

# Resignation Letters

**Unit:** Write Intensively for Business

**Problem Area:** Formulate Responses to Application Questions

**Lesson:** Resignation Letters

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

- 1 Explain the significance of a resignation letter.**
- 2 Summarize the possible effects that a resignation decision has on the employee, the co-workers, and the employer.**
- 3 Compose an appropriate and professional resignation letter.**

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

E-unit(s) corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc. <http://www.mycaert.com>.

Doyle, Alison. "Writing a Resignation Letter," *About.com: Job Searching*. Accessed Aug. 12, 2013. <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resignationletters/qt/resign.htm>.

Guffey, Mary Ellen, and Dana Loewy. *Essentials of Business Communication*, 9th ed. Cengage Learning, 2013.

Kimbrell, Grady, and Ben S. Vineyard. *Succeeding in the World of Work*, 5th ed. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2006.

"Preparing for an Exit Interview," *I-resign.com*. Accessed Aug. 12, 2013. [http://www.i-resign.com/uk/resignationkit/exit\\_interview.asp](http://www.i-resign.com/uk/resignationkit/exit_interview.asp).

Sun, Calvin. "10+ Things You Should Do When You Resign," *Tech Republic*. Accessed Aug. 12, 2013. <http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-things-you-should-do-when-you-resign/326>.



## ■ **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):

- ▶ counter-offer
- ▶ employee handbook
- ▶ employer
- ▶ exit file
- ▶ exit interview
- ▶ references
- ▶ resignation letter

## ■ **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.

*Ask the students about their personal experiences when leaving previous jobs. Discuss experiences, feelings, and reasoning as you begin to set the stage for the appropriate means of resignation that they will soon learn. Next, share a humorous and/or over-exaggerated movie clip that reflects the lesson's focus. Extend that resource into a brief class discussion about the do's and don'ts that are evident from the previewed example. Finally, generate a class list of possible reasons for resigning from a position.*

# CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

**Objective 1:** Explain the significance of a resignation letter.

**Anticipated Problem:** What is the significance of resignation letter?

I. Resignation letter

A. Many reasons exist for an employee to move on from a current job. The best way to transition smoothly is by providing the supervisor with a resignation letter. A

**resignation letter** is a formal written statement that an employee gives the employer regarding his or her desire to leave the company. All employees will leave jobs throughout their lives because of unexpected circumstances or a needed change of pace. An employee may need to leave immediately or may leave with advanced notice, allowing him or her to tie up loose ends. For example, an employee may need to resign:

1. To relocate
2. To pursue a better suited employment opportunity
3. To continue their education
4. To improve their salary and/or benefits
5. To take an extended maternity leave
6. To escape from an unpleasant work environment or position
7. To work somewhere more challenging
8. To change their career paths

B. Analyzing needs and wants

1. Prior to making the decision to resign, it is important for the employee to analyze his or her needs and wants with a pros and cons list. An employee should consider what makes him or her happy as well as what makes him or her unhappy at the current job. Then he or she should consider whether one or all of those issues can be fixed. Once the decision has been made to leave, it is not wise to regret or cancel the resignation notice.
2. An employee needs to be clear on what he or she is looking for in a new job opportunity. It is typically suggested to line up a new job before leaving another job.

C. Leaving the old job

1. Although the employee is moving on and leaving this experience behind, he or she should leave in a professional manner. The general rule of thumb is to avoid “burning any bridges” in the workplace. The business world is much smaller than one might think, and the new supervisor might actually have connections with a previous supervisor.
2. The employee needs to keep options open because the future is unpredictable, and one may be required at some point to reapply to a previous position.
3. An employee should have a stellar reference letter from all professional positions.
4. An employee’s job history follows him or her forever.
  - a. Last impressions are just as important as first impressions. They are as important as work performance. It is courteous to remain professional throughout the entire work experience, so the employee can maintain a positive professional reputation.
  - b. An **employer** is a person or business with people working for him, her, them, or it. Many employers require an exit file to be developed for all employees who leave the company. An **exit file** is a written record that encompasses an employee’s final work documents and notes prior to

leaving the company. A resignation letter and final notes are placed in that file. If a future employer calls the previous employer, this exit file will serve as a reminder of the employee's graceful and professional last impression.

