

A well-written formal letter communicates a message clearly and makes a good impression on the person receiving the letter. You might write a formal letter when you

- apply for a job, an award, or a scholarship
- ask for information
- purchase something
- complain about a product, service, or decision
- express your opinion
- invite someone to an event
- thank someone for a gift, a favour, or assistance
- answer a formal request

There are six components of a formal letter:

your name
street address
city, province, postal code
date

1. The **heading** consists of the writer's address, followed by the date on which the letter is written.

receiver's name and title
receiver's company or institution
receiver's street address
receiver's city, province, postal code

2. The **inside address** consists of the name and title of the letter's recipient, along with his or her address.

Dear Ms. Jones,

3. The **salutation** begins with the word *Dear* and is followed by *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, or *Ms.* (or the person's title) and the person's last name. The salutation ends with a comma or colon.

briefly introduce yourself
explain the reason for writing
provide details and examples
may take two + paragraphs
summarize your message
may suggest action

4. The **body** paragraphs are each written in a single-spaced block, with a double space after the salutation, between paragraphs, and before the closing. The paragraphs are NOT indented.

Yours sincerely,

5. The **closing** begins with a capital letter and ends with a comma.

Sam Smith

Sam Smith
Secretary

6. The **signature** is your name signed in blue or black ink. Beneath your signature, type your name so that it is legible. (Some people's signatures are very difficult to read.) You may also include your title if it is applicable to the purpose of your letter.