

HOW TO WRITE A FORMAL LETTER

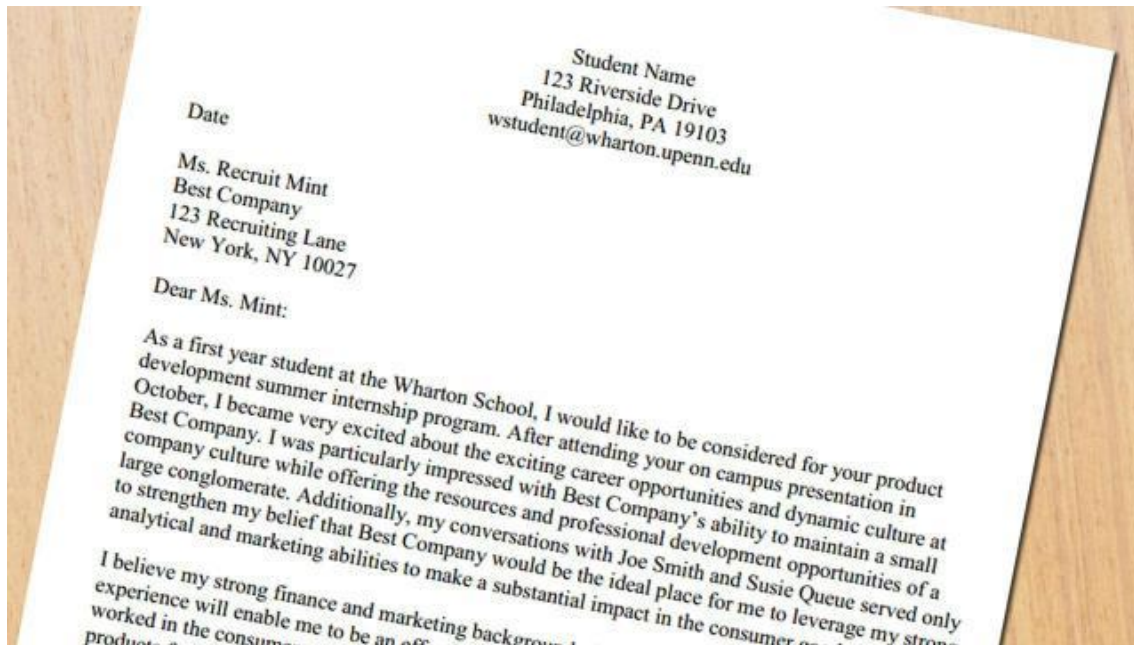
By Mr. Aher T. V.



YOU WILL LEARN

- parts of a formal letter
- formal letter formats
- rules of business letter writing
- some useful tips for writing a formal letter

DECIDE WHAT LETTER YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE



Formal letter



Informal letter

Formal letter - should always be typed
Informal letter can be hand-written or typed



WHAT PARTS SHOULD A FORMAL LETTER CONTAIN?





PARTS OF THE LETTER

- Heading
- Inside Address
- Greeting
- Body
- Complimentary Close
- Signature Line



FORMAL LETTER FORMATS



Block Format

- All the elements are aligned to the left margin
- There are no indented lines

FORMAL LETTER FORMATS



Modified Block Format

- Return address, date, closing and signature start just to the right of the center of the page or may be flush with the right margin
- All body paragraphs begin at the left margin