**Teaching Strategy:** Use the VM–A scenarios to help conduct a group discussion with students. Also, assign LS–A.

**Objective 2:** Summarize the possible effects that a resignation decision has on the employee, the co-workers, and the employer.

**Anticipated Problem:** What are the possible effects that a resignation decision has on the employee, co-workers, and the employer?

II. The aftermath of a resignation notice

- A. Multiple situations could arise after tendering a resignation. Certainly, the employee's behavior will be examined meticulously following the resignation announcement. Some "rules of thumb" about resigning are:
1. The employee must work diligently through the final date of employment.
  2. The employee should make the transition as stress-free as possible for the supervisor. Because the employer is losing a worker, which he or she has invested time and money into training, it is courteous to make the transition as stress-free as possible for everyone involved. Offering to help with the rehire or to help train the new applicant is a great way for the person who is leaving to provide a smooth transition.
  3. The employee should inform his or her co-workers about the desire to resign only after the announcement has been made to the supervisor. The employee needs to keep the story/reason for resigning consistent. Rumors travel quickly in the workplace. It is poor professional etiquette to criticize the current position, the supervisor, or the workplace overall.
  4. Before the final day of work, the employee should have gathered information from his or her **references** (people who can vouch for an applicant's work ethics, character, and professionalism). Thanking everyone in the workplace is important and maintaining excellent networking is a great skill to develop.
- B. Reactions to a resignation notice
1. Being aware of the following reactions to a resignation notice will help the employee avoid being caught off guard. Upon informing the supervisor about the intention to resign, security may be notified to escort the employee out of the building immediately.
    - a. To an employer, not wanting to work for the company any longer means the person is no longer part of the team.
    - b. The employer runs the risk of property damage, theft of private and secure company information, and/or the employee no longer performing up to the expected standards and needs of the company.

- c. It is wise for the employee to clear and organize his or her workspace prior to announcing the resignation in the event that an escort occurs. For example, copying and removing all personal files from the computer is an important first step.
- 2. Some employers may offer the resigning employee a counter-offer. A **counter-offer** is an appealing benefit or raise specifically proposed to persuade the person as well as to entice him or her to stay on board.
  - a. Typically, an employee who agrees to a counter-offer has a limited future with the company. A counter-offer may be a temporary agreement that primarily suits only the needs of the employer.
  - b. An employee needs to remember that once a resignation announcement has been made, the “workplace trust” glass officially begins to crack. Tension and disappointment have already taken center stage from the employer’s perspective, knowing that the employee no longer desires to serve the company and will only do so for the increased pay.
- 3. Co-workers who were considered friends may begin to show an unpleasant side. No matter what, the employee who is resigning must avoid speaking negatively about the work experience and his or her colleagues.
  - a. Co-workers may pry into the “true” reason for the resignation.
  - b. Co-workers may pry into the employee’s business to instigate or try to extract information for future workplace gossip.
  - c. Co-workers may be upset about this sudden change in the workplace and may reveal envy, jealousy, or guilt.
- 4. An employer may request an exit interview. An **exit interview** is a final interview conversation regarding the employee’s experience with the company and his or her reasons for resigning. The exit interview occurs prior to leaving the position.
  - a. It is important to keep the reasons for the resignation consistent.
  - b. It is important to keep the conversation of the work experience at the company positive.
  - c. It is important to keep the meeting brief and professional and to offer gratitude for the growth opportunities.

**Teaching Strategy:** Assign LS–B. You may want to ask for volunteers and have some student groups role play resignation situations.

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**Objective 3:** Compose an appropriate and professional resignation letter.

