

## Guidelines for Writing a Professional Letter

**With today's modern technology, it is possible you will not need to write a business letter until the end of the project when you write a thank you letter to everyone who has helped you succeed.**

- Begin with your address. (Do not include your name.) Leave one blank line after the outside address.
- The date line is next. Use the date the letter is done and ready to send. Use standard American format. Month, day, year. Leave one blank line after the date.
- Recipient's address. Make every effort to find out the name of the person to whom you are writing. Do not use a name for the inside address if you do not know a specific name. Leave one blank line after the inside address.
- Salutation: Begin with: "Dear Mr. Smith:" or "Good afternoon Ms. Jones:" If you do not know the person's name use his or her title instead: "Dear Store Manager:" or "Dear Purchasing Director:" If you do not know and cannot (though you need to make every effort to do so) find out name or title, the appropriate generic greeting is: "Dear Sir or Madam:". Use a colon after the salutation, NOT a comma.
- Body of the letter:
  - The first paragraph should be about who you are and why you are sending the letter.
  - The second paragraph should contain the information you are providing or the request you are making.
  - If you are including anything else in the envelope besides the letter, use a third paragraph to explain this additional information.
- Final statement: Start by thanking the receiver for his or her time. Include an accurate follow-up statement such as, "I will contact you again with further information," or "I look forward to hearing your ideas." Leave one blank line after the final statement.
- The closing:
  - Yours faithfully, (If you do not know the name of the person to whom you are writing)
  - Yours sincerely, (If you know the name of the person to whom you are writing)
  - Use a comma after the closing.
  - Leave enough room after the closing to sign your name, and then type your name.
- Enclosures: In addition to using a third body paragraph, type the word "Enclosures" one line after your typed name.
- **Format**
  - The letter should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 point font.
  - Use block style: All lines should be left justified, with NO indentions. Single space. Put an extra space between paragraphs and after the other segments of the letter as indicated above.
  - Write the letter using all the conventions and rules of proper English you would use when writing an essay for English class. Check, double check, and check again to make sure the letter is perfect. You will not impress anyone with spelling and grammatical errors.