FORMAL LETTER FORMATS

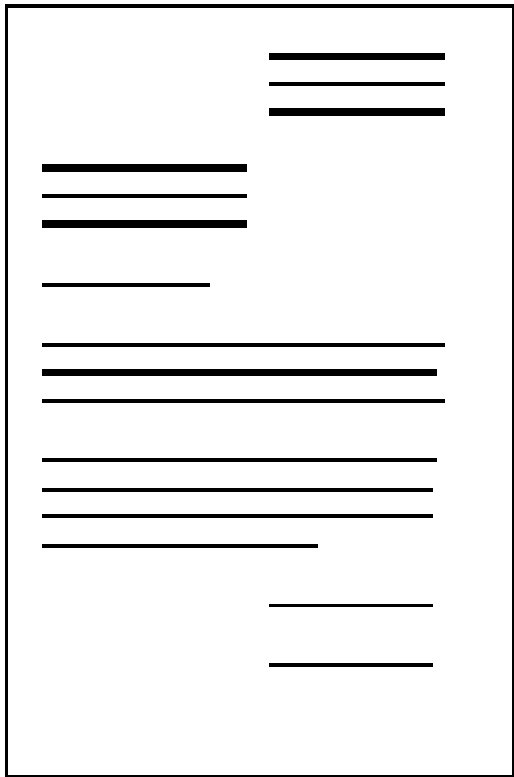


Semi-Block Format

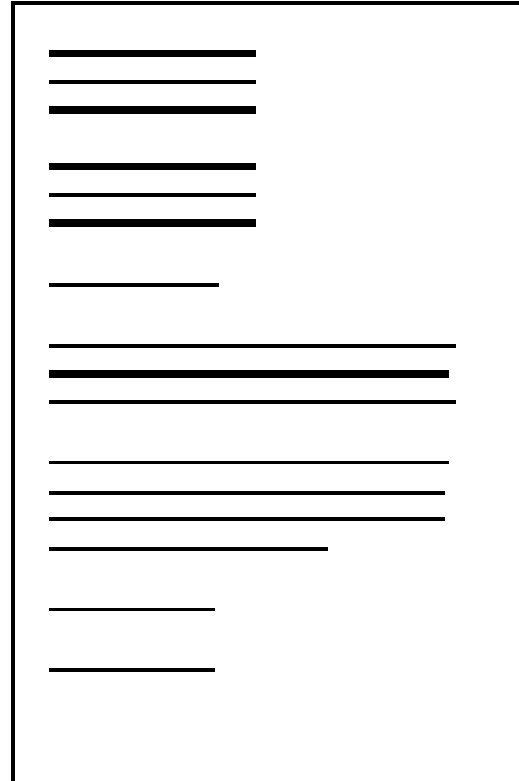
- Similar to the modified block business letter style
- The first line of each paragraph is indented



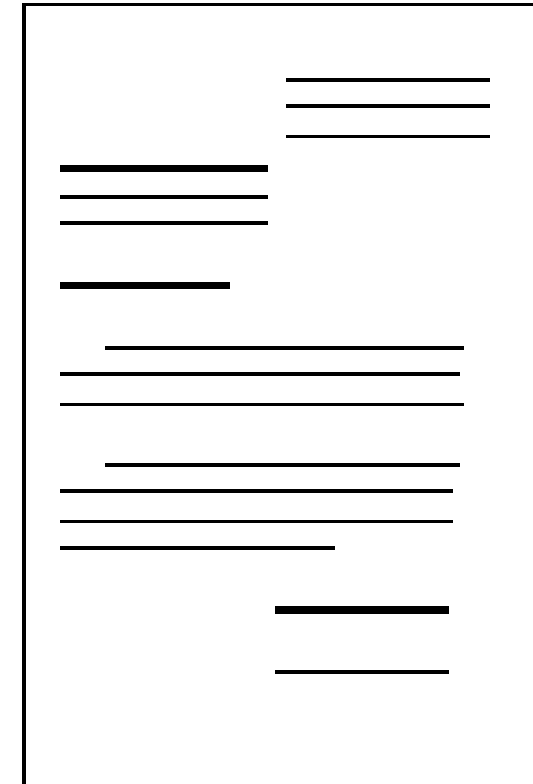
LETTER FORMATS



**Modified Block
Format**



Block Format



Semi-Block Format

HEADING



The heading of a business letter should **contain the return address** followed by a line with **the date**.

The address format:

- ✓ Company/Organisation
- ✓ Number of building and name of the street
- ✓ Post Town
- ✓ Postcode
- ✓ Country name

The date format: Month Day, Year (American Style) or **Day Month Year** (British Style).



HEADING

Example:

Acme Explosives, Inc.
100-B Dry Gulch Alley
Lonesome Coyote AZ 85789
(602) 555-5555
July 14, 1997

Exercise 1

Write down the example of your address and the date of the letter.

Exercise 2

In pairs compare your addresses and dates.

APPLICATION LETTER

xxx Nguyen Trai St.,
Dist 1, Ho Chi Minh City.
June. 18, 2006

Vietnam Recruiter Inc.
xxx Nguyen Thi Minh Khai St., Dist 3,
Ho Chi Minh City

Dear Human Resource Manager:

I am applying for the position of Sales Executive, which was advertised on Aug. 4 with the career services center at xxx University. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

According to the advertisement, your position requires excellent communication skills, computer literacy, and a B.S. degree in business, economics, or finance. I will be graduating from xxx University this month with a B.S. degree in finance. My studies have included courses in computer science, business administration, speech communications, and business writing. I understand the position also requires a candidate who is team- and detail-oriented, works well under pressure, and is able to deal with people in departments throughout the firm. These are skills I developed both in my course work and in my recent internship at United Distribution Inc. in Ho Chi Minh City.

