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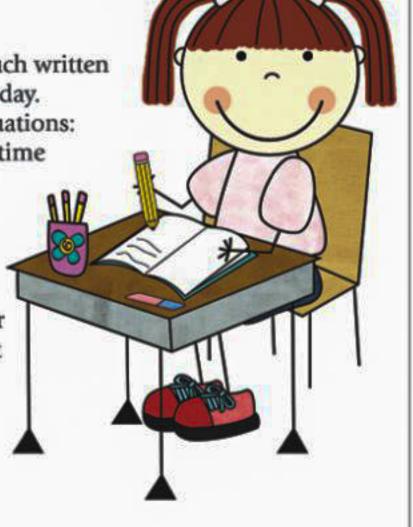


Write A Letter

Introduction

Writing a letter may seem like a lost art since so much written communication is accomplished through e-mail today. However it is still a skill that is useful in certain situations: in business (like a cover letter to a resume') or any time you would like to be more formal. There are many different types of letters, each appropriate for different purposes.

Many of us hesitate to write a letter, feeling that we may not know where to begin, or the 'proper' or 'correct' way to write it. It can feel intimidating, but shouldn't be, since it is simply putting your thoughts down on paper. Think of a letter as simply your thoughts in written form.



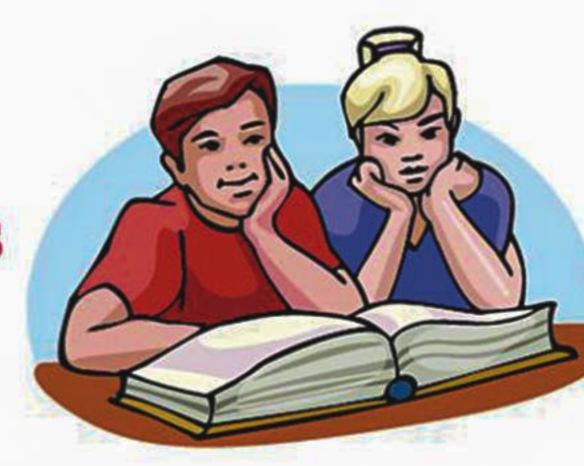
Getting Started

Before you get started, you'll need to decide what kind of letter you want to write. You'll need to think about three main things: 1.) the type of letter (personal or business); 2.) the intended audience; and, 3.) the purpose of the letter.

Two of the easiest letters to start with are a personal (friendly) letter and a thank-you letter. Other common types of letters include recommendation and cover letters.

Once you've decided on the type of letter you want to write, you'll need to think about the parts of that letter. Depending on the type of letter, it can be very simple, such as a short personal note or thank-you letter. Others, such as reference or recommendation letters, will be a bit more complex.

Books Resources



Books

Writing to Others - Will give you practice with everyday writing in real-life situations. Includes lessons on writing notes and invitations, business letters and resumes, want ads, e-mails, blogs, and more! Published by New Readers' Press.

Letter-Writing Made Easy Vols. 1 & 2 -- Includes hundreds of ready-to-use samples for personal and business letters. Published by Santa Monica Press.

