May 23, 2016

Susan Smith, BUS 3700 Student
Western Michigan University
3345 Schneider Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Dear Ms. Student:

Please notice the parts and format of this **BUSINESS LETTER**, as this will be the format you must use for assignments that are considered external communications (i.e. from a business to an individual or from an individual to a business).

A letter contains five parts: (1) return address (or letterhead, in this case) followed by the date the letter was written; (2) inside address; (3) salutation; (4) body; and (5) signature block (close). Correspondence from a business should always be typed on company letterhead stationery, which should include the company name and logo, complete mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address and URL, if available. When individuals write to a company, they wouldn’t have letterhead. Therefore, they would only include their address, typed on two lines: (1) street number and name; and (2) city, state, zip code. Notice: individual names are not included in the return address. The date is considered part of the return address and should be typed two lines below it.

The inside address includes the courtesy title, full name, and business title of the person to whom you are addressing the letter and the company’s name and complete address. The salutation is placed two lines below the inside address and includes the addressee’s courtesy title (if you are writing to a female and do not know her preference, always use Ms.) and last name followed by a colon.

You must double space after the salutation to begin the body of the body of the letter. All of your letters for this class should be written in Block Style. This means that every line (including the date) begins flush with the left margin. Letters are single spaced within paragraphs, but double space between paragraphs. The message of each paragraph should be clear and direct, beginning with a direct, specific and complete topic sentence. Paragraphs must be logically organized. Remember to double space between paragraphs and before the signature block.

The signature block includes a complimentary close (the first word of the close is the only word capitalized) followed by a comma, four blank lines and then the your name and title, typed. You, of course, sign your name between the close and typed name, once you have printed, proofed and approved the final copy of the letter.
Please note that if your letter extends beyond one page, use plain paper for additional pages, not letterhead, and allow only the traditional one inch top margin. At the top of any additional pages, type the receiver’s name followed by the page number before continuing with the letter’s content, for example: Ms. Cornell, page 2. Never use a separate sheet of paper just for the signature block. You must also carry forward at least two lines of text.

Your letters should end with a concluding paragraph that brings the letter to a pleasant, friendly close. Do not introduce new information in the concluding paragraph, except for any action that must be taken after reading the letter.

I hope this handout on the parts, organization and format of business letters has been helpful. Remember, you can always call or e-mail me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jo Wiley, M.F.A., M.A.
Master Faculty Specialist