My background and goals seem to match your requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively, and I am excited about the idea of working for a dynamic, nationally recognized human resource firm.

If you would like to schedule an interview or otherwise discuss my interest in this position, please call me at 095xxxxxxx. I will be available at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nguyen Ngoc Thai

INSIDE ADDRESS



This is the address you are sending your letter to.

It contains

- the address of the person you are writing to,
- the name of the recipient,
- their title,
- company name.

Address is always on the left margin.

Example:

Dr. Calvin Carson
Cross Country Coach
Dept. of Athletics
Colorado Community College at Cripple Creek
Cripple Creek CO 80678

Mr David Tune
Secretary
Department of Finance and Deregulation
John Gorton Building
King Edward Terrace
PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Mr Tune

Under section 193ZA(4) of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* the Director of Evaluation and Audit is required to provide an annual report on the operations of the Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) [OEA] for inclusion in the Department's annual report.

As OEA will be transferred to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) on 14 December 2009, I am providing a report that covers the period 1 July 2009 to 14 December 2009.

Yours sincerely

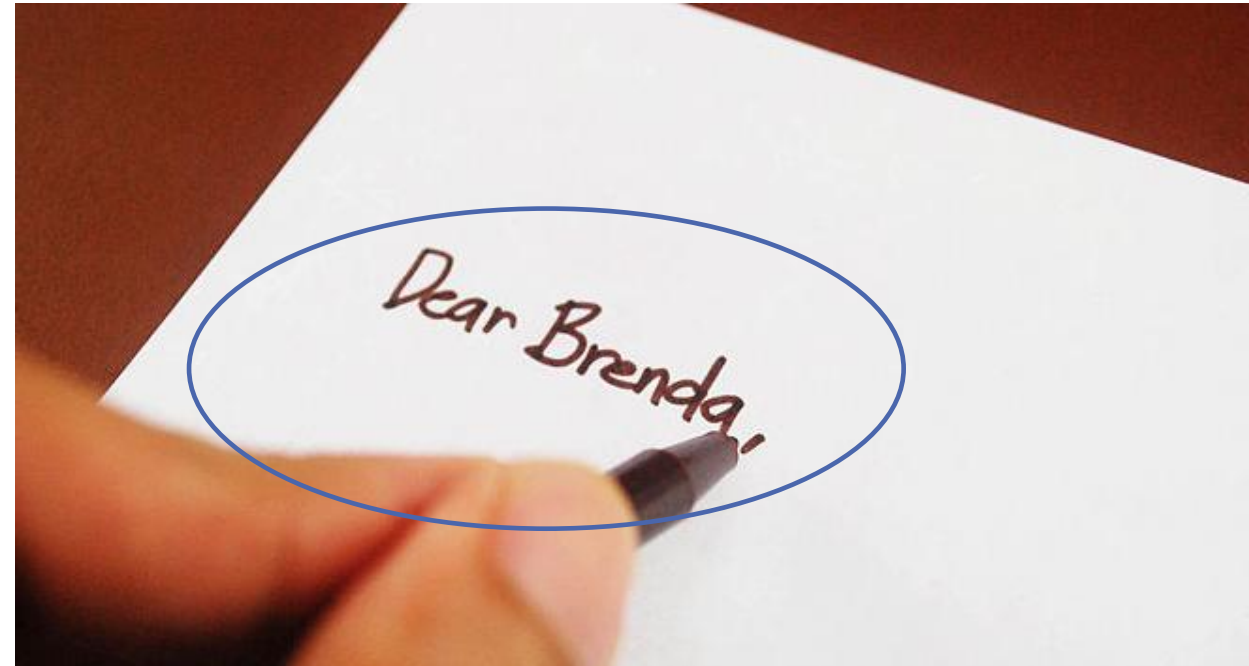
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Pope".

Andrew Pope
Director of Evaluation and Audit
Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)
14 December 2009



GREETING

- Always formal
- Begins with the word "Dear"
- Every word begins with capital
- Includes the person's last name
- Ends in a colon (American Style)
- Ends in a comma (British Style)
- It is always on the left margin.





