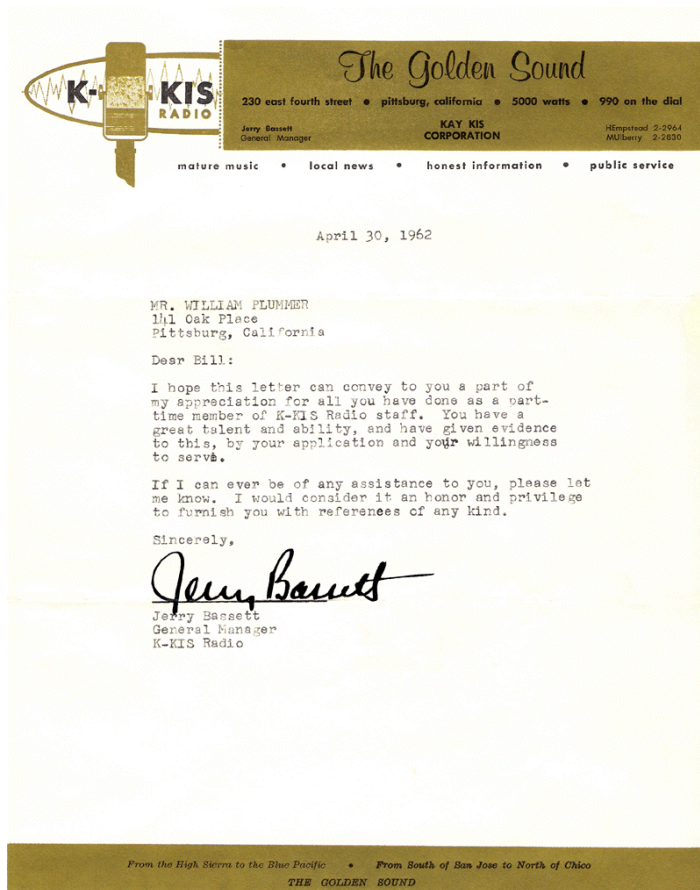


Chapter 16

Format of Business Letters



A business letter has a specific style, position and function. A letter is usually an organization's first visual contact with another organization or person, and makes an important impression



Appearance of a business Letter

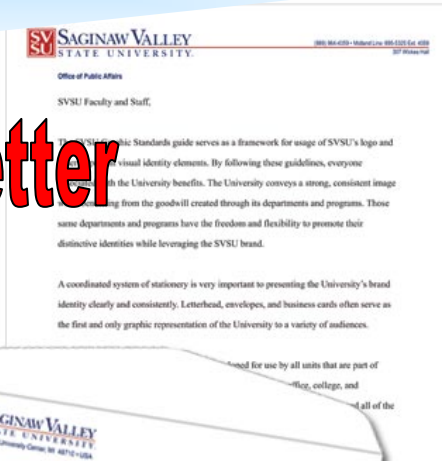
First impression of letter is often decisive. Everyone is attracted by a good, presentable appearance. The appearance of a letter depends on:



Appearance of a business Letter

Stationery: It must be of good quality. The envelope must be of the same quality paper with the same type of print as the letterhead. He typewriters and printers must be well maintained and good quality carbon paper must be used.

Typing: Typing must be neat, without cancellations or corrections. Suitable style should be selected



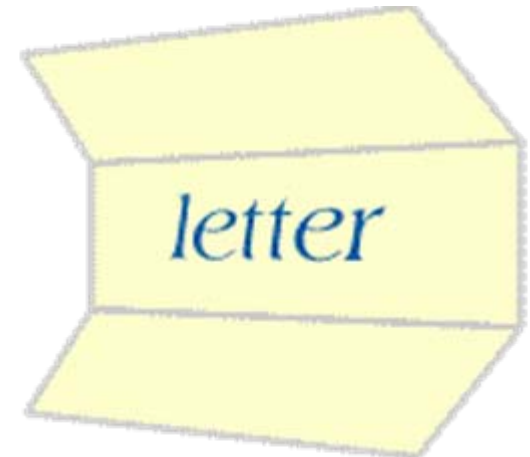
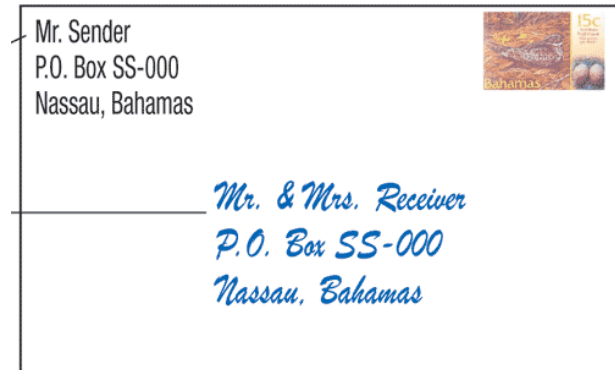


Appearance of a business Letter

Paragraphing: The composition should be into readable, logical and progressive units. Usually a letter has three to four paragraphs.

Folding: Folding of the letter must be clean. The size of folded letter must be such as to fit in the envelope leaving enough space for cutting the envelope open.

Address : It is typed halfway down and one-third in from the left. It is typed in block for





Printed Stationery

The quality of the stationary, the designing of the letterhead, the layout and printing/typing together make the first visual impression on the receiver



Printed Stationery

Letterheads : Most companies have letterheads of at least two sizes: the standard 8.5x11 inches for most letters and smaller 5.5x8 inches for short letters. Good quality white paper, simple elegant, stream lined designs should be used in letterheads. The letterhead includes the Company's name and business, emblem, postal, telegraphic and e-mail address, telephone, telex and fax numbers. If the Company's registered office is different from that one given at the top, it is printed at the bottom along the company's registered number.



