the return address)

2. Date Line
 - a) October 6, 20xx (not Oct. 6th)
 - b) 6 October 20xx (Military or European style)
 - c) Fixed: Type on third line below letterhead at left margin or beginning at center line
 - d) Floating: Date line position varies with length of letter. Type inside address on fifth line below date line.
 - e) Personal business letters with no printed letterhead: type as last line of return address.

3. Personal or Confidential Notation
 - a) Type notation if needed on second line below date at left margin in all caps:

PERSONAL or CONFIDENTIAL

4. Reference Notations
 - a) When the guide words “When replying, refer to” are not printed on the letterhead but are desired, type on the second line below the date line or below any notations that follow it, and type your appropriate reference number or filing code two spaces after the colon:

When replying, refer to: CD-1703

- b) When replying to a letter that contains a reference number, type a reference notation on the second line below the date line or below any notation after it:

In reply to: G2467 Or Refer to: G 2467

- c) When you must give both your and the addressee's reference, type yours first (as in A above), skip a line, and type his or hers. For example:

When replying, refer to: CD 1703

Or

Your reference: G 2467

- d) Some writers prefer to give addressee's reference notation as a subject line (see #8 below).

5. Inside Address

- a) Type on fifth line below date line or on third line below any notation(s) following date line.

- b) Preferably, inside and outside addresses are the same and include addressee's name and job title, name of organization, street address or post office box number, city, state, and ZIP.

- c) Addressee's name/title or organization name:

- (1) Write the name exactly as the person or business does in her/his/its correspondence to you. For example:

Main St. Investments (*not* Main Street Investments)

Mr. William B. Sachs (*not* Wm B. Sachs *or* W.B. Sachs *or* Willie B. Sachs)

- (2) Include addressee's job title and department if known:

Mr. Jon Sleik
Vice President and General Manager,
Section, Southern Corporate Division
(*Note: if title runs over to a second line,
indent turnover two spaces*)

Ms. Eleanor A. Hill
Director of Training
Creative Dining
P.O. Box 13340
Orlando, FL 32659

Dr. Antoinette E. Maroni
President, Haines & Company

Mr. J.C. Lee, President

- (3) For generally accepted forms of address for government officials et al., see "Forms of Address," Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.
- (4) Avoid double titles:

Dr. Ann Smith or Ann Smith, M.D. (*Not* Dr. Ann Smith, M.D.)

(5) Break a long company name into two lines for balance

d) Street names and numbers

(1) Use figures (except for One) for street numbers.

(2) Spell out street names that are numbers 1 through 10.

915 West Seventh Street

(3) Add the letters d, st, or th to numbers over 10 that represent street names.

707 West 16th Street

(4) Preferably, spell out street, avenue, building, and directional words such as east and northwest.

e) State and ZIP Codes:

(1) Use the two-letter state abbreviations (both capitals, no period thereafter) preferred by the U.S. Post Office. Spelling out the state name is also correct.

(2) Type the ZIP code on the same line as city and state, leaving two spaces between state and ZIP.

6. Attention line (used in 23% of business correspondence)

a) Type on second line below inside address at left margin.

b) Type the word attention in all capitals or in capital and small letters, number abbreviated, not underlined, and followed by a colon.

Attention: Mr. Todd W. Baldwin

ATTENTION: REAL ESTATE REPRESENTATIVE

c) Many companies now omit the attention line and sample type the name of the person or department above the company name in the inside address. Whenever possible, omit the attention line. Address the letter directly to an individual in the organization, by name and title.

7. Salutation

a) Type on second line below inside address (or attention line if used). Follow with a colon.

b) Salutation must agree in number with the first line of the inside address.

For Martine's Corporation, use Ladies and Gentlemen: (both sexes work there)

For Mr. Steve Adams, use Dear Mr. Adams: or Dear Steve:

Never use "Dear" before Ladies and Gentlemen.

c) Reply to a letter from M.A. Hadley as follows:

Dear M.A. Hadley

d) When you've used an attention line, the letter is considered addressed to the whole organization rather than to the person named on the attention line. Hence, the correct salutation is the following:

Ladies and Gentlemen: (*not* "Dear Mr. Name-In-Attention-Line.")

