BASIC LETTER PARTS

**Letterhead.** A letterhead contains the name and address of an organization or person. A variety of additional information can be included, such as the telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, list of company officers, and a logo. The letterhead, which is designed to stand out from the text of the letter, is usually preprinted and does not need to be keyed.

**Date.** The only acceptable date style for letters is month/day/year (November 14, 2009), with the month spelled out. Most word processing programs enter and update the date automatically if it is inserted using the Date feature. Key the date 2" from the top of the page, or a DS below a letterhead that is more than 2" deep.

**Letter address.** Key the receiver’s name and address SS, with a minimum of three lines and a maximum of six lines. If the default line spacing in your software is 1.15", you must SHIFT + ENTER after each line of the letter address in order to achieve single spacing. For U.S. addresses, the last line must contain only three elements: city (never abbreviated), state (always two-letter USPS abbreviation), and ZIP+4. The letter address should be the same as the delivery address on the envelope. Begin the address a QS below the date. Key a personal title (Ms., Mr., Mrs.) or a professional title (Dr., Senator) before the receiver’s name. Insert one space between the state and the ZIP code.

**Salutation.** Key the salutation (greeting) double space (one blank line) below the letter address. Only the title and last name appear in the salutation unless the title is not known and the gender of the addressee is difficult to determine—for example, Leslie Kennedy. Then the salutation would read Dear Leslie Kennedy.

### Example

![Diagram showing sample letter structure](image)

**Body.** Begin the body (message) of the letter a double space below the salutation. Single space each paragraph with a DS between paragraphs.

**Complimentary close.** Key the complimentary close (farewell) a double space below the body of the letter. If two words are used (Sincerely yours), capitalize only the first word.
Name of the writer. Key the name of the writer (sender) quadruple space below the complimentary close. Generally the personal title of the writer is not included; however, a title can precede the name if a female prefers (Mrs., Miss, Ms.) or if the gender of the writer is unclear (Mr. Leslie Kennedy). A business title or department title is keyed below the name of the writer.

Reference initials. If someone other than the writer keys the letter, add the keyboard operator’s initials in lowercase letters at the left margin a double space below the writer’s name, title, or department.

PERSONAL-BUSINESS LETTERS

A letter written by an individual concerning business of a personal nature is called a personal business letter. All the parts of a business letter are included, with one exception: The letterhead is replaced with a return address. A personal business letter is printed on plain paper with the writer’s address keyed 2" from the top of the page at the left margin. The return address consists of one line for the street address and one line for the city, state, and ZIP code. The date is keyed directly below the city, state, and ZIP code.

Example shown is opening lines for a letter not using a letterhead in block format. (Personal/Business Letter)

LETTER FORMATS

Business and personal-business letters are arranged in varying formats and styles. These variations are described below.

Margins. Letters are formatted with 1" left and right margins, a 2" top margin, and a 1" bottom margin. Instead of a 2" top margin, letters may be centered vertically using the Center Page feature.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Formats. Business letters are formatted in two basic styles: block and modified block.
Block format arranges all letter parts at the left margin. The paragraphs are not indented. Refer to the illustration of a personal-business letter in block format shown below.

Modified block format places the date and the closing lines (complimentary close, writer’s name, and title) beginning near or at the horizontal center of the page instead of at the left margin. The default tab nearest to the center may be used to place the date and closing lines. The first line of each paragraph may be blocked at the left margin or indented 0.5". See the illustration of a letter in modified block format shown below. This illustration contains several special business letter parts including a mailing notation, subject line, enclosure notation, and copy notation.

Punctuation styles. Two styles of punctuation are commonly used in business letters. Open punctuation has no punctuation mark after the salutation or complimentary close. Mixed punctuation contains a colon (:) after the salutation and a comma (,) after the complimentary close.

ADDITIONAL LETTER FEATURES
Some additional letter features that may be used are described below.

USPS letter address style. The letter address of a business or personal-business letter may be keyed in ALL CAPS with no punctuation if using the United States Postal Service style for the delivery (envelope) address.

Second-page heading. If a letter is longer than one page, a plain sheet of paper is used for the second and succeeding pages. Only the first page contains the sender’s letterhead. A second-page heading should be keyed 1" from the top of the page in block format, SS. Include the name of the addressee, the word Page followed by the page number, and the date. Place DS below the date before continuing the letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Margin is 1 inch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Barbara Powell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 22, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining paragraphs of the letter will be keyed here.