BODY

- Each new paragraph is indented in the semi-block format
- The block and modified block format have all lines of the body to the left margin
- Skip a line between paragraphs
- Skip a line between the greeting and the body
- Skip a line between the body and the close

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH



- Outline the purpose for the letter
- Write the reason of the letter
- Found the summary of the letter
- Display the intentions of the letter

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH



Fine Foods Ltd.
10 Bridge Street
London
SW10 5TG

Hello Mr. Roger Jones:

I got the letter you sent on 1st September, and the stuff about the stock control system you make. It sounds great for us, but I want to check some things before we buy it. You said the system is bang up-to-date, but what happens if you update it again soon? Do we get money off the new one? You said it takes 3 weeks to install the system – that's too long! Can't you do it any quicker? Hope you can reply soon, we're in a bit of a hurry.

Thanks,

Janet Brown

Exercise 3

What is the letter about?

What's wrong with the letter?

Is there an introduction?



MAIN PART

The main part of the body of the letter will expand upon the introductory paragraph and the individual can extend their thoughts and feelings further when it comes to the letter.

Exercise 4

Where is the main part?

Fine Foods Ltd.
10 Bridge Street
London
SW10 5TG

Hello Mr. Roger Jones:

I got the letter you sent on 1st September, and the stuff about the stock control system you make. It sounds great for us, but I want to check some things before we buy it. You said the system is bang up-to-date, but what happens if you update it again soon? Do we get money off the new one? You said it takes 3 weeks to install the system – that's too long! Can't you do it any quicker? Hope you can reply soon, we're in a bit of a hurry.

Thanks,

Janet Brown



COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE AND SIGNATURE LINE

- In the semi-block and modified block formats begin in the center
- In the block letter format begin at the left margin
- Close begins with a capital letter and ends with a comma
- Skip from one to three spaces
- Type in the signature line
- Add the name of the person signing the letter
- Sign the name in the space between the close and the signature line
- Use blue or black ink

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

- Best regards,
- Best wishes,
- My best,
- Regards
- Respectfully,
- Respectfully yours,
- Sincerely,
- Sincerely yours,
- Thank you,
- Yours respectfully,
- Yours sincerely,
- Yours truly,
- With appreciation,
- With gratitude,
- With sincere appreciation,
- With sincere thanks,

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE AND SIGNATURE LINE



Exercise 5

Where are the close and the signature line?

Try to rewrite the letter.

Fine Foods Ltd.
10 Bridge Street
London
SW10 5TG

Hello Mr. Roger Jones:

I got the letter you sent on 1st September, and the stuff about the stock control system you make. It sounds great for us, but I want to check some things before we buy it. You said the system is bang up-to-date, but what happens if you update it again soon? Do we get money off the new one? You said it takes 3 weeks to install the system – that's too long! Can't you do it any quicker? Hope you can reply soon, we're in a bit of a hurry.

Thanks,

Janet Brown

Fine Foods Ltd.
10 Bridge Street
London
SW10 5TG

12th September 2006

Mr. R. Jones
Sales Manager
Thames Software Systems
River Buildings
Stockwell Walk
London
SW17 5HG

Dear Mr. Jones,

Stock Control Software System

Thank you for your letter of 1st September and the information you sent regarding the stock control system offered by your company. I certainly feel the system will meet our requirements. However, there are some points which I would like clarified before we go ahead and order the system.

Firstly, although you mentioned that the system has recently been updated, I wondered whether we might be eligible for a discount on any future upgrades.

Secondly, the installation and implementation period of three weeks, to which you refer in your letter, seems rather long. Is there any possibility of getting the system up and running on a shorter timescale?

I would be very grateful for a swift response to these queries, in order that we can begin the process as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

