

Damascus University  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Department of English  
Third Year / Second Semester

## **Module: Writing for the Workplace**

### **Lecture 12**

#### **How to Write a Business letter**

Sometimes you need to write more formal letters. These types of letters are often called business letters and they follow a particular style or format. When you are working for a company, you should first check how that company writes business letters. If you find it difficult to start writing a letter, break it into smaller parts. You may find it easier to write the conclusion to your letter first. Do the parts you find easiest first.

In writing a business letter and you will need to pay attention to:

- the layout;
- supplying or requesting information precisely; and
- building good customer relations.

## Example of a business letter

	<i>Global Paper Ltd</i> <i>718 Castle Peak Rd, Tsuen Wan NT, Hong Kong</i> <i>Tel: 2345 6789</i> <i>Fax: 2345 6781</i>	<u>Sender's address:</u> optional; many businesses use company letterhead.
<u>Recipient's address:</u> It is best to write to a specific person at the company. Call the company if you do not know who to address the letter to. For international addresses type the name of the country in all upper case letters on the last line.	12 June 20XX  Michael Wong Sales Manager Startup Ltd 123 Middle Road TST Kowloon Hong Kong CHINA	<u>Date:</u> use full date
<u>Salutation</u>	Dear Mr Wong	
<u>Body:</u> Leave a line space between each paragraph.	With reference to our telephone conversation yesterday, I am writing to inform you that we will post six boxes of the required labels Ref. No. 101. They will arrive at your company on 20 June, as you requested.	<u>1st paragraph:</u> reference and reason for writing  <u>(2nd/3rd paragraphs:</u> details)
<u>Closing:</u> Leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature. Make sure you sign your letter.	I am enclosing a copy of the invoice. Please contact us again if we can help in any way.  Yours sincerely  <i>Arnold Brown</i>  Arnold Brown Global Paper Ltd Sales Manager  Enclosures	<u>Last paragraph:</u> closing remarks    <u>Enclosures:</u> If a document(s) is included in the correspondence, type 'Enclosures' one line below the closing. If you have included many enclosures, you may list the names of the documents.

## **Format and Font**

Times New Roman is the generally accepted font, although other fonts such as Arial may be used. Consider your audience when choosing a font. Do not use a mixture of fonts – simple is better. In general, do not use a font size smaller than 12 as it is hard to read.

## **Language**

Remember to keep the tone of the letter positive and polite. It is better to keep business letters short – no longer than one page. Keep sentences short too. Limit paragraphs to four or five lines.

In *the first paragraph*, write a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point. In *the second paragraph*, justify the importance of the main point. In *the third and subsequent paragraphs*, continue to justify the point with background information and supporting details. In *the closing paragraph*, restate the purpose of the letter and, in some cases, request some type of action.

## **Salutation**

- Dear Sir or Madam or Dear Sir/Madam If you do not know the name of the person
- Dear Prof., Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms Jones If you do know the name of the person
- Dear Michael If you know the person well
- Dear Pat Smith If you do not know the gender of the person
- Dear Ms Smith Use 'Ms' for a female unless you know the person specifically wants to be referred to as 'Miss' or 'Mrs'.

## **First Paragraph**

### **The Reference**

Thank you for your letter of April 3.

With reference to your letter of May 14, . . .

With reference to your phone call today, . . .

With reference to your advertisement in the South China Morning Post, . . .

### **The reason for writing**

I am writing to . . . (confirm, apologise for, to enquire about . . .)

Requesting      Could you possibly . . .

I would be grateful if . . .

Agreeing to requests

I would be delighted to . . .

Giving bad news

Unfortunately . . .

I am afraid that . . .

**Second and third paragraphs** (details regarding the reason for writing)

**Last paragraph**

Enclosing documents:

- I am enclosing . . .

Closing remarks:

- Thank you for your help.
- Please contact us again if you have any problems.
- Please contact us again if we can help in any way.

Reference to future contact:

- I look forward to hearing from you soon.
- I look forward to meeting you next Friday.
- I look forward to seeing you next Monday.

**Closing**

Finishing the letter

- Yours faithfully : When you don't know the person you are writing to
- Yours sincerely: When you know the person you are writing to
- Best wishes: If the person is a close business contact or friend
- Best regards
- Kind regards

This is all for this lecture. Any question please never hesitate to email me.

Thank you!

Stay home.. Stay safe!