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4 1 Introduction

There are various styles for letter writing. Among these various styles, fully blocked form and modified blocked form are used on a large scale. Various characteristics that make the letter meaningful are always be taken care of. It is a fact that when we receive a letter, our attention is primarily attracted towards its outward appearance. The six points that make the letter attractive should necessarily be taken care of. Thus, if the letter is attractive in appearance and written properly, the process of commercial communication becomes fruitful. In addition to this, the structure or format of a business letter too is an important facet. A business letter is divided into several parts and if they are arranged in their fixed order, the letter becomes meaningful and creates desired impact on the reader. Among these various parts there are a few regular parts that should be compulsorily included in a letter whereas there are occasional parts that are included as and when necessary in the structure of a letter. These parts are also known as occasional parts; included as per their need.

All the parts which form the lay out of a bussiness letter are divided into two parts : Regular parts and Occassional parts.

4 2 The Regular Parts of a Business Letter

It is necessary to maintain pre-decided, accepted format of a business letter. Accordingly, heading, date, inside address, salutation, the body of the letter, complimentary close and signature should be included in their pre-decided order and pre-determined place. All these parts should consist all the necessary information. If any part is missing/misplaced then the structure of a letter would be inaccurate.

4 2 1 Explanation of the compulsory parts of a business letter with examples :

- (a) Heading/Letterhead
- (b) Date
- (c) Inside Address
- (d) Salutation
- (e) Body of the Letter
 - (i) Introductory Paragraph
 - (ii) Middle Paragraph
 - (iii) Concluding Paragraph
- (f) Complimentary Close
- (g) Signature

A Specimen of Regular Parts of Business Letter

Heading _____ _____ _____		
Phone No. : _____	E-mail _____	Date _____
Inside Address _____ _____ _____ _____		
Salutation, _____		
Introductory Paragraph _____ _____ _____		Body of the Letter
Middle Paragraph _____ _____ _____		
Concluding Paragraph _____ _____ _____		
		Complimentary Close _____
		Signature _____

4 3 The Occasional/Optional parts of a business letter

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) Personal and Other notations | (b) Attention Line |
| (c) Subject Line | (d) Enclosure |
| (e) Carbon Copy Notation | (f) Identification Line |
| (g) Mailing Instruction | (h) Postscript |

4 3 1 Explanation of the Occasional/Optional parts of a business letter with examples

Apart from the seven compulsory parts of a business letter, there are certain occasional/optional parts that are used as per their requirements in a business letter. It is necessary to develop a clear understanding about the purpose and place of writing any information which should be taken care of. Among the occasional/optional parts listed below, a few are mentioned before the main part of the letter whereas a few are mentioned after the last compulsory part i.e. the signature.

A Specimen of occasional parts of a business letters :

Heading _____ _____ _____	
Phone No. : _____	E-mail _____ Date _____ <u>Personal & Other Notations</u>
Inside Address _____ _____ _____	
Attention Line _____ Subject Line _____	
<u>Salutation</u> _____ _____ _____	
Body of the Letter _____ _____ _____ _____	
<u>Complimentary Close</u> <u>Signature</u>	
Enclosure Carbon Copy Notation - C. C. Identification Line Mailing Instruction Postscript	

4 4 Detailed Study of the Regular Parts of a business Letter

Let us now discuss the regular parts of a business letter in detail.

4 4 1 Heading / Letterhead The first regular part provides an introduction of the institute/firm. The letter begins with this part. Some institutes/firms write letters on their printed letterheads. Name of the institute/firm, type of business, postal address for correspondence and other addresses like e-mail, telephone, fax or website are mentioned here. The logo – individual identification of the institute/firm is also included here. All these details are mentioned at their fixed places. The name of the institute/firm is written in block, bold letters in the middle of the paper. The logo of the firm is either printed or embossed on its either side. Generally black or blue color is used for the fonts of the letter but any color of choice can be used for the name of the firm. Address in a business letter can be written in the middle, below the name of the firm and for that, the order of specific details to general details is followed. That means for the address, the shop number will be written first, then the name of the building, the name of the area, thereafter the name of post office area in which that area falls and lastly the name of the city and pin code are mentioned. The details like telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and website are placed as per the convenience on left or right side of the postal address. The first compulsory part of a letter; the letterhead, thus provides many details yet it should be noted that it should not cover more than $\frac{1}{5}$ part of the paper. At times, reference number of the letter is included in this part.

