FORMAL LETTER: LAYOUT, PARTS, VOCABULARY

A] The following sentences are all part of a formal business letter – however, there are many mistakes in almost all of them. Read them carefully and i) correct all mistakes, ii) put them in the correct order (they are in a jumbled form) and iii) produce a formal business letter adopting the appropriate layout, using the space provided below.

•	11/03/2022:
•	Yours faithfully:
•	Dear Mr. Brown:
•	enclosure - price list:
•	Levin Shoes Itd, 10 willow street Canterbury:
•	MG/ws:
•	Thank you for your letter:
•	c.c Mrs Kelly Norman:
•	Re / Summer shoes catalogue and price list:
•	of 20 February asking for details and prices of "Levin Summer Shoes" collection:
•	Gordon Mary, Sales manager:
•	Kent SR3 2PX:
•	Telephone / +44(0)1303 485224:
•	email / mgordon@levinshoes.com :
•	We trust that our quality and prices are:
•	As you will notice our shoes are superior to any other on the market and our prices
	highly competitive:
•	Major's Department store:
•	Attention / Mr John Collins/for the attention of the Sales Manager:
•	We must also point out that many orders have been received even at this time of the year and, if you wish to ensure delivery by the end of April, you must place your order now:
•	Earlham 23 road:
•	London WE51DR:

BUSINESS ENGLISH WORKSHOP – WRITING / 1 – FORMAL LETTERS		
		
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BUSINESS LETTERS: THE WHAT, WHEN, HOW POINTS

A business letter is any letter written – in a formal language - from one business to another or to a client, customer, or partner. The main parts of a business letter are the following:

- i. Company letterhead / Sender's address
- ii. Date
- iii. Receiver's address
- iv. Attention line

- v. Reference number
- vi. Salutation
- vii. Subject line or heading
- viii. Main body
- ix. Closing sentence
- x. Signature

B] Look again at the business letter you re-ordered in Task A – can you identify the main parts of that specific letter (it is not necessary to have all of them, though)?

i.	Company letterhead / Sender's address:
ii.	Date:
iii.	Receiver's address:
iv.	Attention line:
٧.	Reference line:
vi.	Salutation:
vii.	Subject line OR heading:
iii.	Main body:
ix.	Closing sentence:
х.	Signature:

C] What follows is a sample of a formal business letter – read it carefully and identify its main parts from those mentioned above.

Monroe Training Solutions 42, Preston Court Norfolk PE27 5MR Tel: 01485 5974567

Email: jmonroe@gmail.com www.monroetraining.com

6 May 2012

Private and confidential

Re: Your letter dated May 2, 2012

Department of Economics Vancouver Business School 2373 Canadian Walk Vancouver BC Canada V5P 9S8

Attention Ms Victoria Howes

Dear Ms. Victoria Howes,

Subject: Conference Participation

With reference to your letter of 30 April, I would like to thank you for inviting me to speak as a keynote speaker at the Business Solutions conference organized by the Vancouver Business School this November.

It will be my pleasure to attend and I am planning on giving a talk on the following topic: Creative Innovation for Business Managers. Please find enclosed a copy of my latest book for your interest.

I would be interested in asking you a few questions about the event. Perhaps we could arrange a call at your earliest convenience to discuss further details.

Finally, I would like to confirm that I have sent my proposal and speaker form via e-mail to the administrator as requested.

Yours sincerely,

Joanna Monroe Training Consultant

Encl. copy of *Creative Innovation*

What follows is a detailed description of each part we find in a formal business letter, followed by examples.

1. THE LETTERHEAD

Letterhead is printed on the company's stationery, in one or more colours and gives much information about the company. It is usually printed in the middle, the left hand OR right-hand

corner (B.E.) and includes the company's logo, full legal name followed by its full address, telephone, fax and email address. The type of the company is printed after its name. In the UK, the most common company abbreviations are:

- PLC: Public Limited Company
- Ltd: private limited liability company (Ε.Π.Ε. = Περιορισμένης Ευθύνης)
- & Co: partnership between two or more people (= & ΣΙΑ)
- Son/s, Bros (brothers), Daughter/s: the company is a family concern (= Αφοί)
- INC: Incorporated (in the USA)

EXAMPLE:

AUDIOSONIC Ltd.

Head House, Main Street, Rain Hill,

London SB2311B

Chairman Harry Brown Directors S.B.