J. Brown

Ms J. Brown
Purchasing Manager



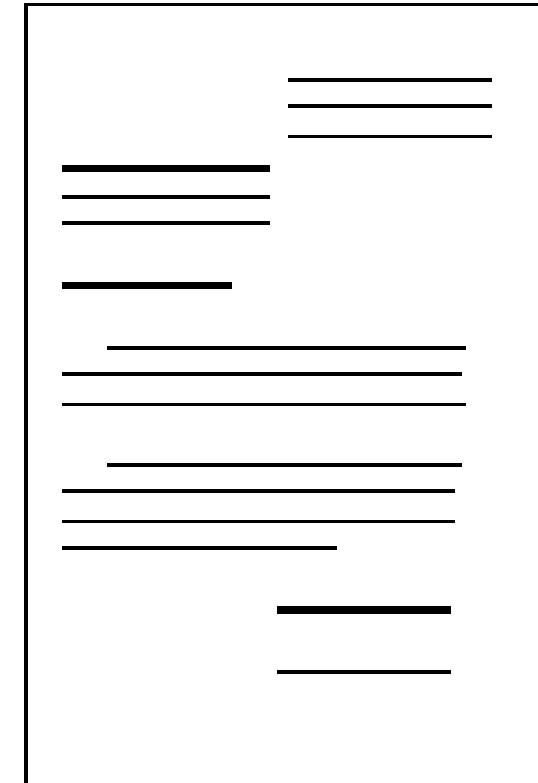
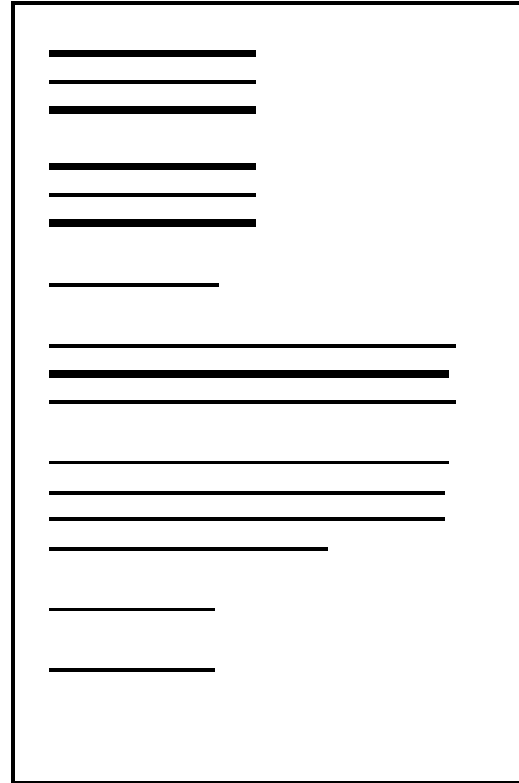
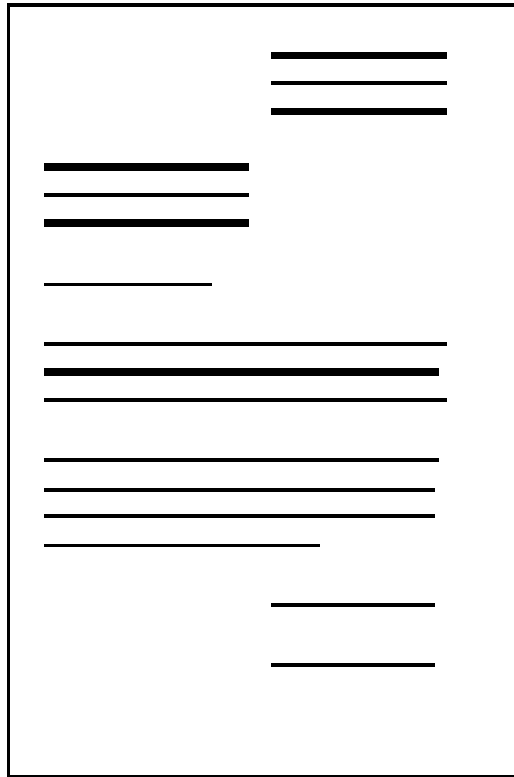
CHECK THE RESULTS

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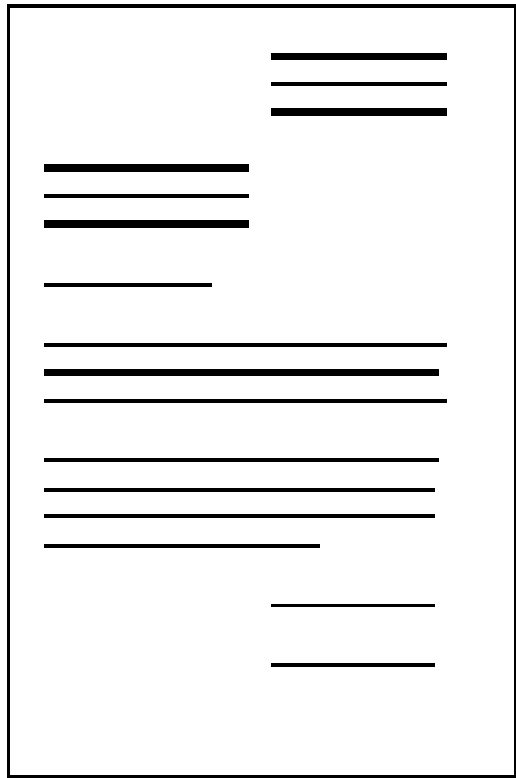
Exercise 6