For example :

Better Home Appliances	
(Dealers in Household Utilities)	
10, Vineet Chambers,	
Behind S T Bus Stand,	
BARDOLI - 394601 - Dist. : Surat	
Phone No. : 0262-2220256	Fax No. : 0262-2220252
E-mail : bethom1@gmail.com	

Or the letterhead can be written like this :

Better Home Appliances	
(Dealers in Household Utilities)	
Phone No. : 0262-2220256	10, Vineet Chambers,
Fax No. : 0262-2220252	Behind S T Bus Stand,
E-mail : bethome1@gmail.com	Bardoli - 394601 - Dist. : Surat

4 4 2 Date The second important feature of the compulsory part of a business letter is the date. Its place is determined as per the style selected for letter writing; whether fully blocked or modified blocked style. It provides time reference to the letter. The date, referring to the date, month and year, can be written in two ways :

1 American Method It is also called Cardinal Numbers. Here the name of the month is written first, then the date followed by a comma (,) and lastly the year.

For example : January 10, 2016

2 British Method It is also called Ordinal Numbers. Here the date with st, nd, rd,th; the manner they are pronounced is written first, then the name of the month followed by a comma (,) and lastly the year.

For example : 10th January, 2016

It should be remembered that the full name of the month should be written and never in their short forms like 'Jan' for January and 'Feb' for February and so on. In the same way the year should be mentioned in four digits as 2016 and writing in short like '16 or 16 is not proper. For a business letter, it will also be improper to write the date as – 22-01-16 or 22/01/16.

4 4 3 Inside Address In this part the address of the receiver of the letter is written. It is written beside the left margin leaving one line after the date. For this address too, the order of specific to general details is to be followed and the punctuation marks are used accordingly. When the letter is addressed to a person, his/her name and if need be, his/her designation is also mentioned. When a name is mentioned as part of an inside address then prefix used for respect must be mentioned. 'Mr.' – the short form of 'Mister' is used before the name of a gentleman.

For example : Mr. J. K. Mehra

When the name of a lady is referred to and if that lady is married then 'Mrs.' – the short form of 'Mistress' is used before her name. If the lady is unmarried, then 'Miss' is used before her name. When there is no idea about the marital status of the lady or if she does not want to disclose it, 'Ms' (pronounced as *miz*) is used before her name.

For example: Mrs Ananta Virani / Miss Devashree Thaker / Ms Prateeti Pandit

In old days, in England, the word showing honor 'Esquire' was popularly used for gentlemen, in short form it was referred to as 'Esq.' It was written after the full name.

For example : R. V. Vaidya Esq.

Some people opt to mention their degree along with their names. It is preferred not to use Esquire and degree both together. If it is inevitable to use both, then it can be written as:

R. V. Vaidya Esq. Ph.D

Some people prefer to mention their degree/designation or title conferred upon them. These can be listed as Doctor, Professor, Sir, Padmashree, Captain, Colonel and so on. They will be mentioned before the full names as :

Dr. Urjaswa Dhruv / Sir Ravindra Jadeja / Prof. Nilay Medh.

When designation along with title is referred to, it should be written like this :

Prin. (Dr.) Rushabh Pandya

In case of ladies, it should be written as :

Dr. (Smt.) Nandana Bhargav

Prof. (Ms.) Kajri Mehta -

With the title of a firm having personal name, 'Messrs' is written before it as:

Messrs Rajani Brothers

With the title of a firm having impersonal name, 'The' is written before it as:

For example : The Radix Corporation

When the executives of any limited company, private firm, bank or public venture are to be addressed as part of inside address then their designations are mentioned and not their names.

For example : The Secretary,

Zaykor Group of Industries,

Ahmedabad

For example : The Manager,

State Bank of India,

Navrangpura,

Ahmedabad

4 4 4 The Salutation After the inside address, beside the left margin, leaving one line, the words of respect, showing readiness for communication written for the receiver of the letter are called the salutation. As per general tradition, we greet one another in the beginning of any interaction like 'Hello', 'How are you ?' 'How do you do ?' and so on. In fact, the important part of the letter now begins, therefore, it would be appropriate to greet the receiver of the letter. This salutation can be like - 'Dear Sir', 'Dear Madam', 'Dear Mr. Suri', 'My dear Mr. Thaker'. It should be remembered at this stage that if the name of the person is mentioned as part of inside address, then as salutation, after 'Dear' that name should be mentioned. If some name is not mentioned but designation is mentioned then the salutation be 'Sir/Madam'.

When the letter is addressed to some group, the salutation will be 'Gentlemen'. As per the British method the punctuation mark comma (,) is placed after salutation, whereas as per American

method the punctuation mark colon(:). is placed. The other important thing about salutation is that it reveals the proximity or nearness in relationship between the letter writer and its receiver. For example, for official correspondence with government institutions, the most formal salutation 'Sir/Madam' is used. In general correspondence the salutation 'Dear Sir/Dear Madam' is used. When there is an intimate relationship with the receiver, the salutation like 'My dear Khan' is used. It is the salutation that decides the complimentary close because both are interconnected.