Smith, N. Mat

Telephone (01) 7235211

Fax: +44(0)234567899

Email: har brown@audiosonic.co.uk

However, in case there is no letterhead we simply write the sender's address. The sender's address is written on the top right-hand side of the page, which includes the name and the number of your house, the name of the road, the village, town, city and postcode and last the name of the country.

EXAMPLE

Industrial Building

24-28 White Road

Liverpool BL47TF

UNITED KINGDOM

2. DATE

The date is inserted below the sender's address, <u>usually separated from it by a space</u>. If there is a printed letterhead, it is also written on the right-hand side of the page. Writing the month in the date in figures can be confusing because 11.2.21 means 11th February 2021 in most countries BUT 2nd November 2021 in the USA. Different regions use different formats for writing dates: in the <u>United States</u>, dates are written in the month-day-year format (3/15/2016, March 15, 2016) but in most English-speaking countries the date is written in a day-month-year format (15/03/2016, 15 March 2016).

British style
12th October, 2021
12 October 2021

American Style
October 12, 2021

12 Oct. 2021

October 12th 2021

The abbreviations [th, st, nd, rd] are acceptable but they may be omitted – abbreviations may be used for Jan. Feb. Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. dec. but they should be avoided.

The appearance of the date in English has particular rules which may differ from those in other languages. In addition to that it shows specific differences in spelling between British and American English. These two facts can sometimes be challenging for English language learners. Despite that a general convention dictates that the names of the months are capitalized in English. Now, consider the following distinctive characteristics and variations:

- ✓ The usual order of writing in British English is day, month, and year:
 - o 15 June 2009
 - 15th June 2009 (→ note the information below)
 - o 15/06/2009 or 15/06/09
 - o 15-06-2009 or 15-06-09
- ✓ In American English, however, it is common to write the month first, then the day, and finally the year:
 - June 15, 2009
 - \circ June 15th, 2009 (→ also consider the information below)
 - o 06/15/2009 or 06/15/09
 - o 06-15-2009 or 06-15-09

Even if you can still see it now and then, it is no longer usual to write the abbreviations '1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th,' etc., especially in formal correspondence – but they are still spoken (as explained in the section below). Furthermore, it is advisable to write out the month as a word to avoid confusion. Again, note the capitalisation of the month:

- When the date is written in a sentence, the preposition 'on' comes before it:
 - o "He sent me the letter on 12 January 2016."
- If only the year is mentioned, the preposition 'in' precedes it:
 - o "In 2013, Peter and his wife bought a new house."

3. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

This phrase may be written above the Receiver's address, and more importantly, on the envelope. Variations of the phrase may be the: "Confidential", "Strictly confidential".

4. THE RECEIVER'S ADDRESS

The receiver's address (also, known as the inside address) is inserted below the sender's address and on the opposite side of the paper. It includes the surname of the person you are writing to (if known), or the title or position in the company (if known), the department of the company, or the company only; the name of the house or the building, the number of the building and the name of the street or road, the name of the town or city and the postcode and finally the name of the country. The most common courtesy titles used in addresses are as follows:

- Mr (.) (Mister) title used for a man
- Mrs (.) title for a married woman
- Miss (.) title used for an unmarried woman
- Ms (.) for both married and unmarried women and tends to be the most prevalent title to address a woman
- Messrs (.) for two or more men
- *Mmes* (.) for two or more women
- ** (.) indicates that the full stop can be omitted

There are also cases in which special titles can be used such as Doctor (Dr.), Professor (Prof.) and they are followed by a given name e.g., Professor John Brown. If the recipient's name is unknown, we can write his/her job title, e.g. The Personnel Manager in the inside address.

5. ATTENTION LINE

This is used when you address your letter directly to a company, but you want the letter to be dealt with by a specific person or directed to a particular department. The attention line is typed two lines below the inside address (recipient's address) ands two lines above the salutation. For example: Attention: Mr. P. James / Attention of Mr. P. James / For the attention of the Sales Manager / To the attention of Ms. Jane Harper / ATTN: Ms. Jane Harper.

6. SALUTATIONS

The salutation is placed two lines below the inside address / recipient's address and they are usually followed by a comma. The standard and best way of beginning a letter is *Dear* (with capital D). There are different ways of salutations:

- Dear Sir: letter to a man whose name you do not know
- Dear Sirs: to address a company (B.E) Ladies and Gentlemen (A.E.)
- Dear Sir / Madame: when you do not know the name or sex of the addressee
- Dear Madame: to address a woman whose name you do not know (married or single)

When you know the name of the recipient, the salutation is *Dear* followed by the person's courtesy title and surname, e.g. Dear Mr. Cornish. In British correspondence a comma can be used after the salutation, e.g. *Dear Mr. Cornish*, whereas in American English a comma is used

when you address people informally, e.g. Dear John, and a colon is used when you address them formally, e.g. *Dear Mr Johnson*.

