

Compulsory Parts of a letter

A formal letter typically consists of several compulsory parts. These parts provide structure and clarity to the message being conveyed. Here are the essential components of a formal letter:

- **Sender's Address (Return Address):** This includes your name, street address, city, state, and ZIP code. It is usually placed at the top-right corner of the letter. If you're using letterhead paper, this information might already be printed.
- **Date:** This is the date on which the letter is written. It's typically placed a few lines below the sender's address, aligned with the left margin.
- **Recipient's Address:** This includes the name, title, organization (if applicable), street address, city, state, and ZIP code of the person or organization you're addressing. It's placed a few lines below the date, aligned with the left margin.
- **Salutation (Greeting):** This is the formal greeting you use to address the recipient. For example, "Dear Mr. Smith," or "To Whom It May Concern," if you don't know the recipient's name.
- **Body of the Letter:** This is where you write the main content of your letter. It should be organized into paragraphs, each expressing a different point or idea. Be clear, concise, and polite in your language.
- **Complimentary Close:** This is the closing phrase of your letter. Common examples include "Sincerely," "Yours faithfully," or "Best regards." It's placed a few lines below the end of the body of the letter.
- **Signature:** Leave space between the complimentary close and your typed name for your actual signature if you're sending a physical letter. If you're sending an electronic letter, you can type your name beneath the complimentary close.
- **Typed Name:** This is your printed or typed name, which is placed below your signature if you've signed the letter by hand. If it's an electronic letter, your typed name goes beneath the complimentary close.
- **Enclosures (if applicable):** If you're including any additional documents or materials with the letter (such as a resume or a report), you can mention them here. For example, "Enclosure: Resume."
- **CC (Carbon Copy) or Enclosure Notation (if applicable):** If you're sending a copy of the letter to someone else, you can indicate it here. For example, "cc: Mr. John Doe."

Optional parts of a formal letter can be included based on the specific context and purpose of the letter. These elements are not strictly required but can enhance the clarity, professionalism, or context of the message. Some optional parts of a formal letter include:

- **Subject Line:** This provides a brief summary of the letter's content. It's typically placed below the date and can help the recipient quickly understand the purpose of the letter.
- **Reference Line:** If applicable, this line refers to a previous communication or a specific subject that the letter pertains to. It's typically placed below the date or subject line.
- **Attention Line:** This is used if you're directing the letter to a specific individual within an organization. It's placed below the recipient's address.
- **Mailing Notations:** These can include instructions to the postal service, such as "Registered Mail," "Confidential," or "Air Mail."
- **Postscript (P.S.):** This is an additional note that is added after the main body of the letter and before the closing. It's used for emphasizing a point or including something that was forgotten in the main body.
- **Email Signatures:** In email correspondence, a professional signature block may include your name, title, company, contact information, and links to your social media or website.
- **Sender's Phone Number:** In addition to the address, including your phone number can provide an alternative way for the recipient to contact you.
- **Logo or Letterhead:** For official or business correspondence, using a company or organizational letterhead can convey a sense of professionalism.
- **Notary Block:** This is used for legal documents or letters that require notarization. It includes a space for a notary public to confirm the authenticity of the signature.
- **Acknowledgment of Receipt Request:** If you want confirmation that the recipient received the letter, you can include a statement like "Please acknowledge receipt of this letter."

Business letter formats



Full block



Modified block



Semi-block