Guess Business Letter Formats

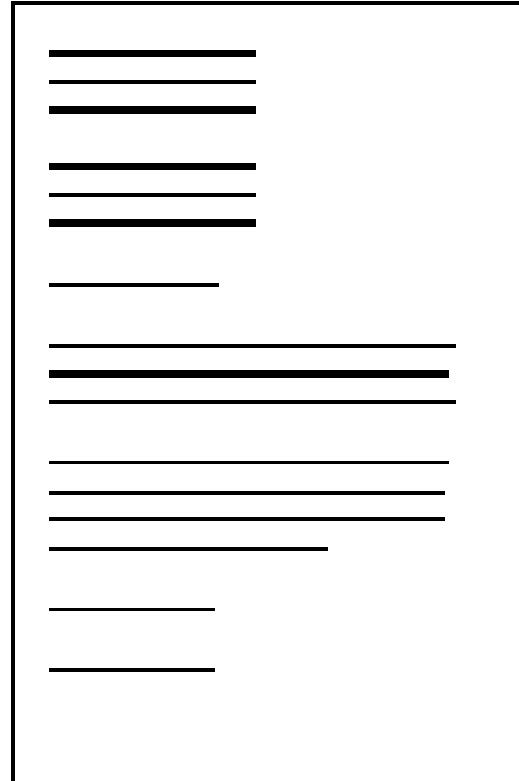




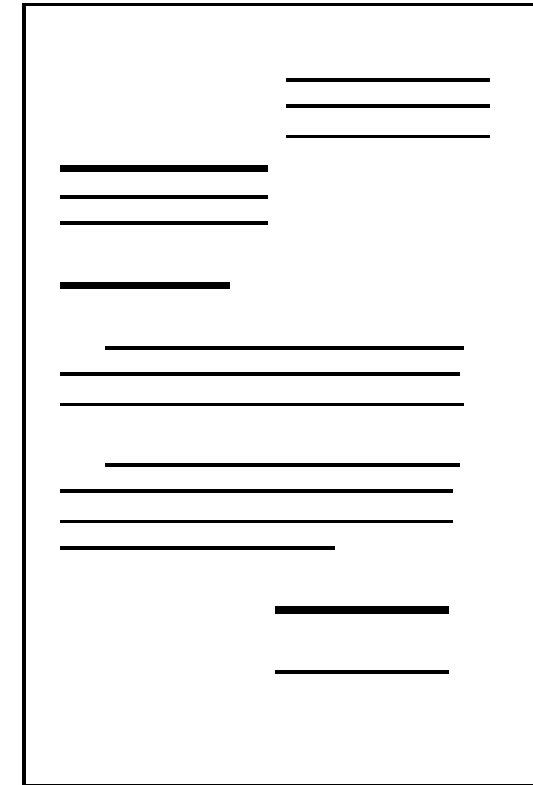
CHECK THE RESULTS



**Modified Block
Format**



Block Format

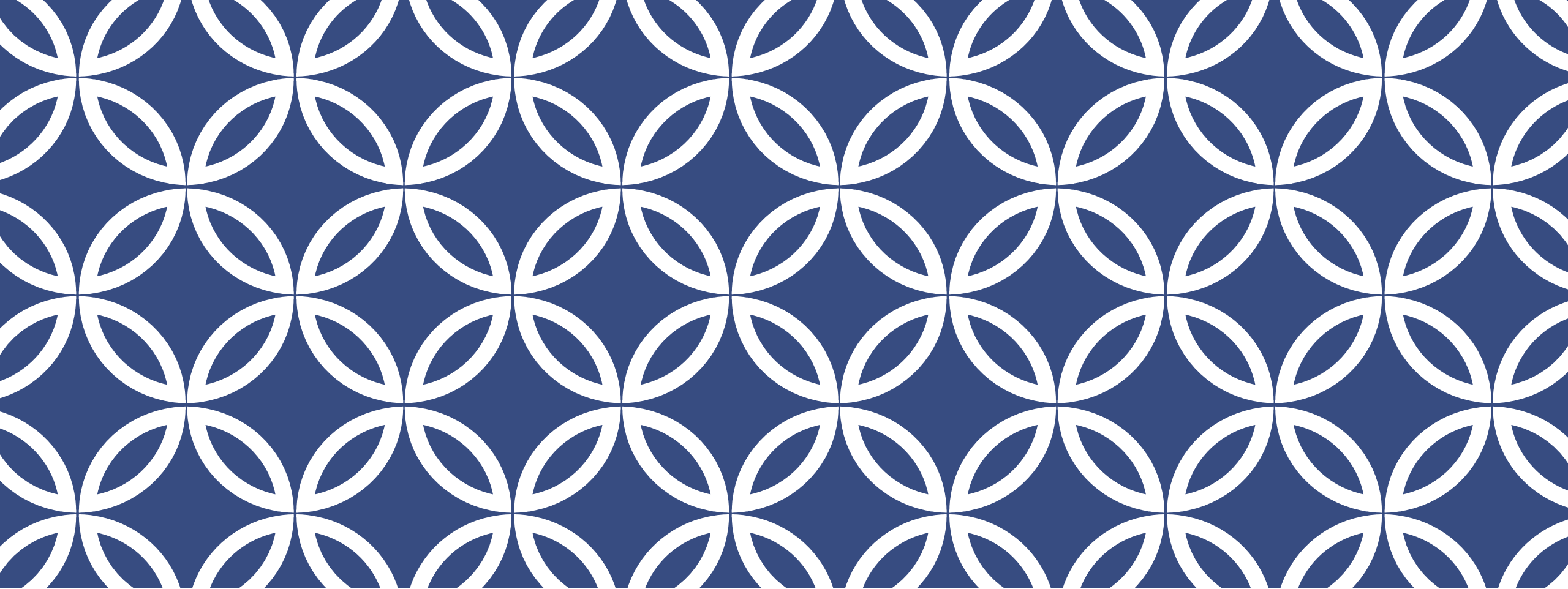


Semi-Block Format

EXERCISE 7



As a head of your department write a letter to The Principal/
The Director asking his/her permission for organising a
competition in your department.



Things to Remember... |

Prewriting Planning

Do a SAP (subject, audience, and purpose) analysis as outlined in the sections that follow.

SAP: SUBJECT, AUDIENCE, PURPOSE

SAP analysis is a process that quickly enables you to pin down the content and organization

of your letter. The process requires you to ask and answer three questions:

- What is the subject (topic) of your letter?
- Who is your audience? (Who will be receiving your letter?)
- What is the purpose of your letter?

Now sit down, and start writing!

GATHER INFORMATION

In order to write an effective letter and save time in doing so, you need to have all your information at hand, such as copies of previous correspondence on the topic,

Etc.

The Professional Practise

- Writing
- Rewriting
- Polishing

Twelve Rules for Better Letter Writing

1. PRESENT YOUR BEST SELF

Your moods vary. After all, you're only human. But while it is sometimes difficult to present your best self in conversation, which is spontaneous and instant, letters are written alone and on your own schedule. Therefore, you can and should take the time to let your most pleasant personality shine through in your writing.

2. WRITE IN A CLEAR, CONVERSATIONAL STYLE

Your ideas should be clear and expressed in conversational language. The key to success in business or technical writing. *Keep it simple.*

“Write to express — not to impress.”

3. BE CONCISE

Professionals, Superiors, Authorities are busy people. Make your writing less time-consuming for them to read by telling the whole story in the fewest possible words.

How can you make your writing more concise?

