FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

by

Dianna L. Smith
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A Programmed Guide to Better
Personal-Business Correspondence

An Honors Project (ID 499)

by

Dianna L. Smith

Project Director

Mrs. Velma Edwards
Department of Business Education
and Office Administration

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
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Dear Reader:

This is a personal letter to you to prepare you for the following pages. During your reading of this guide, it is hoped that we can work together to give you greater confidence and basic knowledge when writing those numerous letters that you never seem to find the "right words" for, or for all of those letters that you think you write just beautifully; but come to think of it, you still haven't received those "Chinese Made Easy" records you once ordered!

As for the structure of the guide itself, it is programmed--step-by-step. Background material is given, a problem or question is then presented, and alternatives or answers follow--each with a different page number for further reference. If you should choose an incorrect answer, you are given an explanation why the answer is not the best of those listed and the guide then returns you to the original question and, thus, you get another crack at it! You progress through the material at your own pace as you select correct or positive alternatives. The appendix provides additional information concerning many aspects of letter writing that might also be of help to you.
Dear Reader
Page 2
May 25, 19

A personal approach is dominant in this guide. That is, it is written from the layman's point of view for the layman's letter-writing situations. Executives writing correspondence in direct representation of their company or office may and should follow many of the basic hints included, but such items as the collection and sales letters are not discussed in the following pages.

Basic, helpful guidelines are presented in the guide to assist us "everyday-type people" in the sometimes cumbersome and horrifying chore of putting the pen to paper. Caution should be followed, though, since this programmed guide does not attempt to cover, discuss, or explain EVERYTHING! But, hopefully, it will be a beginning to a better letter--a letter that will say "Thank you," "I'm sorry," "May I please have the book you advertised...," or "Please send the 'Chinese Made Easy' records I ordered way back when!"

Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Dianna L. Smith

Enclosure

P.S. My sincere thanks go to Mrs. Jane Snodgress for her perennial encouragement; to Dr. C. Warren Vander Hill for giving me the opportunity to do such a project, in fact, even to be an Honors student!; and to my parents who gave me the means and the encouragement to further my knowledge. Most importantly, I want to thank Mrs. Velma Edwards for her suggestions, time, helpful
criticism, and genuine interest and kindness to me, not only during the preparation of this project, but during my junior and senior years as an admiring pupil.
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CHAPTER 1

The Seven C's
The Seven C's

There is actually no better way to begin than to take a look at the Seven C's of personal-business letter writing. They are:

1. Clarity
2. Completeness
3. Conciseness
4. Concreteness
5. Correctness
6. Coherence
7. Courteousness

Please turn to the next page.
Clarity

Many times we (and the Big Shots, too) get all bent out of shape when we make an attempt to impress someone to whom we are writing when we lay on all of those big fifty-cent words! But that is all it is—an attempt. It rarely, if ever, gets the job done. We tend to think the longer the word, the longer the impression. WRONG! Use simple wording, wording that other humans can readily understand. Stay away from slang, and if you are a member of a profession, do not tack on your working lingo to letters to your gardner, for instance. BEWARE! Some "everyday" English language expressions are to be avoided, also. Sayings such as "you can count on me" or "you know" or "what can I say?" should definitely be avoided. You want to talk to your reader in an almost conversational way; but, in all honesty, many times our conversations could be brought up to date! In short, keep your letters clean of the over-used expression or slang.

For instance, which of the following sentences do you believe is the BEST example of Clarity?

1. I phoned my prof to tell him I'd lost my text. (Turn to the top of page 8.)
2. Would you please have a cab pick me up at 10:30 a.m. at O'Hare Airport? (Turn to the bottom of page 5.)
3. I shall contact our Sunday advertisers no later than 5 p.m. Friday. (Turn to the top of page 3.)
You are right on the nose! This is the best example of a clear as day sentence. You state who you are contacting and putting a limit on it. You are definitely off to a great start, so please turn to page 4 and READ ON!

