

Top 14 Steps to Write an Effective Formal Letter in English

1. Write your address and optionally your telephone number on the top right corner of the page.
2. Place the date directly below your address writing the month as a word.
3. Write the recipient's address on line below the date on the left.
4. Place the recipient's name one line beneath the recipient's address.
5. Write the subject of the letter in all caps one full line below the recipient's name.
6. Give the person you're addressing a salutation or greeting.

Salutation or Greeting:

- Dear Mr..... Use the title (Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms., Dr. ...etc.).
- Use the surname only.
- If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, use Dear Sir or Madam.

7. Write the body of the letter (not more than 3 paragraphs) discussing your subject. Be concise in your discussion of the subject.

- **In the first paragraph** write a friendly opening and then state the reason or goal of the letter.
- **In the second paragraph** tackle the subject of the letter using examples to stress or underline your point. Concrete, real examples are always better than hypothetical examples.
- **In the final paragraph** briefly summarize your purpose of writing and suggest how you might want to proceed further.

8. End your letter with:

- "Yours faithfully" if you don't know the name of the letter recipient.
- "Yours sincerely" if you know the name of the letter recipient.

9. Write your name below the ending. Leave a room for your signature.

10. Sign your name.

If you think the person you are writing to might not know whether you are a male or female, put your title (Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms.) in brackets after your name.

11. Below your signature, write your job title.

12. Add the word "Enclosures" below your signature block or job title and add any enclosures.

13. Proofread your letter checking your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

14. Send your letter:

- Pick out a plain envelope.
- Fold your letter so that it fits into your envelope.
- Place the letter into the envelope.
- Flip the envelope over.
- Write the recipient's address on the envelope:
 - Write the name of the person you are sending the letter to.
 - Write the company name on line below that.
 - Write the street-address on the line below the company name.
 - Write the town, state, and zip code on the line below that.
 - Place a stamp on the top right hand corner.