One way is to avoid redundancies —a needless form of wordiness in which a modifier repeats an idea already contained within the word being modified.



4. BE CONSISTENT

Good writers strive for consistency in their use of numbers, hyphens, units of measure, punctuation, equations, grammar, symbols, capitalization, technical terms, and abbreviations. Keep in mind that if you are inconsistent in any of these matters of usage, you are automatically wrong at least part of the time.

5. USE JARGON SPARINGLY

Many disciplines and specialties have a special language all their own.

Technical terms are a helpful shorthand when you're communicating within the profession, but they may confuse readers who do not have your special background.

Eg. Take the word, "yield," for example. To a chemical engineer, yield is a measure of how much product a reaction produces. But to car drivers, yield means slowing down (and stopping, if necessary) at an intersection.



6. AVOID BIG WORDS

Some writers prefer to use big, important-sounding words instead of short, simple words. This is a mistake; fancy language just frustrates the reader. Write in plain, ordinary English and your readers will love you for it.

7. PREFER THE SPECIFIC TO THE GENERAL

Your readers want information — facts, figures, conclusions, and recommendations. Do not be content to say something is good, bad, fast, or slow when you can say *how good*, *how bad*, *how fast*, or *how slow*. Be specific whenever possible.

8. BREAK UP YOUR WRITING INTO SHORT SECTIONS

- Long, unbroken blocks of text are stumbling blocks that intimidate and bore readers. Breaking up your writing into short sections and short paragraphs makes the text easier to read.
- If your paragraphs are too long, go through them. Wherever a new thought starts, type a return and start a new paragraph.
- In the same way, short sentences are easier to grasp than long ones. A good guide for keeping sentence length under control is to write sentences that can be spoken aloud without losing your breath (do *not* take a deep breath before doing this test).

