

# Business Letters and Envelopes

**Unit:** Technology

**Problem Area:** Format Business Documents

**Lesson:** Business Letters and Envelopes

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Identify the parts of a business letter.**
- 2 Format a business letter.**
- 3 Format an envelope for a business letter.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

Hoggatt, Jack P., Jon A. Shank, and James R. Smith, Jr. *Century 21™ Computer Skills and Applications*, 10th ed. Cengage Learning, 2015.

Lowe, Ross E., Charles A. Malouf, and Annette R. Jacobson. *Consumer Education & Economics*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2008.



## ■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

## ■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ block style
- ▶ body
- ▶ complimentary close
- ▶ date
- ▶ double-space
- ▶ enclosure notation
- ▶ indication of copies sent to others
- ▶ inside address
- ▶ letterhead
- ▶ quadruple-space
- ▶ return address
- ▶ salutation
- ▶ sender's handwritten signature
- ▶ sender's job title
- ▶ sender's typed signature
- ▶ writer's initials and/or typist's initials

## ■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

*Explain to the students that sometimes a telephone call or an e-mail may not be the best method of communication when transacting business (e.g., when launching a complaint about a product). Often, a carefully composed and properly formatted business letter, accompanied by a receipt or other documentation, may be preferable. This lesson will familiarize the students with the parts of a business letter, the proper formatting, and preparation of the letter for mailing.*

# CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

**Objective 1:** Identify the parts of a business letter.

**Anticipated Problem:** What are the parts of a business letter?

- I. Parts of a business letter
  - A. The **return address** is the sender's full mailing address.
    1. If the sender is affiliated with a business, company **letterhead** (preprinted stationery) is commonly used.
      - a. Letterhead usually includes:
        - (1) Company name
        - (2) Mailing address
        - (3) Telephone number
        - (4) Fax number
        - (5) E-mail address
        - (6) Website address
        - (7) Company logo and slogan
      - b. With the use of letterhead, only the **date** (month, date, and year) need be typed.
    2. If the sender does not use letterhead:
      - a. The return address must be typed and includes:
        - (1) Full street address
        - (2) City, state, and ZIP code
      - b. The date (month, day, and year) follows.
    3. The return address allows the recipient to handle and file the letter without keeping the envelope.
  - B. The **inside address** is the part of the letter that shows to whom and where the letter is being sent. Whenever possible, the specific individual responsible for handling the subject of the letter should be identified, and the letter addressed to that person. The inside address includes:
    1. Recipient's full name, if an individual is being contacted. The appropriate courtesy title (e.g., "Mr.," "Ms.," "Dr.") should be included.
    2. Recipient's job title. If short, this title goes on the same line as the name; otherwise, on a separate line.
    3. Company name.
    4. Street address.
    5. City, state, and ZIP code.

- C. The **salutation** is the greeting.
1. If the sender and the recipient are not on a first-name basis, a courtesy title and the recipient's last name (e.g., "Dear Dr. Jacobs:") should be used.
  2. If the sender and the recipient are on a first-name basis, the recipient's first name is sufficient (e.g., "Dear Ann:").
  3. Including both the first and last names in the salutation, as is often done on bulk mailings (e.g., "Dear Philip Johnson:"), should be avoided.
  4. If the name and gender of a specific person at the company to which the letter is being sent are not known, the salutation "Dear Sir or Madam:" is appropriate.
- D. The **body** of the letter is the sender's message.
1. This part of the letter should be as concise as possible yet as thorough as the subject demands.
  2. Being courteous is essential.
- E. The **complimentary close** is a polite expression (e.g., "Yours truly" or "Sincerely") for ending the letter.
- F. The **sender's handwritten signature** is the element that shows the writer has read the typed letter and agrees with its content. It makes the letter official.
- G. The **sender's typed signature** is a version of the signature that provides the exact spelling of the name, preventing any errors from the misreading of handwriting. A courtesy title (e.g., "Mr." or "Ms.") may be included to prevent any misunderstanding of gender.
- H. The **sender's job title** is the element that identifies the sender's position with the company.
1. The **writer's initials and/or typist's initials** are elements that identify who wrote the letter and who keyed it.
  2. The **enclosure notation** is an indication following the signature that something in addition to the letter was placed in the envelope (e.g., an agenda or an itinerary).
- K. The letter may include an **indication of copies sent to others**, a notation that shows who besides the primary recipient will receive the letter and any enclosures.