Nope, not this one. Is a letter "kind"? People are kind and they in turn write letters. This is just one of the many time-worn expressions that need to be put in File 13! Some of the MOST time-worn phrases still used are:

- acknowledging your letter
- enclosed please find
- attached hereto
- as per my letter
- the month of December
- in the amount of
- kindly advise

Instead of those oldies of the Thirties and Forties, use language of the Seventies such as:

- thank you for your letter
- here is
- as I wrote you
- in December
- for
- please tell us

There are many, many more of these "oldie" phrases that simply do not belong in your letters. Remember this: Omit all of those prepositional phrases in your letters and you are on your way to getting rid of those ghost phrases and trite expressions of twenty-five or thirty years ago. Just THINK of what you are putting on paper. Would you say that to your reader's face? I doubt it! Return to page 6 and choose another sentence.
Completeness

This is an important factor considering much postage is wasted because two or more letters had to be sent when one letter, complete in information, would have done just as well. Just remember, put yourself in the reader's place. If you tell him, "Mr. Kennedy will speak in the L. A. Pittenger Student Center on Tuesday, October 15," you are leaving a great deal to his imagination. What if he had never been on the Ball State University campus--where, oh where is the Student Center? What room in the Student Center? Perhaps you should include a map! Even if he was President Pruis, you left out the time!

CAUTION! Do not become so hung up on information and detail that you bore or confuse your reader--Do Not Ramble! Be as complete as you should be, but do not go off the deep end!

Please turn to page 6.
You made it! This is the most concise sentence of the three. It is to the point and fully descriptive at the same time. You have now passed the Conciseness Test, so please turn to page 7.

Boy, would I hate to be your taxicab driver! O'Hare Airport is a mighty big place! Where at O'Hare Airport? Also, a cab is a taxicab for Clarity's sake. To be blunt, this is NOT the correct answer. Please return to page 2 and pick a better alternative.
Conciseness

Here is a word that we all need to remember when writing our letters. Conciseness goes hand-in-hand with completeness in that unneeded information should definitely be left out. Conciseness also means that you update your writing, that is, throw out, PERMANENTLY, those time-worn expressions. Only those words, expressions, or phrases that you actually need should be used.

For example, which one of the following passages would you say is the most Concise?

1. We are hoping to hear from you soon concerning this matter. (Turn to the bottom of page 12.)

2. Your kind letter was received March 3, 1973. (Turn to the bottom of page 3.)

3. Here is my check for $250 to pay for the stove and the installation charge. (Turn to the top of page 5.)
Concreteness

If you tend to generalize and like the abstract, you might have some trouble with this one. Some culprits that often cause a lack of concreteness are words like "it," "said," and "same." Vitalize your letters by putting down on paper the sentences you would say as a human being! Even computers talk in more direct, concrete language.

Look at this sentence: The new pool was installed by Mr. Corso on the 4th day of June, 1972. Wouldn't it be much easier to say:

Mr. Corso installed the pool on June 4, 1972.(?)

Please turn to page 9.
No, not this one! Words such as phoned, prof, I'd, and text are either contractions or slang for words such as telephoned, professor, I would, and textbook. Clarity demands that you cut out the slang and preferably the contractions in personal business letters. Please return to page 2 and choose another answer.

Hey, this is great! The sentence is courteous and promises a replacement—just what the reader wanted to read! After contending with the Seven C's, let's look at effective beginnings and endings to your letters. Please turn to page 13.
Correctness

We could spend a lifetime talking about correctness. If you have questions at times, why not invest in a good English grammar book and a dictionary? Seriously, when I have a question, I look it up in my English 103 textbook. As for the dictionary, it is sometimes glued to my hand! At this stage, it pays to have good reference books because NOTHING looks quite as bad as a misspelled word, a comma that changes the entire meaning of the letter, or a verb and subject in disagreement.

Coherence

Coherence in simple terms means "sticking together." And that is exactly what you want your letters to do--stick together! You want the letter to flow. Thoughts, sentences, and paragraphs should have a logical and easy-to-read order. THINK before you write, just as you would THINK before you speak!

Please turn to page 11.
What an insult! What if you were the treasurer of your country club and made a statement like this to one of your members? You would probably be minus one member! If this is the first warning, it is much too harsh. Try again. Turn again to page 11.