4 4 5 The Body of the Letter The body of the letter which is the theme, written immediately after the salutation. This main part of letter and is generally divided into three parts :

a Introductory Paragraph It generally provides reference to the earlier correspondence or interaction. At times it provides an introduction to the letter-writer. It serves the purpose of a connecting-link in the chain of correspondence. A properly begun letter thus works efficiently as a messenger.

b Main Paragraph This second paragraph is the essence of the letter. Here, the theme of the letter is discussed methodically and in detail. By selecting proper sentence pattern and clear selection of words, an attempt is made to justify the purpose for which the letter is drafted. If the sole purpose of drafting the letter is to convey complete and detailed information, then here it is presented in more than one paragraphs or with bullets or even in tabular form where it is arranged appropriately. An attempt is made here to impart information in a precise manner so that the reader gets it equally well and his interest is maintained.

c Concluding Paragraph The letter-writer here clearly mentions what he expects from the reader and moves in the direction of ending the letter. He makes an attempt to convert the prospective customer into an actual customer by giving some assurance. It should be noted that certain regular expressions mentioned after the third paragraph and before the complimentary close should be written as follows :

For example : 'Thanking you'	(Incorrect expression)
'Thank you'	(Correct expression)
'Awaiting an early reply from you'	(Incorrect expression)
'We await an early reply from you'	(Correct expression)

Both the earlier expressions are incorrect because they are not complete sentences. After writing a correct and complete sentence, it should end with a full stop.

4 4 6 The Complimentary Close Just as, the letter begins with greetings in form of salutation, it should end with appropriate expression complimenting the reader. This expression is called the complimentary close and it gives clear indication regarding the proximity and intimacy of relationship between the writer and the reader of the letter. As mentioned earlier these two compulsory parts of letter are interrelated.

Salutation	Complimentary close	Note
Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Sir,	Yours faithfully,	Formal - Popularly preferred for the most formal letters
Dear Mr. Shaikh, Dear Ms. Pathan, Dear Nargis,	Yours sincerely,	Informal - Popularly preferred for informal letters
My dear Jehan, My dear Nancy,	Yours truly, or Yours,	Popularly preferred for the most informal letters

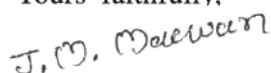
One should be very particular about capitalization and punctuation marks while writing complimentary close.

For example: 'Yours sincerely,' – Here 'Y' of 'Yours' will be capital and no apostrophe mark (') is used before or after 's' of 'Yours' and 's' of 'sincerely' is always small and never capital. A comma (,) is placed at the end.

4 4 7 The Signature After complimentary close, the letter-writer writes his signature or writes his/her full name. In case he/she puts initials (first alphabets of first, middle and last names) or the signature is illegible, then in the next line below he/she is expected to write name in brackets. The signature authenticates the letter, the matter expressed in the letter and the sincerity of the writer. It clarifies that the writer endorses contents of the letter wholeheartedly. The signature is generally hand written. If the letter is computer generated then a digital signature is used.

For example :

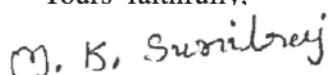
Yours faithfully,



(J. M. Macwan)

When the writer is the sole owner of the firm :

Yours faithfully,



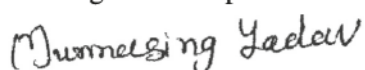
(M. K. Sunilraj)

In case of a partnership firm :

Yours faithfully,

For

Singhal Transport



(Munnasing Yadav)

Per Pro Signature / 'Per procurationem' When a person who holds a higher post in a firm or institute is going to remain away from his/her duties, then the person, keeping in mind the promptness of the routine official work of the company, officially allows another person to sign on his behalf; of course after completing a legal formality. At times heads of different departments officially provides rights to sign on their behalf for certain routine correspondence. In such cases power of attorney is given for signature per procurationem. This proxy signature arrangement necessarily requires prior completion of legal procedure. Per-pro signature is written in the following way :

For example :

Yours faithfully,

p.p. The Oscar Chemicals Ltd.



(R. M. Parmar)

Manager (Sales)

4 5 Detailed Study of Occassional / Optional Parts of a Business Letter

We shall now study in detail about the occassional / optional parts mentioned in a business letter :

4 5 1 Personal and other Notations When the letter-writer expects that the receiver pays prompt attention to the letter, keeps the matter confidential or supply proper reply then in that case, in the top, upper, blank part of the letter instructions like 'Urgent', 'Personal', 'Confidential', 'Priority' are written in either bold letters or with different colored ink. At times, these expressions are underlined to draw attention of the reader. Because of it, any other person in an institute/firm would not open or read the letter or do the needful. It is advisable to mention notations of these types on the envelope.