**Teaching Strategy:** Ask the students if they have ever had to write or respond to a business letter. Have them discuss situations in which a formal business letter might be needed.

## Objective 2: Format a business letter.

### Anticipated Problem: How is a business letter formatted?

- II. Format of a business letter—Many formatting options are possible, and different companies have different requirements for formatting their business letters. In this lesson, one of the most common formats, block style, will be discussed. **Block style** is the format in which every line of every part begins at the left margin.
- A. The left and right margins should be set at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and the bottom margin at 1 inch. The top margin will depend on whether printed letterhead is used.
  - B. A legible size and font of type, such as 11- or 12-point Arial or 12-point Times New Roman, should be selected.
  - C. Justification should be set to “Left,” leaving the right margin ragged.
  - D. If letterhead is used, the top margin should be set so that the date appears  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch below the preprinted material. This distance may be adjusted depending on what looks best with a particular letterhead design. The typist should **quadruple-space**, or press the Enter key four times, between the date and the inside address.
  - E. If letterhead is not available, good-quality  $8\frac{1}{2}$ “ × 11” paper should be used. The return address should begin 2 inches from the top of the sheet. The date goes on the line below the return address. The typist should quadruple-space between the date and the inside address.
  - F. After the last line of the inside address, the typist should **double-space**, or press the Enter key twice; then type the salutation, followed by a colon and another double-space.
  - G. The body of the letter should be single-spaced, with a double-space between paragraphs.
  - H. There should be a double-space between the last paragraph of the body and the complimentary close.
  - I. Only the first letter of the first word should be capitalized in the complimentary close (e.g., “Sincerely yours,” “Yours truly”). The close should be followed by a comma.
  - J. A quadruple-space should follow the complimentary close. This creates space for the handwritten signature, which should be in blue or black ink.
    - 1. If the sender and the recipient are on a first-name basis, the handwritten signature may consist of only the sender’s first name.
    - 2. If the sender and the recipient are not on a first-name basis, the sender’s full name must be signed.
  - K. The sender’s full name is typed on the line below the quadruple-space left for the handwritten signature.

- L. The sender's job title comes next.
  - 1. If the title is short, such as "President," the sender's name may be followed by a comma, and the title typed on the same line.
  - 2. If it is longer, such as "Vice President of Public Relations," it is typed on the line below the name.
- M. The writer's initials and/or typist's initials appear a double-space below the line containing the job title.
  - 1. If the writer keyed the letter, then his or her initials are typed in lowercase (e.g., "rlm").
  - 2. If the writer dictated the letter and someone else keyed it, the writer's initials appear in capitals, followed by a colon and the typist's initials in lowercase (e.g., "RLM:edi").
- N. If something is enclosed with a letter, the notation "Enclosure" is typed a double-space below the writer's initials and/or typist's initials. If more than one item is enclosed, the word is made plural and followed by the number of items (e.g., "Enclosures 2").
- O. Any indication of copies sent to others should appear on the next line. The usual format is "cc: Ms. Andrea Walters."

**Teaching Strategy:** Use VM-A and VM-B as examples of properly formatted business letters.

**Objective 3:** Format an envelope for a business letter.

**Anticipated Problem:** How is an envelope for a business letter formatted?

III. Format of a business envelope

- A. The envelope is the first thing the recipient sees when a business letter arrives. It should look as professional as the letter inside.
- B. The same type size and font as used for the letter should be used for the envelope.
- C. Return address
  - 1. If company letterhead is used for the letter, a No. 10 envelope ( $4\frac{1}{8}$ "  $\times$   $9\frac{1}{2}$ "") with the return address preprinted on it is usually available.
  - 2. If letterhead is not used, the return address should be copied from the letter and then pasted 0.3 inch from the top and 0.3 inch from the left edge of the envelope.
- D. Recipient's address—The recipient's address should be copied from the letter and then pasted 2 inches from the top and 4 inches from the left edge of the envelope.
- E. The word-processing program being used may have a special feature for creating the envelope.