Websites

www.bestsampleletters.com www.letterwritingguide.com

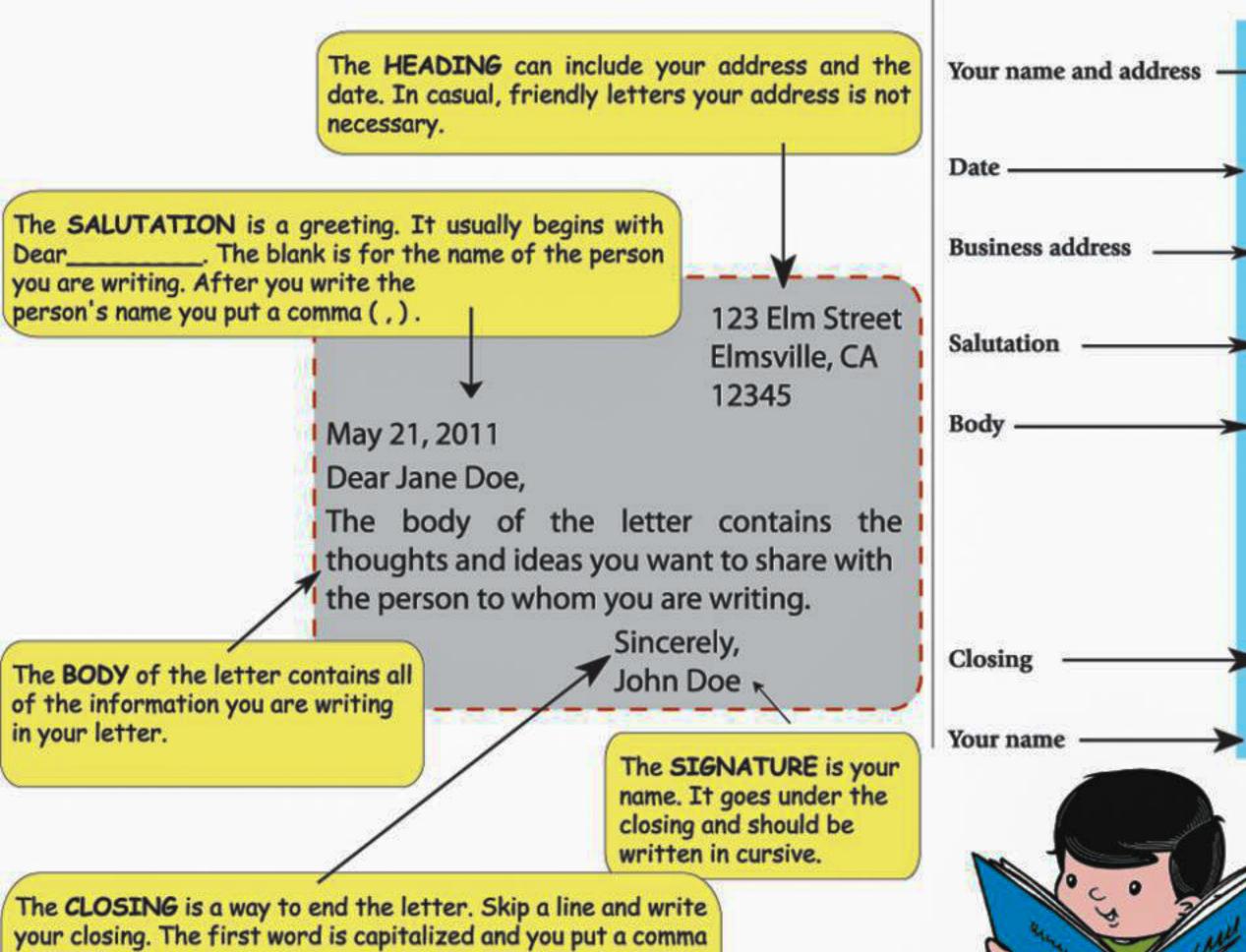


Key Vocabulary

Vocabulary may vary depending on the type of letter you are writing, but here are some of the most common terms used to describe the different parts of a letter:

- Heading: The heading can include the address and the date. In casual, friendly letters, your address is usually not necessary.
- · Salutation (Greeting): The salutation usually starts with Dear and is followed by the person's name and then a comma.
- Body: The body is the main text of your letter. It contains the thoughts and ideas you want to share.
- Closing: The closing is a way to end the letter and to say good-bye. Common closing expressions include Sincerely, Love, or Your Friend.
- Signature: The signature is the final part of a personal or friendly letter. It is your
- name written directly beneath the closing. It is usually written in cursive writing.