9. USE VISUALS

Drawings, graphs, and other visuals can reinforce your text. In fact, pictures often communicate better than words; we remember 10 percent of what we read, but 30 percent of what we see.

Visuals can make your technical communications more effective.

10. USE THE ACTIVE VOICE

Voice refers to the person speaking words or doing an action.

An “active verb” stresses the person doing the thing. A “passive verb” stresses the thing being done.

In the active voice, action is expressed directly: “John performed the experiment.” In the passive voice, the action is indirect: “The experiment was performed by John.”

When possible, use the active voice. Your writing will be more direct and vigorous; your sentences more concise.

The passive voice seems puny and stiff by comparison.

11. ORGANIZATION

Poor organization is the number one problem in letter writing. ‘If the reader believes the content has some importance to him, he can plow through a report even if it is dull or has lengthy sentences and big words. But if it’s poorly organized — forget it. There’s no way to make sense of what is written.’
Poor organization stems from poor planning.

12. LENGTH

Whenever possible, keep your letter to one page. Today's busy readers really appreciate seeing that everything is on one side of a sheet of paper. Even Winston Churchill used to require of those serving under him that they express their concerns on no more than one side of a single sheet of paper.

- If you have more to say, you can go to a second page, and possibly a third. No more than that.



REFERENCES

A business letter – Try - Activities © BBC | British Council 2006.

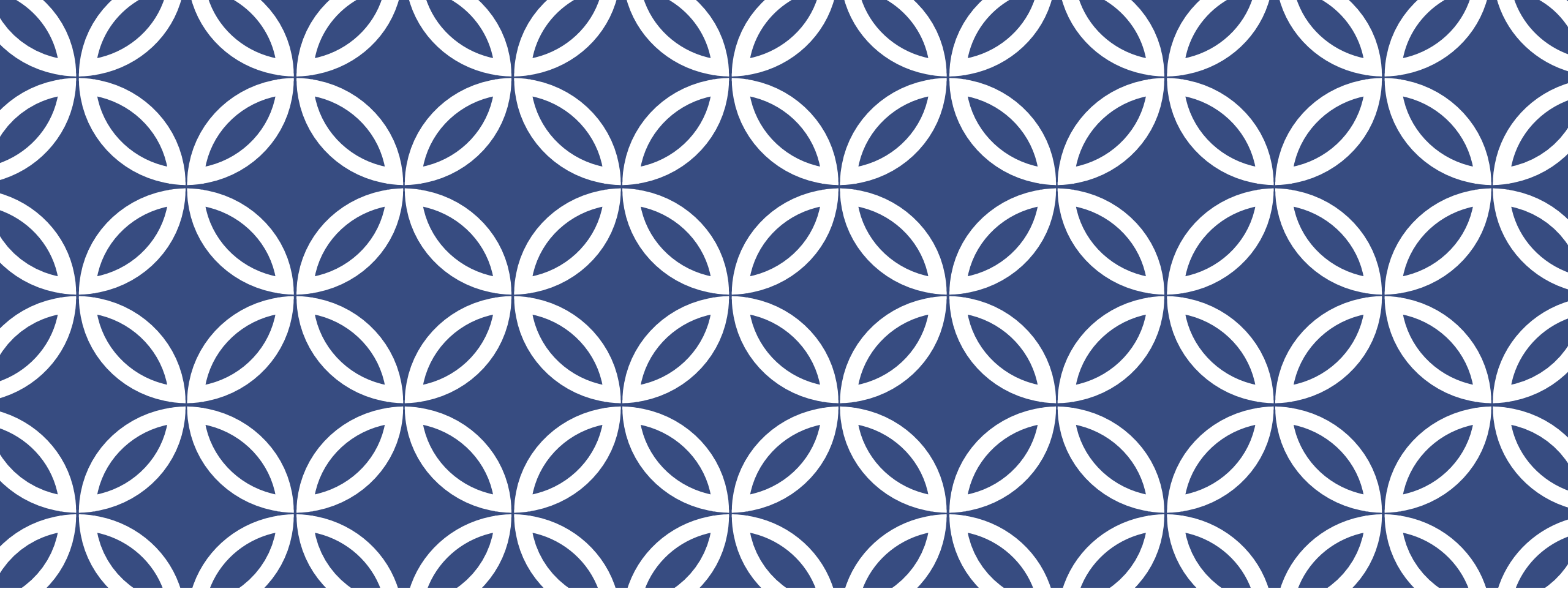
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THANK YOU FOR
ATTENTION