- F. Folding the letter and inserting it into the envelope
1. The letter should be laid face up on a desk or other hard surface and folded in thirds the  $8\frac{1}{2}$ -inch way, beginning at the bottom.
  2. It should be inserted into the envelope with the upper third of the letter right side up and farthest away.
- G. A final check should be made to be sure all the enclosures have been put into the envelope before sealing it and applying proper postage.

**Teaching Strategy:** Use VM–C as examples of properly formatted business letter envelopes. Assign LS–A.

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may also be used in the Review/Summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual masters and lab sheet to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

## ■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

### **Part One: Matching**

1. c
2. e
3. d
4. a
5. b
6. f

### **Part Two: Multiple Choice**

1. d
2. b
3. d
4. b
5. c
6. b
7. d

### Part Three: True or False

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. T
7. T

# Business Letters and Envelopes

## ► Part One: Matching

**Instructions:** Match the term with the correct definition.

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| a. enclosure notation | d. complimentary close |
| b. inside address     | e. salutation          |
| c. return address     | f. block style         |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. The sender's full mailing address
- \_\_\_\_ 2. The greeting
- \_\_\_\_ 3. A polite expression for ending the letter
- \_\_\_\_ 4. An indication following the signature that something in addition to the letter was placed in the envelope
- \_\_\_\_ 5. The part of a letter that shows to whom and where the letter is being sent
- \_\_\_\_ 6. The format in which every line of every part begins at the left margin

## ► Part Two: Multiple Choice

**Instructions:** Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. How many times is the Enter key pressed to create space for the handwritten signature?
- a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4



2. Paragraphs are separated by:
  - a. A single-space
  - b. A double-space
  - c. A triple-space
  - d. A quadruple-space
3. What spacing follows the date of the letter?
  - a. A single-space
  - b. A double-space
  - c. A triple-space
  - d. A quadruple-space
4. What spacing follows the salutation of a letter?
  - a. A single-space
  - b. A double-space
  - c. A triple-space
  - d. A quadruple-space
5. Which is a salutation?
  - a. May 1, 20—
  - b. Yours sincerely,
  - c. Dear Ms. Smith:
  - d. Enclosure
6. Which is a complimentary close?
  - a. May 1, 20—
  - b. Yours sincerely,
  - c. Dear Ms. Smith:
  - d. Enclosure
7. Which part may not be needed in every business letter?
  - a. Inside address
  - b. Salutation
  - c. Handwritten signature
  - d. Enclosure notation

► **Part Three: True or False**

**Instructions: Write *T* for true and *F* for false.**

- \_\_\_ 1. Using a complimentary close means ending the letter with a compliment.
- \_\_\_ 2. The recipient's job title is always keyed on the same line as the person's name.
- \_\_\_ 3. Lines in a paragraph are single-spaced.
- \_\_\_ 4. The line "Dear Dr. Goldwater:" is called the denotation.
- \_\_\_ 5. If something accompanies the letter, the word "Enclosure" should be typed below the writer's initials and/or typist's initials.
- \_\_\_ 6. If the name and gender of a specific person at the company to which the letter is being sent is not known, the salutation "Dear Sir or Madam:" is appropriate.
- \_\_\_ 7. Block style indicates that all parts of the letter begin at the left margin.

# BUSINESS LETTER ON STANDARD BOND PAPER

2555 West Boulevard  
Belleville, IL 62221  
October 31, 20—

Mr. Lee R. Terry, Sales Manager  
Professional Educators Publications, Inc.  
P.O. Box 50  
Danville, IL 61834

Dear Mr. Terry:

This is an example of a business letter. The left and right margins have been set at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and the bottom margin at 1 inch. Because printed letterhead is not being used, the return address begins 2 inches from the top of the  $8\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\times$  11" sheet.

The letter is single-spaced. A double-space (two returns) separates the paragraphs of the body. A double-space also separates all parts of the letter, except a quadruple-space (four returns) separates the date from the salutation and the complimentary close from the typed signature.

This letter is in block style. That means all lines of every part begin at the left margin.

A purchase receipt has been enclosed with the letter. Therefore, the notation "Enclosure" appears below the writer's and/or typist's initials.

