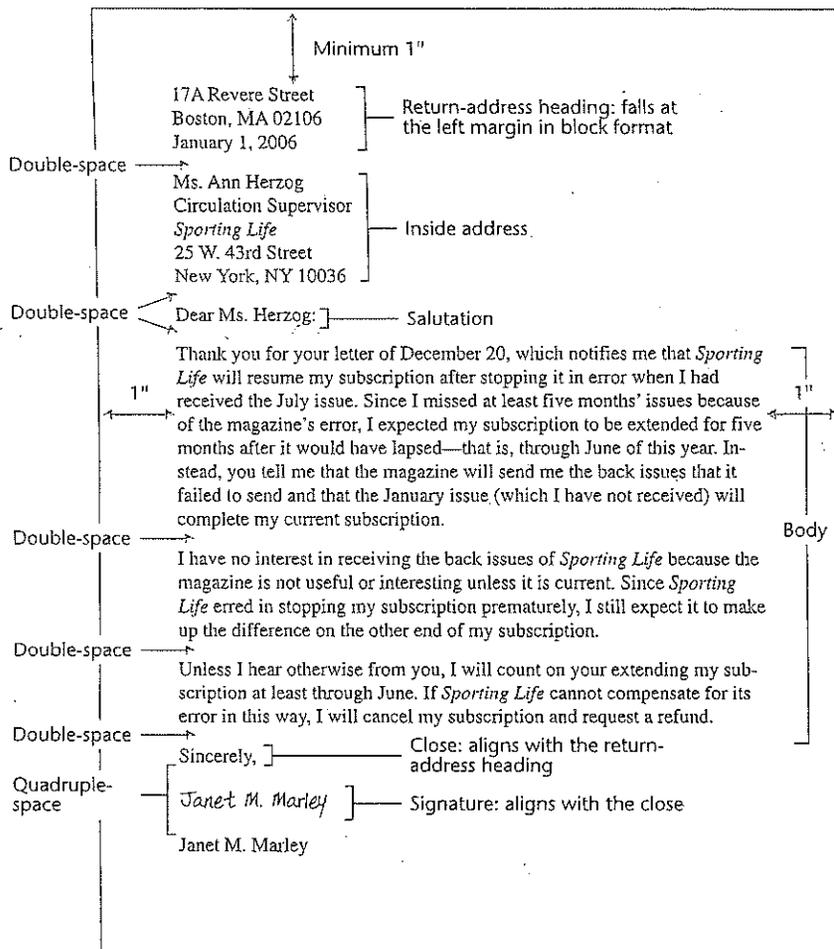


55a Writing business letters and memos

When you write in business, you are addressing busy people who want to see quickly why you are writing and how they should respond to you. A wordy letter or a memo with grammatical errors may prevent you from getting what you want, either because the reader cannot understand your wish or because you present yourself poorly.

Business letter (block style)



In all business writing, follow these general guidelines:

- State your purpose right at the start.
- Be straightforward, clear, concise, objective, and courteous.
- Observe conventions of grammar and usage, which make your writing clear and impress your reader with your care.

The formats of business letters and memos are fairly standardized and are thus expected by your correspondents.

1 Using a standard format for letters

Use either unlined white paper measuring 8½" × 11" or what is called letterhead stationery with your address printed at the top of the sheet. Type the letter single-spaced, with double space between elements, on only one side of a sheet.

The two most common forms for business letters—the full block and the modified block—are illustrated opposite and on page 846, respectively. Annotations on the samples indicate spacing, margins, and other aspects of format.

■ The letter

Return-address heading Unless you're using letterhead stationery, the return-address heading of the letter gives your address (but not your name) and the date. If you are using letterhead, you need add only the date.

Inside address The inside address shows the name, title, and complete address of the person you are writing to. (See p. 842 for abbreviations of state names.)

Salutation The salutation greets the addressee. Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person. (Call the company or department to ask whom to address.) If you can't find a person's name, then use a job title (*Dear Human Resources Manager, Dear Customer Service Manager*) or use a general salutation (*Dear Smythe Shoes*). Use *Ms.* as the title for a woman when she has no other title, when you don't know how she prefers to be addressed, or when you know that she prefers to be addressed as *Ms.* If you know a woman prefers to be addressed as *Mrs.* or *Miss*, use the appropriate title.

Body The body of the letter, containing its substance, begins at the left margin in both letter styles. Instead of indenting the first line of each paragraph, place an extra line of space between paragraphs so that they are readily visible.

Close The letter's close should reflect the level of formality in the salutation. For formal letters, *Cordially*, *Yours truly*, and

4222 Clinton Way
North Hollywood, CA 91606
April 12, 2012

BSIS Committee Members
Mississippi State University
P.O. Box 5247
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is to request acceptance into the BSIS degree program at Mississippi State University. I have selected Communication, Psychology and General Technology for my three emphasis areas.

I began my academic career at Mississippi State in 1988, and was not able to complete my degree. I have found success over the last 18 years as a paramedic at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo. My plan is to complete the BSIS degree requirements and apply to graduate school, seeking a master's degree in education. My career goals include a transition into education and using my years of experience educating the next generation of EMS professionals.

The Communication emphasis area will allow me to improve as a lecturer and communicator. I have often built lectures with a great topic or title in mind, not focusing on the target audience or even the message I hoped to deliver. My two current Communication classes, Principles of Public Relations and Persuasion, have already taught me more than I had learned in 15 years of trial and error.

The Psychology emphasis area might seem odd at first in comparison with my other two emphasis areas, but due to budget cuts at most state supported mental hospitals and outpatient treatment centers many patients with behavioral needs seek out EMS and emergency rooms as their primary care providers. This emphasis area will give me insight into the different diagnosis to teach future providers and improve my own knowledge when I encounter patients' suffering from psychological disorders.

The General Technology emphasis area may be the most important concentration for me to pursue. If my plans are to teach the next generation, then I have to be able to educate them on their level and through mediums they understand. Technology rarely goes backwards and social media has already changed the way we communicate.

I look forward to hearing from the committee and your decision on my petition to the BSIS degree program.

Sincerely,

(Your signature – Must be handwritten, not e-form)

(Your Typed Name)

4222 Clinton Way
North Hollywood, CA 91606
April 18, 2012

BSIS Committee Members
Mississippi State University
PO Box 5247
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear Committee Members:

Please accept my attached petition for acceptance in the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies degree program at Mississippi State University. The emphasis areas I am requesting are Communication and General Business.

Currently, I am working in the Human Resources department of my local hospital as the Human Resources Coordinator. My career goals include expanding the duties and responsibilities in my current position and possibly becoming a member of the Marketing and Public Relations department of this facility in the future.

The Communication emphasis area of this degree program will assist me in performing my duties as HR Coordinator by increasing my skills as an interviewer for new hires, enhancing my performance as an instructor of Targeted Selection Interviewing workshops, and strengthening my ability to relay messages to employees through written and spoken channels. These skills will also help me to advance into the Marketing and Public Relations departments of this facility by improving my writing capacity for newsletter and intranet page publications and demonstrating my passion for public relations and promotions in connection with planning for community and employee events.

The General Business emphasis area will assist me in my current duties by expanding my knowledge and understanding of general insurance principles. As an assistant to the Benefits Coordinator in this department, these particular areas are already helping me in my interactions with employees, regarding their insurance and other benefit questions.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Your signature – Must be handwritten, not e-form)

[Your Typed Name]