**Anticipated Problem:** How is an appropriate and professional resignation letter composed?

III. Letter of resignation

- A. An employee who resigns should consult the employee handbook to ensure that the resignation expectations are met according to company policy. The **employee handbook** is a publication of business etiquette requirements, codes, and expectations given to an employee upon hire. It is wise for the employee to inform the supervisor in person and in writing about his or her desire to resign. The standard resignation is for two weeks.
1. Some employers may expect longer notices. For instance, if the employee holds a higher position with greater responsibility, the notice should be longer.
  2. The employee needs to arrange for a meeting with the supervisor once the decision has been thoroughly considered and a resignation is certain.
  3. The employee needs to think and practice what he or she will say to the employer during this sensitive conversation.
  4. During the meeting with a supervisor, the employee should share the positive experiences of the job opportunity, reveal briefly the reason for the resignation, and provide the resignation letter. The employee should remain calm, professional, positive, and brief. A general business rule of thumb is to backup important events in writing because writing is more concrete and may be used as reference in the future should anything with the resignation go unexpectedly awry.
- B. The employee needs to follow the professional business letter format when writing a resignation letter. It should be a brief three-paragraph format and should be carefully edited and proofread.
1. Paragraph one indicates the employee's intention to leave the company, the position held, and the final date of employment.
  2. Paragraph two indicates a reason for the resignation, a statement complimenting the company, and a statement regarding what was gained during the work experience.
  3. Paragraph three indicates appreciation and gratitude for the professional opportunity and a final goodwill statement.

**Teaching Strategy:** Have students research a sample job post for which they will pretend to resign. They will then pick a "reason for resignation" out of a hat. You may provide reasons from VM-B as well as other reasons. Using the post, the selected reason, and the sample resignation letter format, each student should create a professional resignation letter. Use VM-C as a sample format. Students will be expected to rephrase the reason for resignation in a tasteful and appropriate manner.



- **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. If a textbook is being used, questions at the ends of chapters may be included in the Review/Summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) 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: Short Answer**

1. Answers will vary. For examples of appropriate responses, see “Content Summary”: I.C.1–2.
2. Answers will vary. For examples of appropriate responses, see “Content Summary”: I.A.1–8.
3. Answers will vary. For examples of appropriate responses, see “Content Summary”: II.A–B.

### **Part Two: Completion**

1. positive
2. calm, brief, professional
3. counter-offer
4. two
5. exit
6. guilt
7. job history
8. employee handbook

### **Part Three: True/False**

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. F
9. F
10. F

# Resignation Letters

## ► Part One: Short Answer

**Instructions:** Answer the following.

1. Why is it important to maintain a positive professional reputation during a resignation?
2. What are five acceptable reasons for resigning?
3. List five things to be careful about after announcing a resignation.

## ► Part Two: Completion

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

1. Maintaining \_\_\_\_\_ networking relationships is important to an employee's job history.





2. When meeting with the supervisor, an employee must be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. An employee must beware of the consequences of any \_\_\_\_\_ presented after informing the employer of the resignation.
4. A minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks notice is expected upon informing an employer of the resignation.
5. An employer may save the resignation letter as a reference in an employee's \_\_\_\_\_ interview file.
6. Expect \_\_\_\_\_ from the supervisors and co-workers upon announcing the resignation.
7. Maintaining a professional reputation is important because a \_\_\_\_\_ follows an employee for years.
8. It is important to review the company's \_\_\_\_\_ and the contract for resignation policies and procedures.

### ► Part Three: True/False

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

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Leaving a job on a positive note is overrated because the employee will never have reason to seek out or contact that employer again.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. First impressions are more important than last impressions.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Some employees resign without giving a notice.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. It is imperative to work diligently until the last day of employment.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Sharing feelings regarding the reasons for resignation with a couple of trusted co-workers is acceptable.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. It is suggested to request a brief meeting with the supervisor to announce the desire to resign via a resignation letter.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. The employer cannot legally arrange for someone to escort the employee out of the building upon a resignation announcement.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Of employees who accept counter-offers, 75 percent receive a promotion six months later.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. An employee must provide a reason for leaving the company.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. It is expected that the employee assist the employer with finding and training the new hiree prior to departure.

# RESIGNATION SCENARIOS

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**Scenario 1.** You are finally graduating from college with high honors in a field that does not currently have a high demand for workers. You search and search for openings for an entire year. You do not want to change your career path because you are passionate about it, and you do not want to attend extensive schooling again. Two years later, you receive a phone call from an employer in your field. After the interview, you realize your position will be honorable, your pay and benefits will be exceptional, and the work environment is extremely favorable and relatively free of stress. Naturally, you jump at the opportunity. Months go by, and your boss begins to make you feel uncomfortable. He begins to change your job description and duties. He requests many late hours, and he begins to speak to you in an unprofessional tone about topics not deemed appropriate for the workplace. You simply cannot go on working under these conditions, but you know it will be extremely difficult to find another position in the field. What do you do?