Parts of a Friendly or Personal Letter



after the last word. Here are some examples of common

READING PRACTICE

- Sampler. Learn by reading sample letters. There are numerous sample letters available online. Check out www.bestsampleletters.com or www.letterwritingguide.com and print out a selection. See if you can figure out 1.) the type of letter (personal or business); 2.) the intended audience (private? public? other?); and, 3.) the purpose of the letter.
- Newspaper. Try reading the 'Letters to the Editor' section in your local newspaper. Why was the letter written? Did the writer have a concern? a complaint? a compliment? or some other reason? If you were the editor, how would you respond?
- Historic Letters. At your local library, you can find books containing collections of letters written by famous people in history. Here is one suggestion: Posterity: Letters of Great Americans to Their Children by Dorie McCullough Lawson. Consider writing a letter to a special child in your life. What would you say?
- Writer to Writer. Ask your local literacy program or literacy network for a copy of a 'Writer to Writer' booklet. The Writer to Writer booklets are collections of letters written by adult learners to authors, sharing the impact of those authors' books on their lives. Many of these letters as well as video footage of adult learners reading their letters is available at the California Library Literacy Services webite: http://libraryliteracy.org/w2w/index.html.

WRITING PRACTICE

- Language Experience Letter. If you are a beginning writer, a good way to get started writing letters is by using the Language Experience Approach (LEA). When using this method, you tell your tutor what you want your letter to say, and your tutor will do the actual writing for you. Then you will re-read the letter together and make adjustments as needed.
- Journal. Another good way to get started writing letters is by using a journal. Simply write your journal entry in the form of a short personal letter. You and your tutor can both keep journals and write letters to each other (at home or in the tutoring session) then swap the journals and respond to the other person's entry. This is called a dialogue journal.
- Friendly Letter. Once you've gotten a little bit of practice writing letters, you may want to try writing a short friendly letter to a friend or family member. Remember, writing a letter is simply a way of putting your thoughts on paper. (See the samples on page 5.)
- Enter Writer to Writer. Think about participating in the Writer to Writer Challenge by writing a letter to the author of your favorite book, telling him or her about the impact the book has made on your life. Ask the Literacy Coordinator of your local library literacy program for details about how to get started or go to http://libraryliteracy.org/w2w/index.html.
- Getting Started. Once you've decided what kind of letter to write, start small. Your first letter doesn't need to be lengthy, just a few short sentences will do.

Here is a sample of a very simple personal, hand-written letter:

How are you? I am writing to tell you about my vacation. I went to Hawaii with my cousin. It was really fun. We went swimming every day. The weather was great! Next week, I am going to San Francisco with my family. I hope you are having a fun summer, too.

Your friend,

Dear Sue,

John

Here is another simple letter - a thank-you letter:

May 21

June 30

Dear Lisa,

Thank you so much for the red scarf. It means so much to get a handmade gift. It looks great with my jeans and white shirt. It will keep me nice and warm this winter. It was very thoughtful of you to remember my birthday.