4 5 2 Attention Line The letter-writer would mention the address of the receiver as part of the inside address as well as on the envelope. But when he expects that a particular person of the institute/firm should receive the letter, he only should pay attention and do the needful, then the name of that person is mentioned as part of attention line. It should be noted that if the name of that person is mentioned as part of inside address, attention line is not required in that case. Generally it is placed between inside address and salutation and is written in either of the two ways mentioned below; For example -

The Manager,
Anant Trading Co.,
Ahmedabad

For the attention of Shri Amarendra Parghi

OR

Attention : Shri Amarendra Parghi

Dear Sir,

4 5 3 Subject Line The Subject line indicates the purpose of writing a letter. Before the receiver of the letter starts reading the content of the letter, he would come to know about the main theme of the letter. This line can be written either between inside address and salutation or after salutation and before the body of the letter. Generally, Subject line is indicated by underlining it or by writing in bold letters.

For example :

Subject : Wholesale purchase of pulses and grocery.

4 5 4 Enclosure At times, along with the main letter, as mentioned in the letter, certain papers containing connected information are enclosed in the envelope. This is called enclosure. For example with an application for certain post, copies of mark sheets and certificates are required to be enclosed. The detail of enclosure is mentioned after signature, beside the left margin. When there is more than one enclosure, then either their number is mentioned or they are described one after another.

For example :

Enclosures : Total Three

OR

Encls : (1) Copy of H.S.C. mark sheet

(2) Copies of mark sheets of three years of B. Com.

(3) Copy of B. Com. degree certificate

4 5 5 Carbon Copy Notation At times a particular letter is meant for more than one institute/ department; they all come to know about the content of the letter and each one do the needful in his/ her own way. In such letters, after signature, beside the left margin and among the optional parts, they all are mentioned as carbon copy notation towards the end. With instruction 'C C to:' they all are mentioned in a serial order as :

For example :

C. C. to :

(1) The Managing Trustee, Sharda Paryavaran Jagruti Mandal, Ahmedabad.

(2) The Commissioner of Trade and Commerce, Gandhinagar.

(3) The Secretary, Commerce Section, Gandhinagar.

4 5 6 Identification Line In big institutions or government departments it is very likely that two or more than two persons are involved in the process of drafting a letter. It is also possible that the executive may give dictation of the content of the letter and any other employee may take it down in shorthand and type it. In such a situation in order to create the identity of the persons involved, their names are mentioned as part of identification line – one of the occasional / optional parts of business letter mentioned after signature, beside the left margin. Here, the initials of the person dictating the letter and the one typing it are mentioned separated by colon- (:) or slash- (/).

For example :

H.D.P.: J. R. T. OR H.D.P./ J. R. T.

Here it is understood that the executive with the initials H. D. Pathan has given the dictation of the letter and the one having initials J. R. Tadvani has typed it.

4 5 7 Mailing Instruction As per the contents of the letter the executive of the firm decides and instructs which way it has to be dispatched; whether by ordinary post, registered post, registered a. d. post, speed post or by courier. Authentic detail regarding the dispatch of a particular post is obtained from mailing instruction and it is placed either at the top or end of the letter.

For example:

By Regd. A. D. Post

OR

By Courier

4 5 8 Postscript After mentioning all necessary details as part of the body of letter, if the letter-writer wants to draw the attention of the reader towards some significant matter, then in that case among the optional parts mentioned after the signature, it is mentioned with 'P. S.'. It should be noted that if the writer forgets to mention some significant matter and then mentions as part of postscript then it suggests carelessness on his part. In such a situation, it becomes advisable to redraft the letter. It is a necessary formality to put signature after mentioning details as part of 'P. S.'.

What did you learn in this chapter ?

In this chapter we have studied that it is necessary to maintain the regular, pre-fixed format for a business letter which includes certain compulsory parts as letterhead, date, inside address, salutation, the body of letter, complimentary close and signature. They should be written in their fixed order and at fixed place. They should carefully include all necessary details and if the letter lacks in any of these formalities, it is considered inaccurate. In addition to this, the details of format of a business letter also include certain occasional or optional parts. We should develop clarity about their function, place, the details included and the manner in which they are mentioned and also use them judiciously.

Exercise

1 Select appropriate option from the options given and complete the sentences :

- (1) What is the meaning of the address of the receiver of letter ?
(A) Heading (B) Reference
(C) Salutation (D) Inside address
- (2) Compliment Close provides to a business letter.
(A) proper style (B) idea of mature relations of the two persons
(C) priority (D) authenticity

2 Write short notes on the following

- (1) Identification line
- (2) Postscript
- (3) Mailing instructions.

3 Answer the following questions in detail

- (1) Enumerate compulsory parts of a business letter.
- (2) Write about different ways of writing date in a business letter with examples.
- (3) Write about the meaning and place of attention line by providing example.
- (4) What is the objective of per pro signature in a business letter ?