Printed Stationery

Continuation sheets: It is used if the letter does not fit on a single sheet; it shows the name of the receiver, page number, date of the letter, printed company's logo and name, top margin of 1 inch and similar side and bottom margins of letterhead



Printed Stationery

Envelopes : Offices usually have envelopes with printed company's name and address at the left bottom. Window envelopes are most useful for sending out circulars

The quality and the color should match the letterhead.



Parts of a Letter

Convenience and custom have laid down certain requirements as parts of a letter. Some routine details are necessary in the make-up of a letter.



Parts of a Letter

Date

Inside Address

Salutation

Complimentary Close

Signature

Besides, the following are also included

- **Reference Number**
- **Delivery Note**
- **Subject Line**
- **Attention Line**
- **Enclosure**
- **Courtesy Copy**
- **Sender's & typist's initials**



Parts of a Letter

Date: It is compulsory and it is placed two line spaces below heading, on the right. In full block and NOMA styles, the date is at the left margin. In British practice, the date is written in the order of day, month, and year with no commas. In American practice, the date is written in the order of month, day, year with a comma separating the figure of the day from the figure of the year



Parts of a Letter

Inside address : It is the name and address (typed in block form) of the receiver as it appears on the envelope. The recipient's name should be exactly as they sign it in their letters. The practice of writing to before the address is outdated

For overseas, the name of the country should be written



Parts of a Letter

Reference number : It appears on the left on level with the date. Some companies include both, Cur ref. no. and Your ref. no. in their letter



Parts of a Letter

Special markings: If a letter is confidential, this is indicated above the inside address, either at the margin or in the centre. (either in all capitals or with initial capital and underlined.)



Parts of a Letter

Attention line: It is used only if, from previous communication you know the name of the person in the organization who is handling the matter about which you are writing. The attention line is placed after the inside address and before the salutation, either at the margin or in the centre. The salutation must match the first line of the inside address



Parts of a Letter

Subject line : It gives a brief indication of the subject of the letter. It adds to the clarity of the letter, especially if the letter is long. It helps to focus the reader's attention. It is also used for classifying and filing the letter.

When there is attention line, the subject line is placed after the salutation



Parts of a Letter

Salutation: The salutation begins at the margin, two line spaces below the inside address. It is followed by a comma. It is quite common, now, to address business letters to an official by name and designation



Parts of a Letter

Complimentary close: the complimentary close is written two line spaces below the last line of the text of the letter



Parts of a Letter

Signature: the signature is placed just below the complimentary close. The name of the signatory is typed three or four line spaces below. Letters with legal implications use the words Per pro or pp (per procuracionem) which means “on behalf of”.



Parts of a Letter

Reference section: The reference section includes: enclosures, names of the parties to receive copies, the type of delivery service to be used, and initials of the persons who dictated and typed the letter.



Parts of a Letter

Enclosures : These are related documents sent with a letter; bills, chouse, quotations, brochures, price lists etc

It is indicated by writing Enc(s) or Encls aat the bottom corner of the letter, after the signature.



Parts of a Letter

Copies: When a matter concerns more than the two parties, a copy of letters related to the matter is sent for information to the other parties who are concerned

It is indicated by writing cc



Parts of a Letter

Delivery service: The type of delivery service to be used is indicated as Air Mail, Registered Mail, Express Delivery

Initials: The dictator's and the typist's initials are placed at the bottom. The initials may be shown as PSW: or CRT gt or MRO/cs or any such style.



Parts of a Letter

Postscript: Postscript is a bit of writing, not more than three lines, added to the letter after the signature and after enclosures. It should never be used for adding something which was forgotten while preparing the letter. It can be used to add a friendly personal note to a formal letter. It can be used effectively in a sales letter to impress an “action incentive” sentence on the reader’s mind.



Styles of Layout

Layout means the design in which the different parts of the letter are placed on the letterhead



Styles of Layout

Full block form: This is the most modern style. There is no indentation from the left margin at all; every line, including the date and the complimentary close, begins at the left margin. The address has no punctuations at the end of the line. The date of a letter is an important item and is often referred to for many purposes. Quick reference to date and to signature in the filed letter is not possible in this form

Indented form: It is outdated now.



Styles of Layout

Modified block form: It eliminates the shortcomings of the full block style of the full block style by keeping the date and the complimentary close on the right in their usual position. The salutation and the complimentary close is followed by a comma. Its appearance is balanced and neat



Styles of Layout

Semi-indented form: it is called semi block form. It has the inside address in block form but the beginning of every paragraph is indented. This style is also getting outdated nowadays



Styles of Layout

Hanging indention form: the inside address is in block form. The date and the complimentary close are on the right. This style is adopted for sales letters, brochures and other documents in which striking appearance is useful. The opening line of every paragraph “hangs out” and can be used for high-lighting important points.



Styles of Layout

NOMA form: This is the most recent experiment in layout style. It is recommended by National Office Management Association of America . It has most of the features of full Block form. The special features of this form are: i) it has no salutation and complimentary close; ii) the subject line is in capital iii) numbered items of a list begin at the left margin iv) the writer's name and the title are typed in capitals in one line below the space for signature v) the typist's initials are in the left bottom corner.



An organization decides on its letter layout style and appearance after careful consideration and all typists are expected to conform to the standard of typing set up by the company.