**Scenario 2.** You are working for a relative who has made you the right-hand person in charge. It is a great collaboration, and you enjoy the work. The problem is that she begins to cross the line between family and business. You suddenly do not have the same rights that other employees have because you are relatives. She begins to take advantage of you as an employee. Suddenly, the business starts to decline. To ensure that the other employees get paid, your paycheck has been on hold for almost a month. You do not want to disappoint her or seem unappreciative of the opportunities, but you have to earn a living. You want to make sure you remain on good terms with her because she a lot of acquaintances in the field that may offer you excellent future professional opportunities. What do you do?



**Scenario 3.** You work for a company that advertises a lot of opportunity for growth and advancement. You work there for almost four years in the same position. Throughout those years, you try hard to take on more responsibilities to reveal your value and worth to your boss. The economy has taken a downturn, yet the company seems to be doing exceptionally well. You have not received a bonus or a raise in the four years you have worked for them, but you have received yearly letters of appreciation for great service. The cost of living has gone up, and your salary is no longer satisfying. If you quit and start at a new organization, you will begin at the bottom of the chain again. At your current position, however, you have four years of seniority. What do you do?

# SAMPLE REASONS AN EMPLOYEE MAY RESIGN

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- ◆ The work location is too far from home.
- ◆ A better employment opportunity exists.
- ◆ The job or workplace did not meet his or her expectations.
- ◆ The salary and benefits were not satisfactory.
- ◆ He or she is going to pursue additional education.
- ◆ She is taking an extended maternity leave.
- ◆ It is a personal last-minute resignation.
- ◆ The person plainly does not like his or her job or boss.
- ◆ He or she wants a complete change in a career path.
- ◆ Too few growth opportunities exist.
- ◆ He or she feels devalued and unrecognized.
- ◆ He or she has experienced a loss of trust in senior leadership.

# JOHN A. SMITH RESIGNATION LETTER

**John A. Smith**

542 Golf Court  
Sunshineville, KY 58760  
888-555-5555  
jsmith@hometown.net

September 13, 20—

Mr. Tom Meligalas  
ABC Company  
1234 Main Street  
Skala, KY 58640  
630-555-5555

Dear Mr. Meligalas:

Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation. My resignation will take effect two weeks from now on Sept. 31, 20—.

While I have been very satisfied at ABC Company, I have decided to make this move to advance my career. I have enjoyed working with you and greatly appreciate the opportunities you have given me to grow on a personal and professional level.

I will do my best to complete my current projects prior to my departure. Please let me know if you need my help in any other way. I wish you and ABC Company continued success in the future.

Sincerely,

*John Smith* (sign your name here in blue or black ink)

John A. Smith



# Investigate the Effects of Resigning Appropriately

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to define the pros and cons when resigning with and without a resignation letter.

## Objectives

1. Investigate the pros and cons when resigning with and without a resignation letter.
2. Participate in a class discussion of the pros and cons your research revealed.

## Materials

- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ computer with Internet access

## Procedure

1. Work independently or with a partner to complete this lab sheet.
2. Conduct some research about resignation letters.
3. Use the provided tables to list the pros and cons when resigning with and without a resignation letter.



### Resigning with a Resignation Letter

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>

### Resigning WITHOUT a Resignation Letter

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>

4. Participate in a class discussion of the pros and cons of resigning with and without a resignation letter.
5. Turn in your completed lab sheet to your instructor.

# The Effects of a Resignation Decision/Notice

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to reflect on the possible effects that a resignation notice has on the employer, the co-workers, and the employee.

## Objectives

1. Summarize the possible effects that a resignation notice has on the employer.
2. Summarize the possible effects that a resignation has on co-workers.
3. Summarize the possible effects that a resignation has on the employee.
4. Participate in a class discussion of the effects of a resignation.



## Materials

- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ computer with Internet access

## Procedure

1. Work independently or in pairs to complete this lab sheet.
2. Conduct research on the ramifications of a resignation.



3. Use the table below to list the possible effects that a resignation notice may have on the employer, the co-workers, and the employee.

**The Effects of a Resignation Decision/Notice for the...**

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Co-Workers</u>	<u>Employee</u>

4. Use the space below to complete the short answer accordingly.

*What advice would you give an employee who just informed the employer of his or her resignation?*

5. Participate in a class discussion emphasizing the effects that a resignation decision has on the employer, the co-workers, and the employee.
6. Turn in your completed lab sheet to your instructor.