

# Identify Uses of Business Letters

**Unit:** Technology

**Problem Area:** Format Business Documents

**Lesson:** Identify Uses of Business Letters

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

- 1 Define the purpose of a business letter.**
- 2 Recognize the differences between business letters and personal business letters.**

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

Hoggatt, Jack P., Jon A. Shank, and Jerry W. Robinson. *Century 21 Computer Applications & Keyboarding*. 7th ed. Thompson South-Western, 2002.

- **List of 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



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

- ▶ business letters
- ▶ formal communication
- ▶ letterhead
- ▶ permanent record
- ▶ personal business letters
- ▶ reference 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 situation. A possible approach is included here.

*Ask students how they would advertise a new product if they worked for a company. How would they communicate with customers or clients? Let them know that communication outside the company is very important and that is why they need to learn about business letters. Business letters are important when working for a company or when taking care of personal business from home.*

## SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

**Objective 1:** Define the purpose of a business letter.

**Anticipated Problem:** What is a business letter and when is a business letter necessary?

- I. **Business letters** are documents created primarily for communicating messages outside of an organization; they represent a company, not an individual. Although e-mail is incredibly successful for both internal and external communication, many important messages still call for letters.
  - A. Business letters are necessary for various reasons. They provide a permanent record. A **permanent record** is a stored formal document used to reference an event or idea. A copy of a letter is kept in a specified location as proof of an official statement. Letters are considered a formal style of communication. **Formal communication** means the message is delivered in an official manner and can be used as evidence of communication. Letters can contain very important information that need to be well thought out and presented strategically. The business letter serves as a reflection on the company. Mistakes or poor presentation can reflect negatively on the organization's image or reputation.

- B. Business letters may be sent out regarding various topics, such as advertising. A business may send out a letter informing clients of new products or services. Business letters may be mailed to request information or to motivate action. The letters should be short, concise, and written in a positive tone.

*Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Use VM–A to identify uses of a business letter.*

**Objective 2:** Recognize the differences between business letters and personal business letters.

**Anticipated Problem:** How are business letters different than personal business letters?

- II. A business letter represents a company; a **personal business letter** is a document that is sent on behalf of an individual (e.g., cover letter, inquiry, thank you, and so forth) to discuss matters with an organization or other individuals.
- A. Business letters are usually printed on company stationery called **letterhead**. The letterhead contains the name and contact information for the business. Personal business letters are typed on stationery without letterheads and must have the writer's return address.
- B. The writer's job title is typed below the name in a business letter; a personal business letter does not contain a writer's job title.
- C. **Reference initials** are the initials of the person who typed the business letter. If someone other than the writer types the business letter, then the reference initials are typed double-spaced below the writer's identification. A personal business letter does not include reference initials.

*Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. As an example, students could visually compare a personal business letter with a business letter. 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. a
2. b
3. c
4. d
5. e
6. f

### Part Two: Short Answer

1. resume, cover letter, inquiry, thank you
2. when someone other than the writer types a business letter

### Part Three: Completion

1. return address
2. letterhead
3. reference initials
4. individual
5. strategically

# Identify Uses of Business Letters

## ► Part One: Matching

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

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. business letter      | d. permanent record         |
| b. formal communication | e. personal business letter |
| c. letterhead           | f. reference initials       |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Documents created primarily for communicating messages outside of an organization
- \_\_\_\_ 2. The message is delivered in an official manner and can be used as evidence of communication
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Stationery that contains the name and contact information for the business
- \_\_\_\_ 4. A stored formal document used to reference an event or idea
- \_\_\_\_ 5. A document that is sent on behalf of an individual (e.g. cover letter, inquiry, thank you, and so forth) to discuss matters with an organization or other individuals
- \_\_\_\_ 6. The initials of the person who typed the business letter

## ► Part Two: Short Answer

**Instructions:** Complete the following.

1. List two situations when a personal business letter may be written.
  
2. When is it appropriate to use reference initials when writing business letters?



### ► Part Three: Completion

**Instructions:** Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. Personal business letters are typed on stationery without letterheads and must have the writer's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A personal business letter does not involve \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A personal business letter does not contain a writer's \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A business letter represents a company, not an \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Letters can contain very important information and need to be well thought out and presented \_\_\_\_\_.

# USES OF A BUSINESS LETTER

- ◆ Business letters are documents created primarily for communicating messages outside of an organization; they represent a company, not an individual.
- ◆ The following are situations in which a business letter is useful:
  - Advertising
  - Hiring
  - Request attendance
  - Statement of new policies
  - Recognition of new services or products
  - Informational



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A BUSINESS LETTER AND A PERSONAL BUSINESS LETTER

Business Letter	Personal Business Letter
Use letterhead	Does not use letterhead
No return address	Uses a return address
Includes reference initials when appropriate	Does not use reference initials
Represents a business	Represents an individual
Includes writer's job title	Does not include the writer's job title



# Uses of Business Letters

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## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to identify uses of business letters.

## Objectives

1. Identify the uses of a business letter.

## Materials

- ◆ computer with word processing software

## Procedure

1. Monitor mail at home, and collect three examples of business letters.
2. Create a document in your word processing program. State the company each letter is from and the purpose of each letter.
3. Turn in the letters and the printed document to the instructor.