7. SUBJECT TITLE / LINE

The subject lines are very useful in formal letters since many letters on the same subject may be exchanged at intervals of some weeks during which other matters may be examined and other letters added to the files. The subject line may be omitted but, if used, it saves introducing the subject in the first paragraph and enables the reader to see what the letter is to deal with. It is placed below the salutation and it is printed either in capitals or in bold type, or underlined. It is not necessary to begin the subject title with Re: For example: Re: Information Technologies Conference / SUBJECT: Information Technologies Conference / Subject: Information Technologies Conference.

8. MAIN BODY OF THE LETTER

Every aspect of the subject matter requires a separate paragraph. The paragraphs may be indented, or blocked. Usually, a line space is left between paragraphs in the body of the letter. In the first paragraph, clearly state why you are writing ("With reference to our conversation of August 3", "With reference to your letter/email of (date)", "Regarding our meeting on Thursday..."). The first opening paragraph is mostly used to state the date of the letter being answered, the subject matter and the writer's feelings on the subject. The middle paragraphs elaborate on the subject matter, consisting of short paragraphs which enable the reader to comprehend the matter easily. Spacing should be single within paragraphs and double between paragraphs. Keep the paragraphs short and confine each on to a single, central key idea. The closing paragraph serves as a summary of the points raised before, recapitulating the message and giving the final shot. Some common phrases for closing business letters are: Please do not hesitate to contact us again if you have any questions or concerns / Please let me know if I can be of more assistance / If you need further help, please contact us again / We look forward to our next meeting.

9. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE / CLOSING

It should be two spaces under the last sentence of the last paragraph of the letter on the left hand and can be followed by a comma. Commonly used formal closings are:

- Yours faithfully if you begin the letter with Dear Sir/Dear Sirs/Dear Madame/Dear Sir or Madame
- Yours sincerely if your letter begins the letter with a personal name

The Americans tend to use "Yours truly, Yours very truly, Respectfully yours" for formal correspondence and Best regards, Kind regards, for friendly letters.

10.SIGNATURE

The simplest form of the signature consists of the sender's name, typed and signed. You have to type your name after your handwritten signature. It is advisable to use your courtesy title in the signature block in order for your correspondent to identify your sex and address correctly when s/he replies. For example:

Yours faithfully,

(Signature)

Mr J. Smith

Asst. Sales Manager

In B.E. the abbreviation per pro (P.P) means for and behalf and it appears in the signature block (secretaries use per pro when they sign letters on behalf of their bosses). For example:

Yours faithfully

(Mrs)

p.p. B. Brown

Managing Director

If an assistant signs his/her name on behalf of someone else, s/he must type his/her name and title below the signature. For example:

Yours sincerely,

(signature)

Karen Hope

Assistant to John Morris

11.REFERENCE INITIALS

Reference initials are an optional addition to any letter and can be used to identify the writer and the typist. They may appear at the top, after the letterhead, above the date, and on the left margin (British English) or bottom of the page, left-justified (American English and are indicated by the signer's initials in capitals, followed by a slash (/) or colon (:) and the lowercase initials of the employee who prepared the letter. If the letter has enclosures, put the typist's initials under the enclosure notice. If not, put the initials two to four line spaces under your name and title.

For example: John Green

Sales Manager

JG/lk

Besides, the information 'Your ref.' or 'Our ref.' may be employed to indicate the reference. Consequently, a complete line may look like this:

- BRS/rm
- Your ref. JK/887 / Our ref. 54/hn

12.ENCLOSURES

An enclosure is another document sent with a business letter and they appear in the bottom left hand corner of the page. Enclosures may be brochures, order forms, reports and other kind of documents. You should mention in the first paragraph of your letter that you have enclosed something and mention it again at the bottom of the page, under your signature. To reference your enclosure in the letter, you can use one of these phrases:

- We are enclosing
- I have enclosed
- Enclosed is
- Please find enclosed

Two to four line spaces under your name and title, at the very bottom of your business letter, reference the enclosure again. You can either type out the full word "Enclosure" and include the number of enclosures after it in parentheses. For example:

Enclosures (3) 1. Invoice 1029

- 2. Return slip
- 3. Customer satisfaction survey

OR

encs (2) 1. Invoice 1029

2. Return slip

If the letter is sent via mail, the word *Attachment* should be used instead and the same rules as those for the enclosures should be followed.

