

Business Letter

1. View the parts of a business letter
2. View the sample business letter
3. Use the rubric to double check your letter

Write a letter to Mr. Scrucci, the Superintendent of Bowling Green City Schools. Tell him at least three things you like about Bowling Green Schools or give him two suggestions on how to improve Bowling Green Schools.

Mr. Scrucci, Superintendent

Bowling Green City Schools

137 Clough Street

Bowling Green, OH 43402

Business Letters

A business letter is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8½"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery. There are six parts to a business letter.

1. The Heading. This contains the return address (usually two or three lines) with the date on the last line.

Sometimes it may be necessary to include a line after the address and before the date for a phone number, fax number, E-mail address, or something similar.

Often a line is skipped between the address and date. That should always be done if the heading is next to the left margin. (See Business Letter Styles.)

It is not necessary to type the return address if you are using stationery with the return address already imprinted. Always include the date.

2. The Inside Address. This is the address you are sending your letter to. Make it as complete as possible. Include titles and names if you know them.

This is always on the left margin. If an 8½" x 11" paper is folded in thirds to fit in a standard 9" business envelope, the inside address can appear through the window in the envelope.

An inside address also helps the recipient route the letter properly and can help should the envelope be damaged and the address become unreadable.

Skip a line after the heading before the inside address. Skip another line after the inside address before the greeting.

3. The Greeting. Also called the salutation. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word "Dear" and always includes the person's last name.

It normally has a title. Use a first name only if the title is unclear--for example, you are writing to someone named "Leslie," but do not know whether the person is male or female. For more on the form of titles, see Titles with Names.

The greeting in a business letter always ends in a colon. (You know you are in trouble if you get a letter from a boyfriend or girlfriend and the greeting ends in a colon--it is not going to be friendly.)

4. The Body. The body is written as text. A business letter is never hand written. Depending on the letter style you choose, paragraphs may be indented. Regardless of format, skip a line between paragraphs.

Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

5. The Complimentary Close. This short, polite closing ends with a comma. It is either at the left margin or its left edge is in the center, depending on the Business Letter Style that you use. It begins at the same column the heading does.

The block style is becoming more widely used because there is no indenting to bother with in the whole letter.

6. The Signature Line. Skip two lines (unless you have unusually wide or narrow lines) and type out the name to be signed. This customarily includes a middle initial, but does not have to. Women may indicate how they wish to be addressed by placing Miss, Mrs., Ms. or similar title in parentheses before their name.

Dr. Michael Smith
123 ABC St.
New York City, NY 99999
April 17, 2016

Dr. Patricia Brown
University of California, Los Angeles Medical Center
777 Medical Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 11111

Dear Dr. Brown,

I am the chairman of the 2016 Metropolitan Medical Conference that is being held this year in Miami, Florida on July 5, 2016. I write to invite you to present your groundbreaking research on beta blockers with our conference participants and invited guests. A 30-minute discussion of your work along with a 20-minute question and answer session would add so much to the intellectual landscape of our annual medical conference.

The Metropolitan Medical Association would be pleased to cover your travel and lodging expenses while you visit the conference, in addition to providing a per diem budget during your stay.

Please reply with your answer as soon as you are able so that we may begin making arrangements. I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,
Dr. Michael Smith

Business Letter Assessment Rubric

Writer: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

Topic (Weight)	1	2	3	4
Return Address & Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Return address or letterhead is missing. <input type="checkbox"/> Date is missing. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Return address or letterhead is missing some information. <input type="checkbox"/> Date is there but format is incorrect. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Return address or letterhead is complete & accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Date is complete & positioned correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Return address or letterhead is complete & accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Date is complete & positioned correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> No spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.
Inside Address & Salutation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inside address is missing. <input type="checkbox"/> Salutation is missing. <input type="checkbox"/> Subject line is missing. <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inside address is missing information. <input type="checkbox"/> Salutation is inappropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Subject line information is misleading. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inside address is complete & accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Salutation is appropriate but incomplete. <input type="checkbox"/> A subject line needed or added correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 2 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inside address is complete & accurate. <input type="checkbox"/> Salutation is appropriate & complete. <input type="checkbox"/> A subject line needed or added correctly. <input type="checkbox"/> No spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.
Content Organization & Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No organization pattern is apparent. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph order does not follow suggested format. <input type="checkbox"/> Message has enough missing or incorrect information to be ineffective in meeting the writer's goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is not appropriate to the writer's purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph order is close to the suggested model. <input type="checkbox"/> Two pieces of information are missing or incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is appropriate to the writer's purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph order is close to the suggested model. <input type="checkbox"/> One piece of information is missing or incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Organization is appropriate to the writer's purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph order follows the suggested model. <input type="checkbox"/> Message is complete and correct.
Closing, Signature, & other End Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More than two pieces are missing or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Two pieces are missing or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> One piece is missing or inaccurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Closing is appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Written & typed signatures are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Reference initials & enclosure reminder are included if needed.
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice is unprofessional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice is inappropriate for audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Writer sometimes uses action verbs. <input type="checkbox"/> Too much use of passive voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice is mostly appropriate for audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Writer uses action verbs. <input type="checkbox"/> Use of passive voice ONLY as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice is appropriate for audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Writer uses action verbs. <input type="checkbox"/> Use of passive voice ONLY as needed.
Sentences Fluency, Paragraphs, & Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 sentence fragments. <input type="checkbox"/> Message is lost in poor construction. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs do not follow suggested format. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors make message unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar & usage errors makes message unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Two sentence fragments. <input type="checkbox"/> Message is there, but underdeveloped. <input type="checkbox"/> Awkward paragraph construction clouds the message. <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 4 grammar & usage errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Some variation in sentence length. One fragment. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph divisions are somewhat effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Main purpose of the message is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 grammar & usage errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete sentences of varying length. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph divisions are effective. <input type="checkbox"/> Number of paragraphs fits suggested format. <input type="checkbox"/> Main purpose of the message is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> No spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar & usage are correct.