Do you ever feel as though you were in a daze when reading some letters? Well, this sentence is on the verge of putting you, the reader, in a daze. It becomes a bit catchy and the structure of the sentence itself is not the best. Please return to page 13 and choose the correct alternative.
Courteousness

Here we are, last but definitely not least, at the last of the Seven C's—Courteousness. Remember the reader and that his needs, desires, and thoughts should be the prevailing factors when writing letters. You may say "please" and "thank you" in your letter, but just one or two words do not always convey courtesy to the reader. You must have courtesy for the reader constantly in mind as you write the letter. And be positive about the whole thing. Throw out those words that may be negative or vague. NEVER insult your reader—you will probably live to regret it!

Which of the following examples have the reader in mind and is courteous to him?

1. Because you failed to pay your December bill, we are closing your account. (Turn to the top of page 10.)

2. We were glad to hear from you, Mrs. Love, and will replace your damaged carpet immediately. (Turn to the bottom of page 8.)

3. We are at a loss as to what happened to your order, but will replace it at your earliest convenience. (Turn to the top of page 12.)
This is very vague. You might say it is courteous, but "earliest convenience" is not the newest phrase around. Return to page 11, there IS a statement that is courteous and sets the reader's mind at ease at the same time.

Is this sentence really concise? What is meant by "hear from you soon"? Soon to you and soon to your reader may be a difference of weeks! What is "this matter"? You just are not conveying the full picture. You want a reply in a matter of time, so tell your reader exactly how long that is. It really was not concise, was it? Then return to page 6 and choose another alternative.
Beginnings

"Where do I start?" is often a problem to the novice letter-writer. Or, "I can't seem to find the right words" is also an excuse. A good place to start is to the point in the area that is the primary interest of both the reader and to you. A simple and sure way to get to the heart of things is to say: "Thank you for your letter of _____." Or are you ordering something? Just say: "Please send a 20-week subscription for TIME Magazine to_____." Are you inviting a speaker to one of your meetings? Just say something like: "Your recent article in COSMOPOLITAN has aroused considerable comment and our members would enjoy your personal comments on the subject of Women's Liberation." (You're inviting Gloria Steinem?) In short, be simple, direct, and interesting. Avoid being blunt, wordy, or downright boring.

You sent a check for $49.50 to Ceasar's Palace in Las Vegas as a deposit on a room for your stay there next June. A week later, you receive a letter. It should begin with which of the following sentences?

1. Thank you for your check of $49.50 which you sent with your May 5 letter. (Turn to the bottom of page 16.)

2. Your check for $49.50 arrived with your letter of May 5 and it was greatly appreciated. (Turn to the top of page 14.)

3. In reply to your letter of May 5, your room will be reserved and your check for $49.50 has been received. (Turn to the bottom of page 10.)
This one rambles a bit. It almost makes the grade, but there is another answer to this question. Please turn back to page 13 and see if you can find it.

Not quite! The word "hope" is too vague. You want to hear from your reader by June 7, not hope to. Say instead: "Please write to me by Wednesday, June 7 concerning your reservations." State how or in what manner you want your desired response (write, telephone, telegram, or carrier pigeon?). State an exact date or a "week of" limitation date. Never say "soon" or "in a few weeks." Be specific. Also, clarify the matter that needs answered. In the example above a response was needed concerning reservations. Please return to page 15 and choose the correct response.
Endings

This thing about endings can really give a person big trouble. It should be worded in such a way as to give the reader a good feeling, get him to do something, or just end with a nice thought. The biggest stumbling block most of us fall onto is thanking someone for something he has not yet done! Merely saying "thank you" for an action or thought that you have no idea the reader has done or ever will do for that matter, is a definite NO NO! The real killer is to write, "Thanking you in advance." What a loser! And what a loser you'll be! Never insult your reader by assuming that he will automatically do what you ask or think the way you want him to think. He is not a robot, so don't thank him for something he has not, or more importantly, may NEVER do!

Another pitfall to endings--do not be vague. If you want to hear from your reader by next week, tell him so! What is "soon"? What is an "early reply"? If you do not know, obviously your reader will not either. Your reader may not have ESP--just do not assume that he does!

Which of the following sentences do you feel would make a good ending to a letter?