13.COPIES / COPY NOTATION

c.c./cc (carbon copies) is written usually at the end of the letter (below the enclosures or reference initials) and indicates that copies have been sent to other people, apart from the named receiver. For example: *Cc: Ted Hanks, CFO.* In case you do not want the named recipients to know that other people have received copies, wrote **b.c.c.** (blind carbon copies) on the copies themselves, but not of course, on the top copy.

14.POST SCRIPTUM (P.S.)

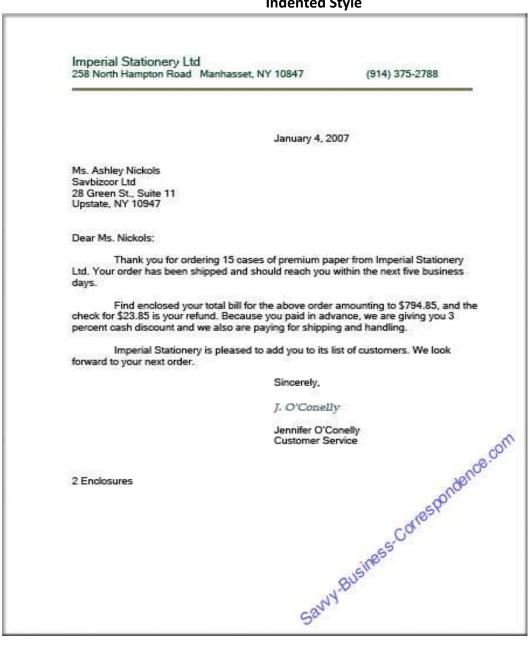
No longer than two lines below the last notation, used to write an additional message after the letter has been signed – though it is rarely used nowadays.

