

You can find four basic elements in both formal and informal letters: a salutation, an introduction, body text and a conclusion with signature.

## Salutation

The salutation is also known as the greeting. Formal letters often begin with Dear Sir/Madam. If you know the name of the person you are writing to, use it instead of the impersonal Sir/Madam.

In formal and semi-formal letters, it is common to put a colon after Dear X. In informal letters you can put a comma or nothing at all.

## Introduction

The introduction doesn't have to be particularly long. Explain in one or two sentences the reason for your writing. That's enough.

## Body

This is where you have to outline the information you need to communicate. Be concise but don't forget to provide all the necessary information. In formal and semi-formal letters, you should also include a formal conclusion. Examples are given below.

*Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Thank you for your help and consideration.*

## Closing and signature

*Yours sincerely* is the most common closing used in formal and semi-formal letters. When the name of the addressee is not known the phrase *Yours faithfully* should be used. Note that in American English *Yours faithfully* is not normally used.

In informal letters other closings such as *Regards* or *All the best* can be used.

Leave some space for your signature and then print or write your name underneath it.