1. I hope to hear from you by June 7. (Turn to the bottom of page 14.)

2. I would appreciate a reply by the end of next week. A stamped, pre-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. (Turn to page 17.)

3. I trust the completed order will be satisfactory. (Turn to the top of page 16.)
Off the mark on this one! The word "trust" is too vague. The use of a more concrete word would be more appropriate here. Example: "We feel the completed order will be satisfactory." Now, turn back to page 15, re-read the material, and try again.

You are right! Thanking your reader in the very first sentence is one of the safest routes to follow. It looks as though you read the material well, so please turn to page 15 to read about Endings.
Safe at home! The fact that you are sending a stamped envelope is a fine gesture for a quicker and more convenient reply for your reader. NOTE: Envelopes are "pre-addressed" not "self-addressed"; that is, they do not address themselves!

Now that you are familiar with how to begin a letter and how to end it, not to mention what you can put in the middle, let's look at the specific types of letters and effective ways to write them.

Please turn to the next page.
CHAPTER 2

General Personal-Business Correspondence
The Inquiry Letter

While scanning through the magazines or newspapers, we often read of offers for "information upon request," or opportunities to obtain free price lists or catalogs. All kinds of things are advertised and may be received merely by writing a letter. Now the fun begins! Things get even more complicated when a small price is attached to the requested item.

First, take a look at those inquiries involving free material or information. You find this advertisement in a popular magazine and think it would be a good idea to obtain the information.

**Interior Decoration at Home**
Chicago School of Interior Decoration, 555 E. Lange Street, Dept. 710-05, Mundelein, IL 60060

The following letter is one attempt to request the booklet.

3987 Winding Way
Muncie, IN 47304
April 17, 19

Chicago School of Interior Decoration
555 East Lange Street
Dept. 710-05
Mundelein, IL 60060

Gentlemen:

I noticed in the recent edition of *Education News* an advertisement in which you mentioned your approved supervised home study training.

Would you please send me a copy of the free booklet explaining the course. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Linda K. Stewart

If you think this is a GOOD letter, turn to the top of page 23; if you think this is a NOT-SO-GOOD letter, turn to the bottom of page 26.
588 North Yoder Avenue
Muncie, IN  47304
April 17, 19

Chicago School of Interior Decoration
555 East Lange Street
Dept. 710-05
Mundelein, IL  60060

Gentlemen:

Please send me your free booklet explaining home study training in Interior Decoration as advertised in the February 21 issue of Education News.

Sincerely yours,

Dick Hester

NOTE: No matter what information or materials you may be requesting, keep in mind the "to the point" attitude, be brief, and steer away from the thank you's. If there is a specific department or person to whom you should write, be sure to note this.

Please turn to the next page.
Inquiries with Money

The same rules for general inquiries for free information go for those requests including money. Most companies prefer that you send check or money orders. NEVER send cash! C.O.D.'s (Cash on Delivery) may also be specified in the advertisement. If you do send money in some form, be sure that it is the correct amount. If you are not sure about the exact price, a safe thing to do is to write one letter to obtain the correct price information and THEN write the letter with the correct amount enclosed. Note in the letter that you are enclosing a check for $XXX (then state the specific amount).

Example:

930 Morrison Lane
Indianapolis, IN 46219
October 15, 19__

Chicago School of Interior Decoration
555 East Lange Street
Dept. 710-05
Mundelein, IL 60060

Gentlemen:

Please send me your booklet explaining home study training in Interior Decoration as advertised in the February 21 issue of Education News.

Enclosed is my check for $1.25 which includes postage fees.

Sincerely yours,

Bonnie Smith

Enclosure

Please turn to the next page.
Invitation to a Speaker

Surprisingly, more people write this type of letter than might be expected. In our clubs and various organizations throughout our lives, one never knows when one will be called upon to ask a speaker to come to a meeting.

Several factors need to be taken into consideration when writing a request for a speaker. Is an honorarium included? What is the topic? Why do you want this particular individual to speak? What are the travel arrangements for the speaker? Are overnight accommodations needed for your guest? Is it a luncheon, or dinner, or business meeting the speaker is being asked to attend? If your speaker is a busy person (they usually are), are you allowing enough time prior to the scheduled engagement for the speaker to make adequate arrangements and give your group a head start?