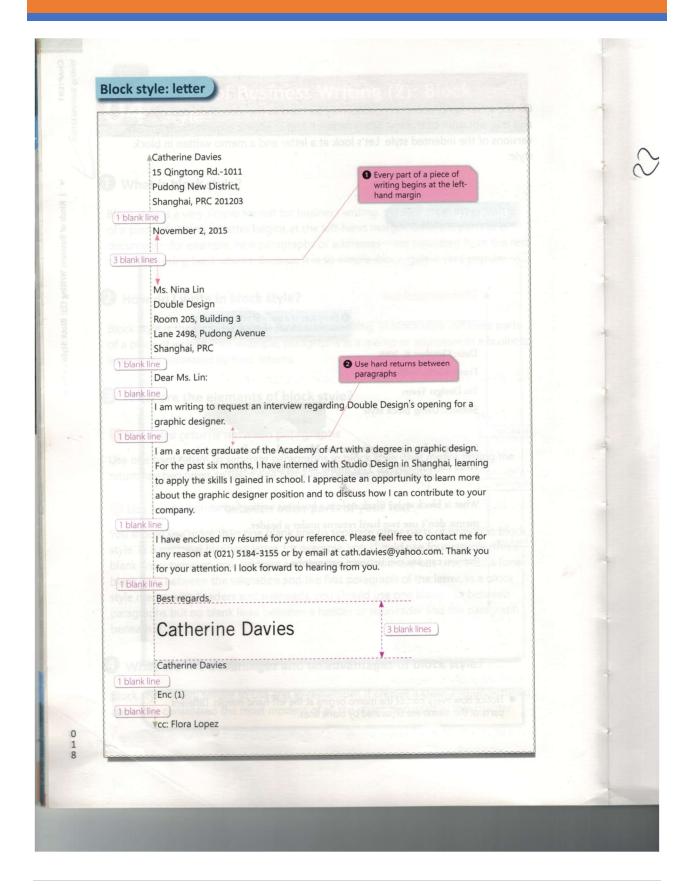
15.KINDS OF BUSINESS WRITING

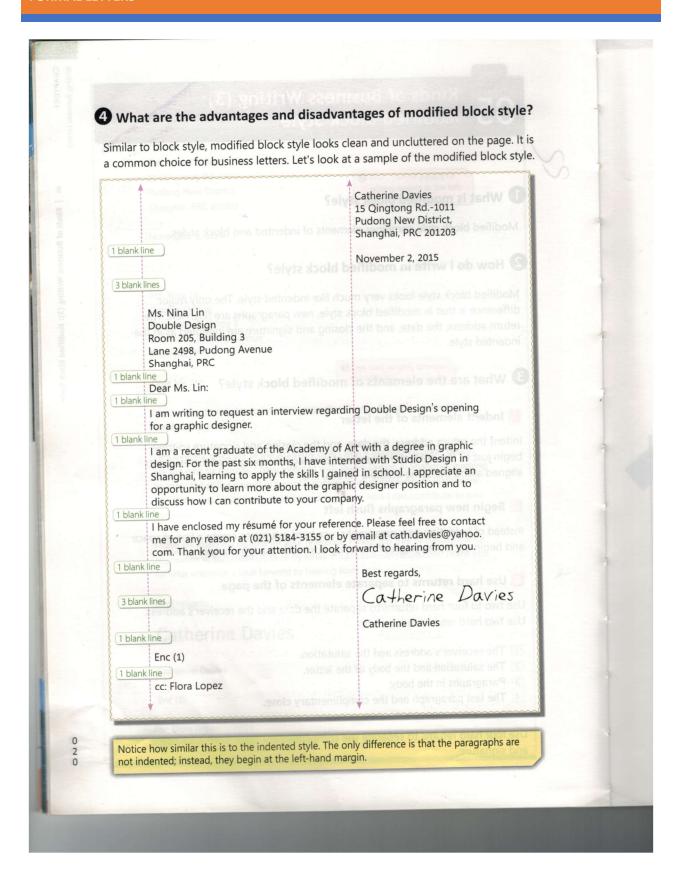
Business writing is formatted differently than academic or creative writing. Often, a company will choose a style to use for all of its internal materials and correspondence. There are three main formats from which to choose:

- Indented style
- Block style
- Modified block style

Indented Style







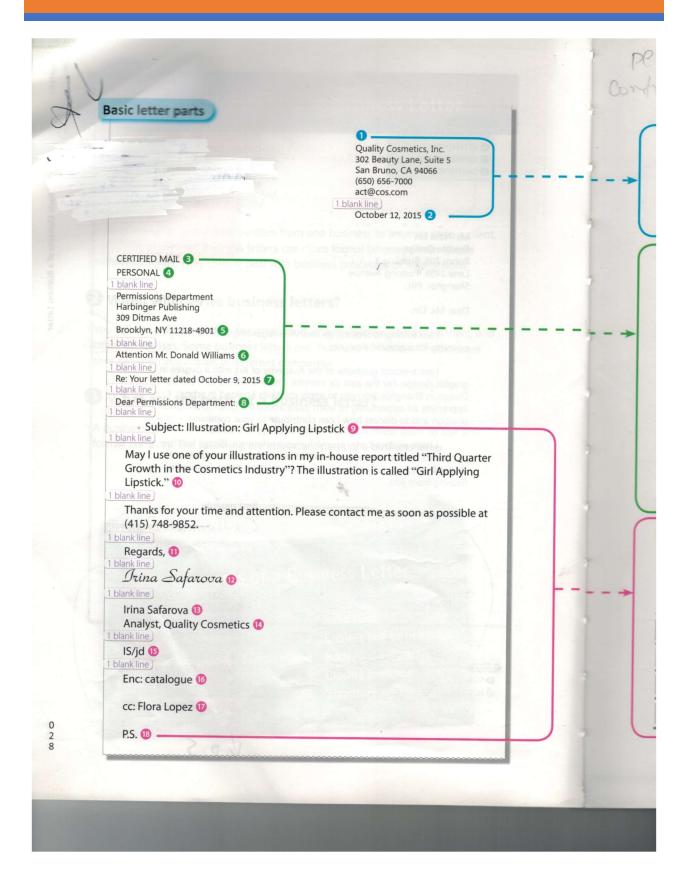
16.LIST OF PHRASES TO BE USED IN FORMAL LETTERS