Sincerely,

Ms. Tammie G. Hettenhausen

tgh

Enclosure

# BUSINESS LETTER ON LETTERHEAD STATIONERY



P.O. Box 50  
Danville, IL 61834-0050  
217.446.9184

[www.professionaleducatorspub.net](http://www.professionaleducatorspub.net)

November 5, 20—

Ms. Tammie Hettenhausen  
2555 West Boulevard  
Belleville, IL 62221

Dear Ms. Hettenhausen:

This is an example of a business letter. The left and right margins have been set at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and the bottom margin at 1 inch. Because letterhead is being used, the date is keyed  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch below the preprinted information.

The letter is single-spaced. A double-space (two returns) separates the paragraphs of the body. A double-space also separates all parts of the letter, except a quadruple-space (four returns) separates the date from the salutation and the complimentary close from the typed signature.

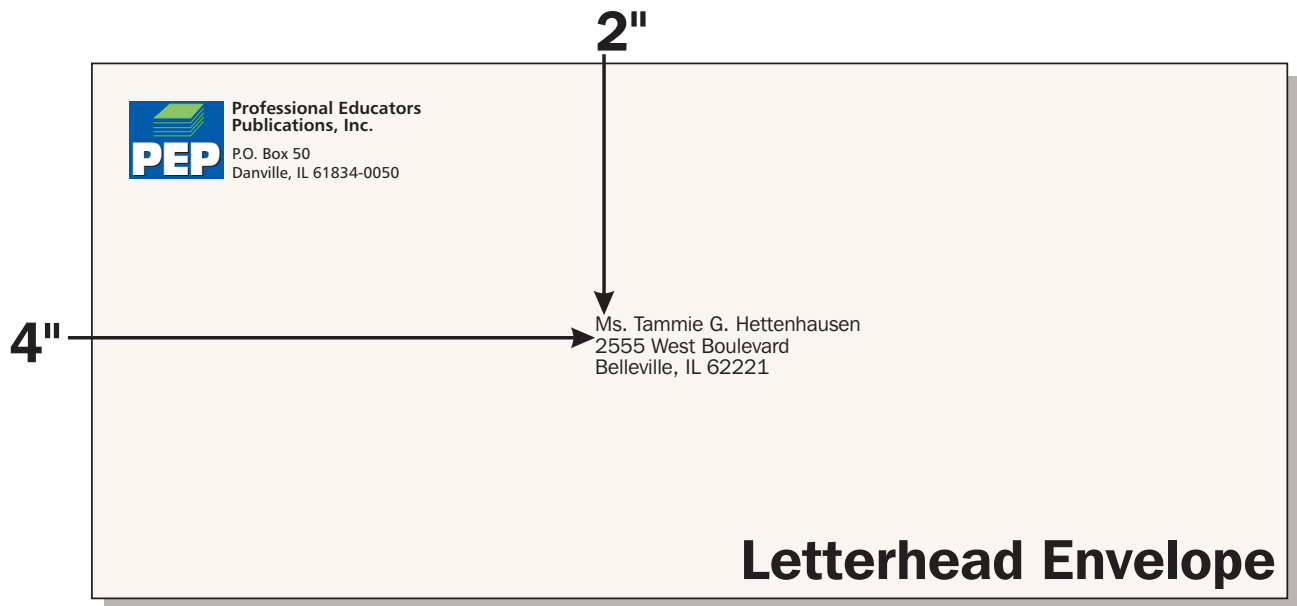
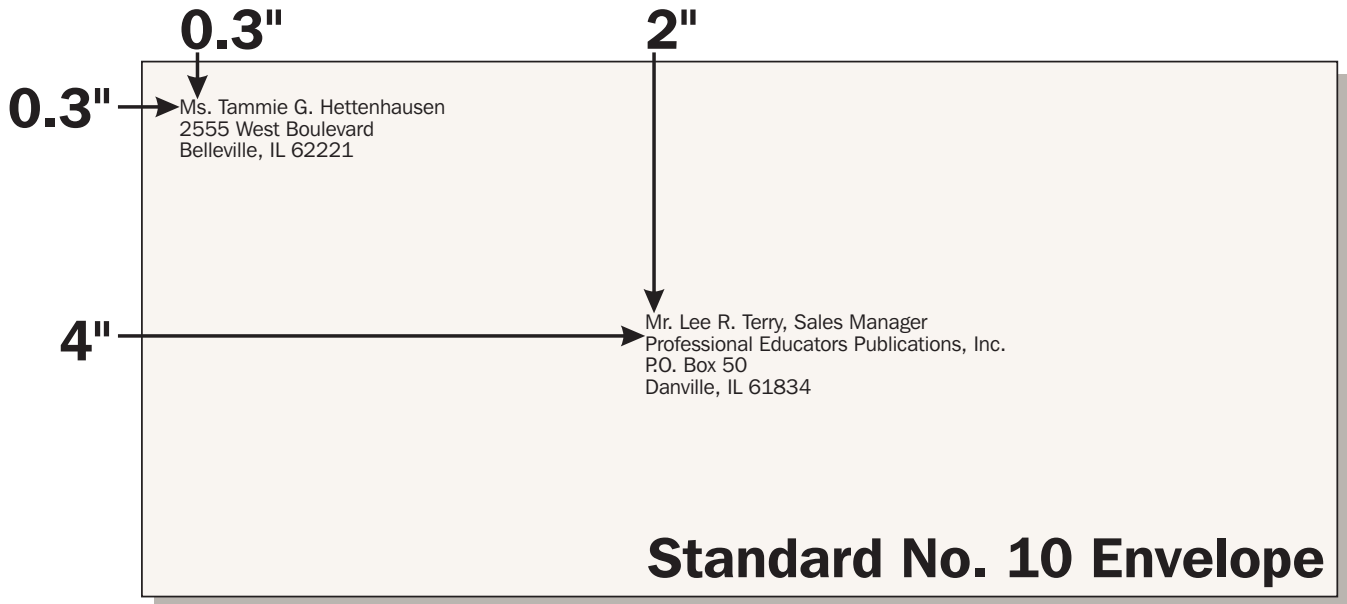
This letter is in block style. That means all lines of every part begin at the left margin.