8. Subject Line (used in 38% of business correspondence)

a) Type between salutation and body, with one blank line above and below, flush left or indented according to format of body paragraphs.

b) Type either in capital and small or in all-capital letters, not underlined, begin with the word

Subject: *or* In re: *or* Re: *followed by a colon*

RE: MEADOW GLENN MALL TAB *Or* Subject: Direct Mall Piece

9. Body (average business letter is 125 words in three paragraphs)

a) Begin on second line below salutation or reference line.

b) Single space within but double space between paragraphs.

c) Block paragraphs flush left, or indent paragraphs five spaces.

d) Place on page based on letter length, visualizing "frame" of white space around letter. Bottom margin should be at least six lines deep. Use this guide:

MARGIN GUIDE

<u>Letter Length:</u>	<u>Width of Margins:</u>	<u>Spaces in Margins:</u>		<u>Line Length:</u>	<u>Spaces in Line:</u>	
		<u>Pica</u>	<u>Elite</u>		<u>Pica</u>	<u>Elite</u>
Long	1"	10	12	6 1/2"	65	78
Medium	1 1/2"	15	18	5 1/2"	55	66
Short	2"	20	20	4 1/2"		

10. Complimentary Closing

- a) Type on second line below last line of body, starting at center page or flush left, followed by a comma.
- b) More Personal:
Sincerely,
Cordially,
Sincerely yours,
Cordially yours,
- More Formal:
Very truly yours,
Very sincerely yours,
Very cordially yours,
Respectfully yours,

11. Company Signature

- a) Use to emphasize that a letter represents the views of the company as a whole, not just the company employee who wrote it.
- b) Type in all capitals on second line below complimentary closing, beginning at same point as complimentary closing.

12. Writer's Name and Title

- a) Ordinarily, type name on fourth line below the company signature (if used) or the complimentary closing (if letter is short, leave up to six lines blank for signature; if long, reduce to two blank lines), beginning at same point as complimentary closing or company signature.
- b) Signature should be in the form by which writer wishes to be addressed. A man should not include Mr. in his signature unless he uses only initials or has a name that could also be a woman's:

Mr. J.G. Eberle *or* Mr. Lynn Treadway

If given in the typed signature,
do not enclose Mr. in parentheses:

If given in the handwritten signature, do
enclose Mr. in parentheses:

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Mr. Lynn Treadway

Lynn Treadway

2. Invoice A 35712 or Enc.

15. Copy Notation

- a) Type on the line below the reference initials or enclosure notation the initials cc or c (copy) with or without a colon thereafter and follow on same line with name of person to receive copy.
- b) If several people are to receive copies, type their names below the first name, arranged by rank or alphabetically. Don't repeat cc or c.
- c) When using both first names and/or initials with last names, omit personal titles except in formal letters and/or if using nicknames with last names.

For example:

cc:	Mr. Able	<i>or</i>	J. Able	<i>or</i>	cc: Jim Able
	Miss Blue		S. Blue		Sandy Blue
	Ms. Capp		M. Capp		Peggy Capp

- d) Note this distinction:
cc: Mr. R.R. Parent (received only copy of letter)
Cc/enc: Mr. T.W. Baldwin (received copies of letter and enclosure)

16. Postscript

- a) Use a postscript for emphasis to express effectively an idea that you have deliberately withheld from the body of the letter.
- b) Type flush left or indented (according to body paragraph format) on second line below what was typed last, beginning with no abbreviation at all or one of these: PS: or PS.

17. Second Pages

- a) Use plain paper (never a letterhead), using same margins as on first page.
- b) Type a second page heading on the seventh line down from top of page, giving 1) addressee's name, 2) page number, and 3) date. On the third line below last line of heading, resume letter. Either of these styles is correct:

Across:

Mr. Steve Adams

or Down:

Mr. Steve Adams

Page 2

- c) Always have at least two lines of a paragraph at the bottom—and at the top—of the next page. Never have just the complimentary closing on the last page.
- d) Don't divide the last word on a page.

STANDARD TWO-LETTER ABBREVIATIONS FOR ADDRESSING ENVELOPES:

AL	Alabama	AK	Alaska	AR	Arkansas
AZ	Arizona	CA	California	CO	Colorado
CT	Connecticut	DC	District of Columbia	DE	Delaware
FL	Florida	IA	Iowa	IL	Illinois
IN	Indiana	KS	Kansas	KY	Kentucky
LA	Louisiana	MA	Massachusetts	MD	Maryland
ME	Maine	MI	Michigan	MT	Montana
NC	North Carolina	ND	North Dakota	NE	Nebraska
NH	New Hampshire	NJ	New Jersey	NM	New Mexico
NV	Nevada	NY	New York	OH	Ohio
PA	Pennsylvania	PR	Puerto Rico	RI	Rhode Island
SC	South Carolina	SD	South Dakota	TN	Tennessee
TX	Texas	UT	Utah	VA	Virginia
VT	Vermont	WA	Washington		