Widow/Orphan. At least two lines of a paragraph must be keyed at the bottom of the first page of a letter and at the top of the second page. Activate the Widow/Orphan feature from the drop down menu item Format, Paragraph, Line and Page Breaks to ensure proper breaks. This feature ensures that the first line of a paragraph does not appear by itself at the bottom of a page (orphan line) or the last line of a paragraph does not appear by itself at the top of a page (widow line).
Bullets and Numbering. Use the Bullets feature or Numbering feature to create bulleted or numbered lists. These features automatically format each listed item in hanging indent style (the second and succeeding lines align under the first letter of the first word).

Tables in letters. A table inserted in a letter should be placed even with the left and right margins of the letter or centered between the margins. Leave a blank line above and below the inserted table. Table gridlines may be shown or hidden.

Form letters. A form letter is a standard message sent to more than one addressee. Form paragraphs may be stored as macros (stored text) and played back when needed to create personalized form letters. Form letters can also be created using the Mail Merge feature of word processing programs.

ENVELOPES
Most word processing programs have an Envelope feature that will automatically format the placement of the return and letter addresses. However, because of printer issues, not all users are able to use the Envelope feature efficiently. Therefore, specific keying instructions are provided below for formatting envelopes.

- **Sender’s return address.** Key the return address in block style, SS, approximately 0.25" from the left and top margins of the envelope. Key the name, street address, city, state, and ZIP Code in three lines either in ALL CAPS or Initial Caps.
- **Receiver’s address.** Key the receiver’s address in block style, SS, and Initial Caps. You may use ALL CAPS if desired. Place the city, state, and ZIP Code (one space precedes the ZIP) on the last address line. Never abbreviate the name of a city or country.
- **International addresses.** Omit postal (ZIP) codes from the last line of addresses outside the U.S. Show only the name of the country on the last line, as shown below.

  Mr. Hiram Sanders  
  2121 Clearwater Street  
  Ottawa ON KIA OB1  
  CANADA

- **Spacing.** If not using the Envelope feature, tab over 2.5" for a small envelope (No. 6 3/4) and 4" for a large envelope (No. 10). Enter hard returns to place the first line of the delivery address approximately 2" from the top of the envelope.
- **Mailing and addressee notations.** Key a mailing notation (REGISTERED, SPECIAL DELIVERY) in ALL CAPS below the stamp, approximately 1/2" above the first line of the delivery address. Key an addressee notation (PERSONAL, CONFIDENTIAL) at the left margin a DS below the return address. If an attention line is used, key it as the first line of the delivery address.
Mr. Bill Eggert  
Enterprise High School  
3411 Churn Creek Road  
Redding, CA 96002

Dear Mr. Eggert:

For my project I chose to do something that I have not done before. I will be exploring herbal medicine as a positive alternative to prescription drugs. I feel drawn to this subject due to the overwhelming amount of herbs that are available. I want to know if they can do what expert’s claim they can do. By completing this project, I will have been exposed to a part of the medical field which I might learn to enjoy. I might even want to make a career out of it.

My research paper will consist of a history of herbal and the effectiveness of herbal medicine. I hope to be able to include a wide variety of herbs to cure various ailments, especially common ones. I will be using several home remedy and botany books for my reference materials. The Internet will also be used for some of my references.

My physical project will be directly involved with my research paper in the sense that I will job shadow in a health food store. While job shadowing I will learn how to use many forms of alternative medicine. My mentor will be Mrs. Jane Pryde, who sells herbs and does herbal consulting. The cost of my project will be relatively low, probably no more than fifty dollars. The time it will take to complete my project will be approximately twenty hours.

I understand plagiarism and its repercussions. I will credit all sources.

Sincerely,

David Blythe-Bettes
Mr. Jamison Cooper  
882 Elderberry Drive  
Fayetteville, NC 28311-0065  

Dear Mr. Cooper  

SELECTION OF EXCELLENT PRESENTERS  

Last week at our meeting, you mentioned several individuals you thought would be excellent presenters for the opening and closing sessions of next year’s convention. I accept your offer to contact them. When you contact them, please share with them the theme of our convention and determine what they would propose as an opening or closing session for our convention. Of course, we need to be concerned with the budget; please determine the fee they would charge.

The information will be needed before June 15 for our meeting. Your willingness to serve on this committee is greatly appreciated. I’ll look forward to seeing you in a couple of weeks.

Sincerely yours  

Susanne J. Warrens  
Program Chair  

A block format letter is enclosed so that you can compare the two formats. As you can see, either format presents an attractive appearance.