BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Introduction to writing letters
As Hollet (1994) claims written business communication can take the form of a letter, but, in recent years, it has often been replaced by a fax or an e-mail. An internal letter, called a „memo”, can be used within an organization.

LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

The parts of a business letter are as follows:

1. **Sender's address**
2. **Date**
3. **Inside address**
4. **Attention line**
5. **Salutation**
6. **Body of the letter**
7. **Complimentary close**
8. **Signature**
9. **Enclosures**

1. **Sender's address** is usually given in the letterhead, but if there is none, the address can be typed in the top right- or left-hand corner of the letter.

2. The date is written below the sender's address. The month is usually not written out as numbers – it could be confusing (different sequences):
   
   20 December 2004       20th December, 2004

3. **The inside address** begins with the name of the company or – if you know the name of the person you are writing to – you can begin with his / her name. Courtesy titles are used before names: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Messrs, M.Sc, Dr, Prof., Capt., Maj., Col., Gen.

   Abbreviations may be used with or without a fullstop, but we must remain consistent throughout our correspondence.

   The address can also begin with a **job title** or a **department** (if you do not know the name): The Sales Manager, The Accounts Department.

   The items that follow are:

   - the name of the house or building
   - the number of the building and the name of the street
   - the name of the town and the postcode
   - the name of the country

4. **Attention line** is an alternative to putting the recipient's name in the address.

5. **The salutations** are as follows:
   
   - Dear Sir – to a man whose name you do not know
   - Dear Sirs /Gentlemen – to a company
   - Dear Madam – to a woman whose name you do not know
- Dear Sir or Madam – to a person whose name and sex you do not know
- Dear Mr Smith – to a person whose name you know, but you do not know the person very well
- Dear John – to a person you know well

The British like to use the comma after the salutation: Dear Mrs Jones, but the Americans prefer a colon - Gentlemen:

6. The body of the letter is usually written in the blocked style. A line of space is left between the paragraphs.

7. The complimentary close is related to the salutations:
   - If the letter begins Dear Sir / Sirs / Madam / Sir or Madam, the complimentary close should be Yours faithfully
   - If the letter begins with a personal name, e.g. Dear Mr James, it should be Yours sincerely
   - A letter to someone you know well may end with Best wishes or Kind regards.
   A comma after the complimentary close is optional.

8. Signature – always type your name and possibly your job title below your handwritten signature (the so called signature block).

9. Enclosures – If there are any documents enclosed with a letter, although they might be mentioned in the body of the letter, it is common to write Enc. or Encl. below the signature block.

19 Port Street
Cardiff
2nd April 2014

Travel Grant Foundation
Sussex Gardens
York Y03 9HE

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Kelly Peterson and I am studying English, French, German and History. My favourite subject is French and I am really good at languages.

I am writing to apply for a grant to visit France and Germany because I would like to improve my knowledge of these two languages.

When I leave school, I am hoping to work as an interpreter or as a tourist guide and such experiences could help me get a better job.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Kelly Peterson

Kelly PETERSON
TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

ENQUIRY - Pridobivanje informacij

In the opening tell your supplier what kind of organization you are; if applicable, state the references.

You can ask for catalogues, price lists, brochures, samples, patterns and demonstrations; point out any particular items you are interested in.

When asking for goods or services, be specific and state exactly what you want. Quote the reference (catalogue, brochure, advertisement).

A company may write circular letters to several suppliers, inviting offers to do a certain job or supply a certain item.

The closing of an enquiry is usually a simple »thank you«. You may mention that a prompt reply would be appreciated or indicate further business.

QUOTATION - Ponudba

In the quotation, the following subjects should be covered:

a) Prices: say if the price includes the costs of transport, insurance and purchase tax, e.g. VAT (gross price) or none of them (net price); state if the price is firm or subject to change.

b) Transport and insurance costs: state the terms exactly, so that the customer knows which price was stated to him.

c) Discounts: state the possible discounts – trade discounts to sellers in similar trades, quantity discounts, cash discounts, loyalty discounts.

d) Methods of payment: require or suggest the method of payment, e.g. letter of credit, bill of exchange.

e) Delivery date: confirm the proposed delivery date or suggest an alternative date which you will be able to meet.

ORDER - Naročanje

Orders are usually written on a company's official order form, accompanied by a covering letter where the following points should be mentioned:

a) In the opening mention that an order is enclosed;

b) confirm the terms of payment;

c) confirm the agreed discounts;

d) confirm the delivery date;

e) advise the company on how you want the goods packed and sent;

f) close with a promise for further orders.
COMPLAINT – Pritožba, napake in reklamacije

A letter must be used for large and more serious complaints whereas a fax or an e-mail may suffice for minor ones. Write the complaint as soon as you notice the mistake. The letter of complaint should include the following items:

a) state the mistake; it should be explained politely;
b) if you think you know how the mistake was made, politely point this out to your supplier
c) if you know how the mistake could be corrected, let your supplier know.

The following factors are important when writing a formal letter:

Layout - the letter should be attractive for the reader with plenty of white space.

Organisation of information - include only relevant information. Deal with topics systematically and link your ideas clearly.

Organisation on paragraph / sentence level - do not write too short or too long paragraphs, sentences should not be too long or incomplete.

Language - Keep It Short and Simple - KISS. Take care of word order, verbs, prepositions, punctuation and spelling. DO NOT use short forms (e.g.,“don’t”) or telex abbreviations (e.g. reps).

Formal vocabulary

Read a checklist of useful phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting</th>
<th>We are writing to: advise you of/confirm/enquire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stating a reference</td>
<td>Thank you for your letter of February 16. With reference to: our telephone conversation/your fax of May 6th; Further to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving good news</td>
<td>I am delighted to tell you that … You will be pleased to hear that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving bad news</td>
<td>We regret to inform you that … Unfortunately … I am afraid …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a request</td>
<td>We would be grateful if you could … I would appreciate if you could … Could you possibly …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering help</td>
<td>If you wish, we would be happy to … Please do not hesitate to ask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologizing</td>
<td>I am sorry about the delay in replying. I would like to apologize for … We are sorry for …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosing documents</td>
<td>I am enclosing … Please find enclosed …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing remarks</td>
<td>If you have any further questions, … If we can help in any way, please contact us/Thank you for your help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referring to future contacts</td>
<td>I look forward to meeting you next week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>