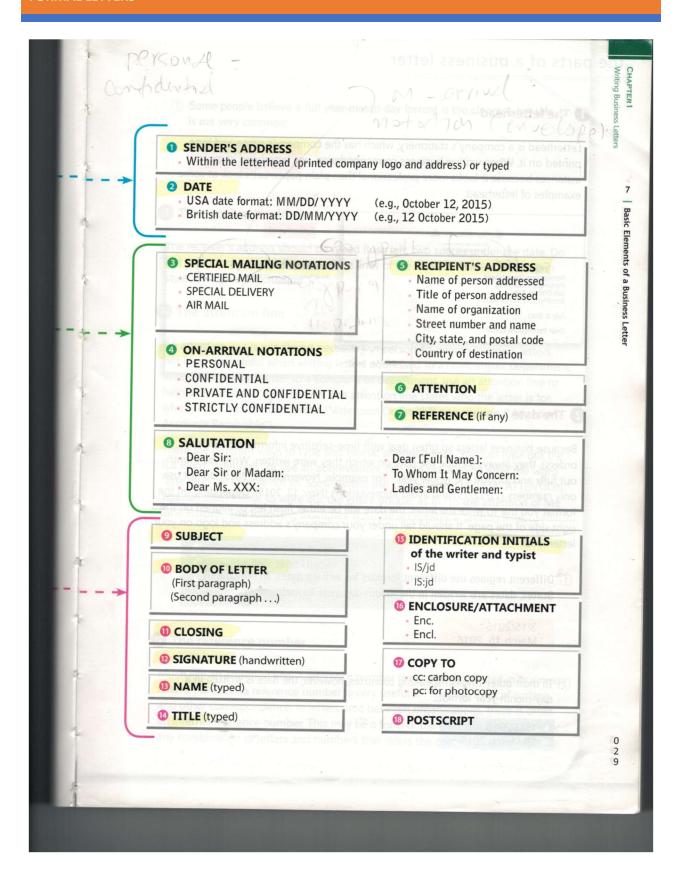
Opening a letter	I have the honour to
[first time]	I take the liberty to
[mst time]	•
	This is to inform /advise you that Places the fluor to the
	Please kindly note that
	I would like to take the opportunity of informing / to inform you that
	This is to certify that
	I hereby/herewith wish to inform/advise/notify you of
	 We are writing to inform you that/to confirm/to request/to enquire
	about
	I am contacting for the following reason
	I recently read /heard about and would like tom know
	Having seen your advertisement in , I would like to
	•
Referring to	Thank you for your letter of March 15
previous contact	Thank you for contacting us
	In reply to your request,
	Thank you for your letter regarding
	With reference to our telephone conversation yesterday
	Further to our meeting last week
	It was a pleasure meeting you in last month.
	I enjoyed having lunch with you last week in
	I would just like to confirm the main points we discussed on Tuesday
	With reference to your
	Referring to your
	With further reference to
	Replying to your letter
	In response to your letter
	As requested in your letter
	With regard to my email of
	Following our letter of the 4 th
	I regret to inform you that
	Reverting to our letter
	In compliance with your request
Making a	We would appreciate it if you would
request	I would be grateful if you could
'	Could you please send me
	Could you possibly tell us / let us have
	In addition, I would like to receive
	It would be helpful if you could send us

	Landinkon akadin (akkainin n/masainin n)
	I am interested in (obtaining / receiving)
	I would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter
Clasina a latter	Please let me know what action you propose to take
Closing a letter	Hoping to receive your reply soon
	Looking forward to a reply at your earliest convenience
	Thank you for an early reply
	An early answer would be appreciated
	I would greatly appreciate an early reply
	Expecting to receive/get a satisfactory reply and thanking you in advance
	Thank you in advance for any help you can give us
	 Please accept my apologies for the trouble this mistake has caused you
	Regretting the trouble we are causing you
	The above for your guidance
	Thank you in advance for your cooperation
	 Assuring you of my very best attention at all times
	Always at your disposal for any further information
Building up or	In the first place
adding	First of all
	Secondly/Next/Besides/Further
	Equally important
	Lastly/Last
	Furthermore/Moreover/Also/In addition
	 To begin with/In the second place/Apart from that
Result	• Therefore
	Consequently
	As a result
	So / thereupon
	• Thus / So
Summary -	To sum up
Repetition –	On the whole
Exemplification	In short/In brief/In sum
	• In other words
	As I have stated
Everoccing	For instance/For example In my eninion
Expressing an opinion	• In my opinion
οριποπ	To my mind On the other hand
	On the other hand (C) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A) (A
	Yet/Still/Although
	• In contrast to
	In spite of/In spite of the fact that

- Despite/Despite the fact that
- From my point of view, I believe
- As far as I am concerned
- It would appear that
- It seems/It appears to me that
- Personally
- However/Nevertheless/Notwithstanding/But

Following you will find a business letter with its basic parts numbered and explained.





REFERENCES

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