

# Business Letter Basics

## Date

The date line is used to indicate the date the letter was written. However, if your letter is completed over a number of days, use the date it was finished in the date line. When writing to companies within the United States, use the American date format. (For example: June 11, 2001. ) Write out the month, day and year two inches from the top of the page. Depending which format you are using for your letter, either left justify the date or center it horizontally. You should leave 4 blank lines after the date before the inside address. (5 enters)



## Sender's Address

Including the address of the sender is **optional**. Most companies have a letterhead.

## Inside Address

The inside address is the recipient's address. It is always best to write to a specific individual at the firm to which you are writing. If you do not have the person's name, do some research by calling the company or speaking with employees from the company. Include a personal title such as Ms., Mrs., Mr., or Dr. Follow a woman's preference in being addressed as Miss, Mrs., or Ms. If you are unsure of a woman's preference in being addressed, use Ms. If there is a possibility that the person to whom you are writing is a Dr. or has some other title, use that title. Usually, people will not mind being addressed by a higher title than they actually possess. To write the address, use the U.S. Post Office Format. For international addresses, type the name of the country in all-capital letters on the last line. The inside address begins one line below the sender's address or one inch below the date. It should be left justified, no matter which format you are using.

## Salutation

Use the same name as the inside address, including the personal title. If you know the person and typically address them by their first name, it is acceptable to use only the first name in the salutation (i.e., Dear Lucy:). In all other cases, however, use the personal title and full name followed by a colon. Leave one line blank after the salutation. (two enters)

If you don't know a reader's gender, use a nonsexist salutation, such as "To Whom it May Concern." It is also acceptable to use the full name in a salutation if you cannot determine gender. For example, you might write *Dear Chris Harmon:* if you were unsure of Chris's gender.

## Body

For full block and modified block formats, single space and left justify each paragraph within the body of the letter. Leave a blank line between each paragraph. When writing a business letter, be careful to remember that conciseness is very important. In the first paragraph, consider a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point.

## Closing

The closing begins at the same horizontal point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph.

**Capitalize the first word only** (i.e., Thank you) and leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature. (strike enter 5 times) If a colon follows the salutation, a comma should follow the closing; otherwise, there is no punctuation after the closing.

## Enclosures

If you have enclosed any documents along with the letter, such as a resume, you indicate this simply by typing Enclosures one line below the closing.

## Typist initials

Typist initials are used to indicate the person who typed the letter. If you typed the letter yourself, omit the typist initials. Key these using lowercase letters.

**FULL BLOCK BUSINESS LETTER**  
EVERYTHING BEGINS AT THE LEFT MARGIN

May 26, 1998 ----- Date

Mrs. Mary Jones  
The Tiny Tots Toy Company ----- Inside Address  
15456 Pyramid Way  
College Park, FL 33133

Dear Mrs. Jones: ----- Salutation

I recently purchased one of your Tiny Tents (Model # 47485) for my three-year old. Unfortunately, after viewing the components that came with the product, I discovered that four of the parts were missing. Also, the instructions that came with the tent are incomplete. Both of these situations have resulted in the tent remaining unassembled and unacceptable as a toy for my daughter.

I am writing to request replacements for the missing parts, and a copy of the full set of assembly directions for the model I purchased. If reasonable arrangements are not made within ten business days, I will return the tent to the store I purchased it from and expect a full refund. To assist you in processing my request, I am including a copy of my sales receipt and a list of the missing parts.

Sincerely,----- Closing

*Signature of Clara Winters*

Clara Winters ----- Typed Name and Position

yo (writer's initials)

Enclosure ----- Notation

## MODIFIED BLOCK BUSINESS LETTER

May 26, 1998 ----- Date begins at 3"

Mrs. Mary Jones  
The Tiny Tots Toy Company ----- Inside Address  
15456 Pyramid Way  
College Park, FL 33133

Dear Mrs. Jones: ----- Salutation

I recently purchased one of your Tiny Tents (Model # 47485) for my three-year old. Unfortunately, after viewing the components that came with the product, I discovered that four of the parts were missing. Also, the instructions that came with the tent are incomplete. Both of these situations have resulted in the tent remaining unassembled and unacceptable as a toy for my daughter.

I am writing to request replacements for the missing parts, and a copy of the full set of assembly directions for the model I purchased. If reasonable arrangements are not made within ten business days, I will return the tent to the store I purchased it from and expect a full refund. To assist you in processing my request, I am including a copy of my sales receipt and a list of the missing parts.

Sincerely,-----Closing at 3"

*Signature of Clara Winters*

Clara Winters -----Typed Name and Position at 3"

yo (writer's initials)

Enclosure ----- Notation