Cordially,

Mr. Lee R. Terry, Sales Manager

LRT:edi

# BUSINESS ENVELOPES (STANDARD NO. 10 AND LETTERHEAD)



# Business Letter Parts and Spacing

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to label the parts of a business letter and to indicate the spacing required between the parts.

## Objectives

1. Label the parts of a business letter.
2. Indicate the spacing required between the parts of the letter.

## Materials

- ◆ lab sheet
- ◆ writing utensil

## Procedure

1. Refer to the sample letter provided.
2. Write the names of the business letter parts next to the number that corresponds with the number on the sample.
3. Indicate the spacing required (single-space, double-space, triple-space, quadruple-space) next to the capital letter that corresponds with the one on the sample.



1 → 2555 West Boulevard  
Belleville, IL 62221  
2 → October 31, 20— A

3 → Mr. Lee R. Terry, Sales Manager  
Professional Educators Publications, Inc.  
P.O. Box 50  
Danville, IL 61834 B

4 → Dear Mr. Terry: C

This is an example of a business letter. The left and right margins have been set at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and the bottom margin at 1 inch. Because printed letterhead is not being used, the return address begins 2 inches from the top of the  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$  sheet. D

5 → The letter is single-spaced. A double-space (two returns) separates the paragraphs of the body. A double-space also separates all parts of the letter, except a quadruple-space (four returns) separates the date from the salutation and the complimentary close from the typed signature. E

This letter is in block style. That means all lines of every part begin at the left margin. F

A purchase receipt has been enclosed with the letter. Therefore, the notation "Enclosure" appears below the writer's and/or typist's initials.

6 → Sincerely, G  
H

7 → Ms. Tammie G. Hettenhausen

8 → tgh I  
J

9 → Enclosure

**Parts of a business letter:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

**Spacing required:**

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.
- F.
- G.
- H.
- I.
- J.

# **Business Letter Parts and Spacing**

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## **Parts of a business letter:**

1. Return address
2. Date
3. Inside address
4. Salutation
5. Body
6. Complimentary close
7. Handwritten signature
8. Writer's initials and/or typist's initials
9. Enclosure notification

## **Spacing required:**

- A. Quadruple-space
- B. Double-space
- C. Double-space
- D. Double-space
- E. Double-space
- F. Double-space
- G. Double-space
- H. Quadruple-space
- I. Double-space
- J. Double-space