Your friend,

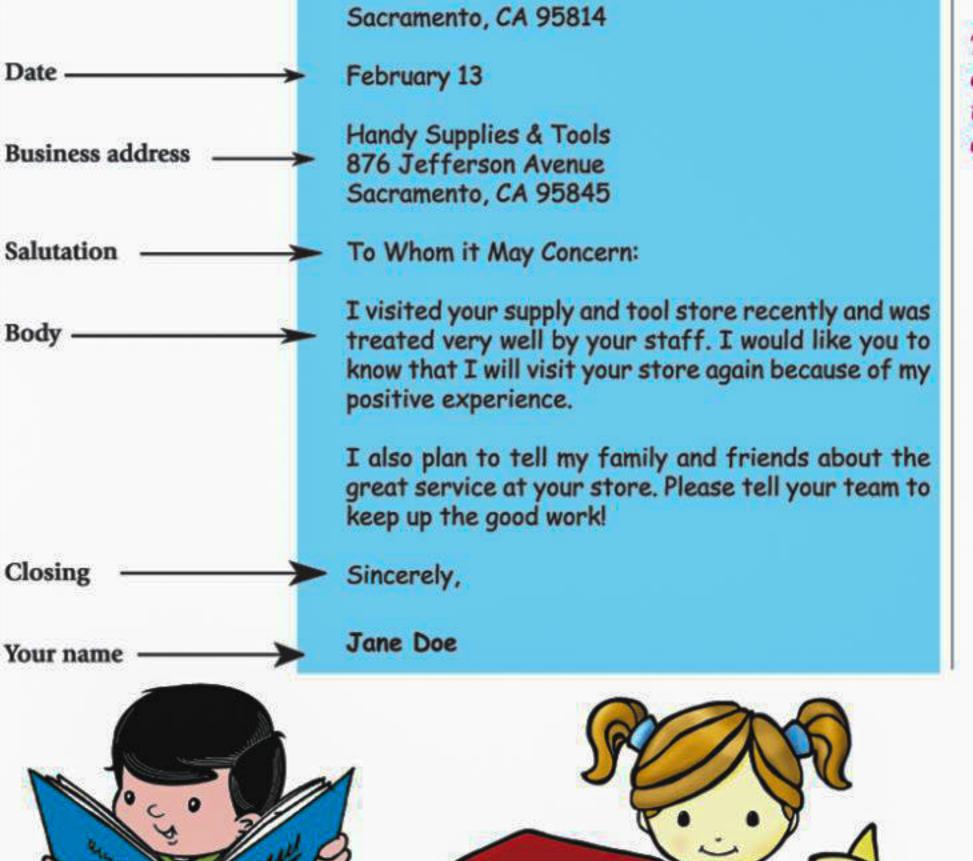
Jennifer

Once you are comfortable with simple letters such as these, you are ready to move to the next step - writing letters which are longer and a bit more formal. These kinds of letters should be typed on the computer to give a more professional look. Here are some samples of longer, more formal letters.

Jane Doe

1000 A Street

Sample Personal Letter:



Sample Business Letter:

Mrs. Jennifer Montgomery 444 Eagle Street Sacramento, CA 95811

Writer's Address

Date

February 19

Mr. Eric Armstrong, Owner/Manager Magic Gifts & Fun, Inc. Address 17253 La Sierra Boulevard

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Elk Grove, CA 95403

Salutation

This letter is to inform you of a problem I have had with a magic set that I purchased at your store.

I purchased the "Ultimate Magic" set in January which included a DVD and magician's supplies.

After watching the DVD to learn how to complete the magic tricks, I reviewed all of the materials and found that I was missing the additional wand, three of the coins and the scarf.

I am writing this letter to seek a replacement "Ultimate Magic" kit with all of the supplies included. Please contact me at your earliest convenience so that we can arrange the best time and date to complete the exchange: 916-333-4444.

Sincerely,

Closing

Jennifer Montgomery

Signature

Jennifer Montgomery Writer's Typed Name

Games & Activities

Here are some ideas for further practice in developing your letter-writing skills. These are examples which you can use but you can also create your own activities just like this with your own letters or the letters found on the websites recommended above.

Letter to a Friend

Dear Fred,

Complete the letter by using the word list below to fill in the missing words.

Hey Buddy! It's 10:30 in the morning and I'm in the kitchen writing to you. It sure is nice outside. The weather is great. My dog, Bandit, is _____ by my feet and _____ at me with his big eyes. He wants me to him extra____ _____. I'm not going to because he's getting fat. I'm _____ how to play ___ games with my _____, _a lot. It will take me some time, but one day I will him! I hope you are having a great. that your family is too. Please write back soon.

Choose from these words:

Your Friend,

Rick

lying learning summer brown give treats beat looking sitting video nephew wins

Parts of a Letter – Sequencing Activity

The parts of this complaint letter are not in the right order. Cut the page into strips on the dotted lines then put the different parts of the letter into the correct order from beginning to end.

I bought a 32 inch flat screen TV from you back in December. It cost me \$400. I have had trouble with it ever since. I called your store and have taken it in for service many times hoping it would be fixed.

Sincerely, Joe's Electronics

1722 Wayfara Way Denver, CO 95225

(916) 555-3467

I am writing to complain about my TV.

Dear Sir,

I would like my money back for the cost of the TV or a new replacement. I do not want to bring it in for service anymore.

James D. Hampton

May 14

Every time I brought the TV back to you they told me they could not trace the problem, but agreed that it does not work right.



Love,

Sincerely,

Yours Truly,

Your Friend,

closings: