



FORMAL LETTERS AND OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION -



PART – 1

FORMAL LETTERS

GOALS

Learners will be able to-

1. Improve their business communication skills.
2. Understand the importance of formal letters in business communication.
3. Become familiar with the various types of formal letters.
4. Explore the appropriate language and format associated with a formal letter.
5. Express their ideas clearly.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Differentiate business letters from other formal letters like letter to the editor and job application.
- ◆ Understand the subject matter carefully and include relevant information pertaining to the issue in the letter.
- ◆ Organise content logically and systematically.
- ◆ Use proper format while writing formal letters.
- ◆ Write letters using appropriate language and style.
- ◆ Practice writing different types of formal letters.



INTRODUCTION

Letters are a traditional and popular method of communication. A letter is a written message which is sent from one party to another and contains important information. Letters perform the function of bringing friends or relatives closer together, enhancing professional relationships and providing a means of self-expression. There are two types of letters, i.e. formal letters and informal letters.

Informal Letters

Informal letters are letters written to people we are familiar with, like relatives and friends. They are used for casual and personal communication. While writing informal letters we can make use of a personal and emotional tone. The language and tone of the letter depends on the level of comfort and familiarity between the sender and the recipient. There is no specific format prescribed for writing informal letters.

Formal Letters

Formal letters are used for official and professional communication. They are written with a particular, well-defined objective or set of objectives in mind and not for the sake of arbitrary correspondence. As opposed to informal letters, there is a manner prescribed for writing formal letters. These letters are concise and written in a specific format using formal language. The term formal letter encompasses any letter written for a formal purpose, whether that be a recommendation letter, a complaint letter, a job application, or a letter to the editor. Formal letters are used mainly for two purposes. The first is that they open channels for communication which will aid you in receiving a desirable response while solving a problem, making preparations, and inquiring about products and services. Moreover, they can be used as official records of the communication between two parties, so that if there is a dispute or confusion, you can support your case with physical proof.

Formal letters can be categorized into the following:

- (a) Business or official letters (for making enquiries, registering complaints, asking for and giving information, placing or cancelling orders, sending replies in response to enquiries or complaints, etc.)
- (b) Letters highlighting civic problems (letter to the editor, or letters to concerned authorities regarding civic problems)
- (c) Job applications

In this unit we will focus on business or official letters only.

Points to remember while drafting formal letters

- Use the **specified format**.
- **Leave a line/additional space between paragraphs** since no indentation is followed.
- State your **reason for writing in your first paragraph**. Your objective while composing a formal letter should be to present the key facts as quickly and as simply as you can.
- **Keep the language simple**. Formal does not mean complicated. Use simple language that is easy to read and understand.
- At all times **add details and information** that will make the addressee's (or receiver's) task easy. For example: If you are writing to an organization to apply for a job, mention the post you are applying for along with your qualifications and experience. If you are writing to a service centre, mention specifics such as model number, year of purchase, invoice number, etc. about the product along with a description of the problem you are facing.
- If you wish to make a reference to previous letters or conversations, payments, etc. provide details such as date, invoice number, quotations, cheque numbers, etc.
- Always **be gentle and courteous** while directing the receiver's course of action.
- Do not forget to **be polite** even if it is a complaint letter you are writing.
- Check to ensure that your **letter** is free from any mistakes, i.e. grammatical or spelling.

Format of Formal Letter

Sender's Address	R-27, Block - A Greater Kailash Pune - 56																		
Date	17 May, 20XX																		
Designation/Name of Addressee	The Manager / Mr. / Ms.																		
Address of the Addressee	Shrishti Enterprises 247, Okhla Industrial Area New Delhi -25																		
Salutation	Sir/Ma'am																		
Subject	Placing an Order for Office Furniture																		
Content : Introduction	After going through your catalogue of office furniture, I wish to place an order for the following items for our office.																		
Body	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S. No.</th> <th>Item</th> <th>Quantity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Chairs (Steel)</td> <td>25 Pieces</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Tables (Wooden)</td> <td>15 Pieces</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Stool (Wooden)</td> <td>20 Pieces</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Computer Table</td> <td>10 Pieces</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Filing Cabinets</td> <td>05 Pieces</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	S. No.	Item	Quantity	1.	Chairs (Steel)	25 Pieces	2.	Tables (Wooden)	15 Pieces	3.	Stool (Wooden)	20 Pieces	4.	Computer Table	10 Pieces	5.	Filing Cabinets	05 Pieces
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5.	Filing Cabinets	05 Pieces																	
Conclusion	All the items should be as per the specifications mentioned in your quotation. Substandard material will be returned. The delivery should be made before May 25, 20XX failing which the order will stand cancelled. Please send the bill after deducting the discount as applicable. As agreed upon earlier, payment of the bill will be made by cheque in favour of the firm within 10 days after the delivery of items.																		
Complimentary Close	Yours truly / sincerely																		
Signature	Rohan Sinha																		
Designation of Sender (if applicable)	Manager KD Infotech																		

Sender's Address

The sender's complete address or contact details must be added at the top. If you are making use of the letterhead of the company, then contact details will be present on top of the letter.

Date

It is important to add the dates because, if you want to communicate further then adding the date can make it easy for you keep a tab on your letters.

Salutation

The salutation is an important part of the letter and must be added at the beginning.

- Dear Sir or Ma'am

If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use this. However, it is always advisable to try and find out the name of the person you are writing to.

- Dear Mr. Mudliar

If you know the name, use the title (i.e. Mr. Miss., Mrs., Ms, Dr., etc) along with the surname only.

Subject

The subject is entered immediately after the salutation. It is a brief statement of the issue or matter the letter is related to. It must attract the attention of the receiver and help him understand quickly what the letter is going to be about. Examples: Placing an order for library books; Application for the post of Assistant Manager; Complaint regarding incorrect billing; Enquiry about exchange policy; etc.

Content

- a) Introduction - The introductory paragraph of a formal letter should always be written in a concise manner. It should quickly and simply summarize the point that you want the reader to focus or act on. The sooner you do this, the better.
- b) Body – The body of the letter should detail the key points or the message you want to convey. Add all the required details but don't exaggerate. Use simple language that is easy to read and understand.
- c) Conclusion – The conclusion is a declaration of the writer's purpose of writing, expectations from the receiver, what he thinks the next step should be and further actions that he may take. Moreover, the writer should always hope for a positive reaction or reply and must use terms like 'Thanking you', 'With warm regards', etc. before signing off.

Examples:

The concluding lines for a job application may be: 'I will be readily available for a personal interaction any time as per your convenience, in case my candidature is considered for the aforesaid post.'

or

The concluding lines for a letter of complaint may be worded as follows: 'It is apparent from the condition of the machine that it is a defective piece. Since the machine is in the guarantee period, I would like it to be replaced with a new one, but of the same model at the earliest.'

Complimentary Close

A complimentary close is the term prior to your signature in a letter. This sign-off phrase shows your respect and appreciation for the person who is considering the request in your letter. The following options are all good ways to close a formal letter:

- Yours respectfully
- Yours sincerely
- Yours truly
- With appreciation
- With sincere appreciation
- With sincere thanks



TYPES OF BUSINESS OR OFFICIAL LETTERS

1. Letters of Enquiry

A letter of enquiry is one of the most important types of business letters. These letters are written to gather information from various sources about people seeking jobs, prices of services and products, etc. They help the receiver decide whether they should give jobs and promotions, grant credits or enter into contracts. They may also be written to third parties asking for information about jobs or about organizations wishing to build a business relationship.

When writing a letter of enquiry, you should:

- Give a brief introduction about yourself with the name of your organization.
- Provide the details about the subject of inquiry.
- Present queries in bullet points if you require a lot of information.
- Mention the deadline by when you require the information.

Sample

Zest Designs
F- 671, AH - Block
Jangpura
New Delhi - 18

29 October, 20XX

Proprietor
Creative Catering
59, Kailash Colony
New Delhi- 32

Dear Mr. Khan

Subject: Enquiry about catering services

With reference to your advertisement dated October 20, 20XX, we wish to enquire about your catering services. Our organization is celebrating its 50th foundation anniversary in the coming month and we are looking for somebody who would cater for our celebration dinner.

We are expecting at least 500 guests and employees during the said event. It will be a formal event and we will need full catering services that include several courses, desserts, and waiters and hosts.

Kindly provide us with details about the following:

- Whether your catering service has the ability to handle a lavish celebration with a large audience such as ours.
- Whether waiters and hosts are provided by you
- Offers and discounts available
- The menu options and charges
- If there are any additional charges levied for linens, centerpieces, etc.

We shall be grateful if you could furnish the above mentioned details along with your quotations as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Ms. Sadhna Kakkar

Administrator
Zest Designs

2. **Order Letters**

An order letter is written by a buyer to the seller requesting him to deliver goods. These letters include three major types of information.

1. *Details about the item or product being ordered:* Complete information and specifications of the goods ordered must be provided in an order letter. Such information includes the followings:
 - Name of product
 - Name of brand
 - Unit price
 - Quantity
 - Other specifications (such as catalog number, model number, colour, size, weight, etc.) if required
2. *Information relating to shipping:* In absence of shipping information, misunderstanding can arise between buyer and seller. Shipping information may include the followings:
 - Desired receipt date
 - Desired shipping location
 - Mode of shipping (rail, road, or waterways)
3. *Information relating to payment:* Mode of payment must be clearly indicated. The seller will accept the order letter only when both agree to the terms and conditions of payment. Payment information includes the following:
 - Mode of payment (cash, cheque, draft)
 - Payment date

Sample:

APS School
Kochi

12 June 20XX

Best Sports & Co.
21, Mall Road
Chennai -12

Subject : Placing an order for sports equipment

Dear Sir

As discussed telephonically, we wish to place a bulk order for the supply of the following sports equipments for our school.

S. No.	ITEM	QUANTITY	SPECIFICATIONS
1.	Basket ball	1 dozen	Cosco, No.6
2.	Football	1 dozen	Cosco, No.18
3.	Badminton net	4 units	Nivea
4.	Hockey stick	1 dozen	Alfa Hockey
5.	Badminton racket	2 dozen	Carlton gpx – 11
6.	Cricket sets	5 sets	GM apex

The above mentioned equipment should reach us latest by 15 July 20XX. You are requested to ensure that high quality products are supplied. The initial up-front payment of 20% is enclosed (cheque no.124321 for an amount Rs. 15,000/-). As discussed telephonically, the balance payment will be made at the time of delivery in the form of a demand draft after adjusting the applicable discount.

An early delivery would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely
John Mathews.
(Principal)

3. Letters of Complaint

In the business world, where selling and providing services to fulfill needs of customers plays an important role, there will also be scope for complaints raised by customers due several reasons. A letter of complaint letter enables us to notify an individual, company or business that we are dissatisfied with a product purchased or a service received from them. A complaint letter can be written in an individual capacity or on behalf of a company. Writing a compliant letter is an effective and professional way to get the problems resolved.

While writing a letter of complaint, you should:

- Give a **clear and detailed description of the problem** you are facing and what you want done (i.e. the outcome).
- **Include important dates.** It is imperative that you mention the date on which you placed an order, purchased the goods or services and when the problem occurred. If you are following up on a previous complaint that you made, you may even need to include the date on which you made the first complaint.
- Give details of what **action you have taken** up till now to solve the problem and **what you plan to do** if the problem is not resolved.
- **Ask for a response.** Give the seller a reasonable time limit to respond to your request, but state with clarity that you expect a response from them.
- **Attach a copy of any supporting relevant documentation** such as a receipt or invoice.
- Never make personal accusations/allegations.
- Avoid discussing any other concern besides the complaint issue.

Sample Complaint letter

XYZ Corporation
Rajeev Chowk
Delhi

15 December, 20XX

The General Manager
Sales and Purchase Division
ABC Electronics
Bailey Road
Ghaziabad

Dear Sir/Madam

Subject: Complaint against the order no. S/N-115

This is with reference to Order no. S/N 115 made on December 1, 20XX. The order comprised six 2 tonne split air-conditioners of XXX brand and four 1.5 tonne window air-conditioners of XYZ brand. As per the agreement, the products were to be delivered within ten days of order and a representative was to be sent for installation and demo. Unfortunately, only half the order has been delivered and no representative has visited for installation or demo.

The fact that you have taken undue time and have not yet delivered the order, has caused us great embarrassment and inconvenienced our clients. In addition we have received no correspondence from your side explaining the delay.

Kindly ensure that the remaining items of the order are delivered to us before December 20, 20XX failing which payment will be stopped or the order cancelled.

I sincerely request you to look into the matter and do the needful as soon as possible.

Thanks and Regards.

Ashita Bhargava

Sr. Manager
Operations and Admin Department

4. Reply to Letter of Complaint

The way a firm/business responds to complaints and unhappy customers impacts its reputation more than most other things. Customer service has always been an important part of developing brand loyalty. With the increasing competition in the market, it's becoming even more critical for companies to provide great customer service.

While responding to complaints made by customers, it is important that you:

- Address clearly and specifically the problems and issues brought up by the customer.
- Acknowledge and apologise for any error that occurred on your end.
- Explain to the customer exactly what you plan to do or may have already done to resolve the problem.
- Assure the customer that he will never experience such problems in the future and propose how you will improve his experience.

Customers do not accept vague responses to their complaints. You may even lose clients or customers if they feel that their complaints are being brushed off; therefore, it is of extreme importance that you are very specific and clear while responding to letters of complaint.

Sample

ABC Electronics
Bailey Road
Ghaziabad

16 December, 20XX

Sr. Manager
Operations and Admin Department
XYZ Corporation
Rajeev Chowk
Delhi

Dear Ms. Bhargava

Subject : Reply to complaint against order no. S/N-115

This is in regard to your order no. S/N -115 which you placed with our company on December 1, 20XX. The order comprised six 2 tonne split air-conditioners of XXX brand and four 1.5 tonne window air-conditioners of XYZ brand.

We sincerely apologize to you for the delay in delivery of the products you ordered with us. Due to problems with supply from the manufacturers' end, this inconvenience has been caused to you. We are also flooded with a large number of unexpected orders this month leading to this delay.

We are trying our best to minimize the delay as much as possible to reduce your trouble. We promise that your shipment will be delivered before December 20, 20XX.

You have been a loyal and supportive client of our company for years, and we are grateful to you. As a small token of honor and as a mark of apology we offer 10% discount to you on your next purchase order with us. Whenever you place your next order with our company, you can avail this discount on the final bill value.

To ensure that a similar problem does not occur in the future again, we have taken all precautionary steps. Once again we apologize to you for the inconvenience caused to you. We would appreciate your support on this matter.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Siddhartha Sapra
General Manager
Sales and Purchase Division

5. Promotion Letters

Promotional content refers to letters written to customers primarily to apprise them of some new development, like opening of a new branch, offers an deals extended by them, or new facilities available. They may even be used to inform customers of new schemes or upgradation from a normal to a privileged category, or to offer promotional discounts.

How to write promotional content

- Adhere to business English.
- Avoid fancy jargon.
- Text should be to the point and discuss only promotions.
- Personal topics should not be included.
- Subject should be clear and precise.

Sample Promotion letter

XYZ Bank
56 Videocon Towers
Prashant Lok
Mumbai -2

10 December, 20XX

Chief Finance Officer
Arihant Corporation Ltd
Sarojini Nagar
Delhi -38

Dear Sir

Subject: New branch at XYZ Nagar

We are happy to announce the grand opening of our bank's 100th branch in XYZ Nagar, New Delhi.

As a privileged customer, we are pleased to offer you extra benefits for an account opening in the new branch.

The new branch has three ATM machines and locker facility. In lieu of our long term association, we would not charge you any fees for locker facility.

Kindly visit the branch. Contact details are given below:

87, XYZ Nagar
Just 2 km from main bus stop.
Ph: 011-25590000

Yours sincerely,
Sudhir Kumar
(Branch Manager)

6. Sales Letters

Sales letters are an important means of business communication and are written to publicise and ultimately sell a product or a service to the consumers.

Benefits of Sales Letters

- Help in sales promotion
- Help in presenting introductory offers
- Strengthen business ventures and partnerships

- Highlight the importance of customers
- Makes it easy to understand facts and figures

Tips to Write Sales letter

- Use formal language; spoken English and slangs should be avoided
- Salutations should be business like
- Content should be sales specific
- Extra details/information should not be included
- Personalized comments should not be included
- Keep things short and crisp
- For a new product launch, mention its features, uses, benefits
- Pay attention to the target audience, each letter might need a different phrasing

Sample Sales Letters

Kalu Sarai,
New Delhi

10 December, 20XX

Mr. Akbar
Director, Sales and Marketing
XYZ Corporation

Dear Sir,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your business with our organization. It has always been a pleasure working with you.

I would like to inform you that the 1800 units of machinery ordered, will be delivered as per the mutually decided date. In addition, our experts would come to install the machinery and give a detailed demo of its working. We would also provide a free service for the next two years, taking care of any wear and tear or product damage. The product has two year warranty period.

For any other query regarding the machinery ordered and its functioning, please feel to contact me. We would be happy to serve you at the earliest.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Khan,
Sr. Manager, Sales and Marketing, Drive Pvt. Ltd.
Ph: 123456789

7. Recovery Letters

Recovery letters are addressed to customers or clients from whom money needs to be collected for the goods or services provided to them. The intent behind writing such letters is to 'recover' money without annoying or alienating the customers. Such a letter will include detailed information regarding the amount of outstanding payment and the last date for the payment of the outstanding amount. It must also detail the

legal action that could be taken in the event of further delay or non-payment of dues. One must remember that the language used while writing recover letters must be polite, so as not to offend the customer and to ensure that future transactions with him are not adversely affected.

Tips to Write Recovery Letters

- Use polite language, as in a gentle reminder.
- Accusatory or threatening language should be used only when things are beyond control.
- State the reason for dispute, error, pay back.
- State the legal action that could possibly be taken.
- Do not use official recovery letters to vent out personal enmity or hatred.
- Keep the language formal and business oriented.

Sample Recovery letter

XYZ Bank
PP Towers
Tirumalai
Tamil Nadu

30 June, 20XX

Manager,
Tirumala Corporation
Tirumalai,
Tamil Nadu

Dear Mrs. Ved Lakshmi ,

SUBJECT: Pending dues

This letter is a gentle reminder for the payback of the loan amount of Rs 4 crores that your company have taken from our bank in June last year. As per the loan guidelines, on completion of twelve months you would need to pay back the loan with appropriate interest. As the payment is due since long, we would appreciate if you send the cheque immediately.

I request you to kindly do the needful within the next six working days, failing which strict legal action will be taken.

Kindly acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Thanking You

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Anil Jain
Manager