Well, here we go again! Where do you begin? The key word here is interesting. Have an interesting beginning.

Example: You are the secretary of the Evansville Optimist Club and are the person responsible for writing requests for speaking engagements. You are to request the talents of Dr. Robert Bell, Dean of the College of Business at Ball State University to speak on the topic of "Young People in Today's World of Business." The meeting is June 12. How would you begin?

1. On behalf of the membership of the Evansville Optimist Club, I would like to invite you to speak at our meeting on June 12. (Turn to the bottom of page 23.)

2. It is well known among the business leaders of Indiana that you have given the graduates of the Ball State University College of Business outstanding learning opportunities and resources. (Turn to the top of page 29.)

3. As secretary of the Evansville Optimist Club, I would like to invite you to be our speaker at our luncheon on June 12. (Turn to the top of page 26.)
Go back and look at that first paragraph again. What a 'round about way of telling the school where you found the advertisement. The second paragraph is a bit more to the point. Remember, be courteous, brief, and for heaven's sake, do not beat around the bush! Also, do you recall that little reminder at the beginning of the guide concerning thanking in advance? Please DO NOT thank in advance! You are making a request, you are not making a decree or a demand. Turn back to page 19 and re-read the material and the letter. Perhaps it is not quite the letter you thought it was.

What a tired old line! Again, this little clincher was used for years and often gets no results. Do not use it now. You may not get ANY results! And anyway, is this really interesting? Actually, it just takes up a line in the letter. Return to page 22.
Dear Dean Bell:

It is well known among the business leaders of Indiana that you have given the graduates of the Ball State University College of Business outstanding opportunities and resources.

Although Ball State is a long way from Evansville, the business leaders of our community would like very much to learn of your ideas and plans of action to boost young people into business in order that we may be able to do the same here on a somewhat smaller scale.

Would you please speak at our June 12 meeting in the Evansville Hilton on the topic of "Young People in Today's Business World?" It is a 12 o'clock noon luncheon meeting. A flight can be arranged for you on Allegheny Airlines. All transportation to and from Evansville will be paid for you in advance. Also, if you would prefer staying in Evansville overnight rather than flying back the same day, hotel accommodations will be furnished for you.

Please return by mail the enclosed postal card to inform us of your decision.

Very truly yours,

E. Benjamin Smith
Secretary

Enclosure
By the way, what happens when your club does not have enough money to pay a speaker's known fee? A chicken's way out is to consider a completely different speaker. But, if you honestly want THIS individual to speak on THIS topic, more tactful persuasion and sincere interest is called for. NOTE: If it is a luncheon or a dinner, a meal is not much of a bait. Free transportation or free hotel or motel accommodations should always be mentioned if offered--FREE! Now you are on your way to being such a persuasive and interesting writer of invitation letters for speakers, you may even get President Nixon to the County Democratic Meeting!

Please turn to page 27.
Play it again, Sam! Dean Bell will know you are the secretary when he reads the typed signature and title. You have more important things to write about in the body of your letter. This is perhaps one of the worst ways to begin a letter requesting a speaker. Put this answer in File 13 and keep it there! Return to page 22 and look over the alternatives once more. Choose another one!

Right you are! This is not the best request for that free booklet. The letter beats around the bush and commits the Cardinal Sin of thanking in advance. Please turn back to page 20 and read a better alternative to this letter-writing situation.
The Order Letter

Order letters fall in the same general category as inquiry letters. Usually, when you place an order there is a special order form. BUT, sometimes people lose order forms, and other times companies just do not supply them.

Again, the safest course to follow is that of writing a short request letter for more details on prices, measurements of the products, sizes, colors, special characteristics, and so on, BEFORE you send the payment in any form. When you order, be brief, to the point, specific (very important), and CORRECT!

Here's an advertisement from a newspaper concerning an air conditioner sale.

A new shipment of Frigidare air conditioners has just arrived. Three models to choose from: Model 404-F priced at $50. Model 405-E priced at $75. Model 406-G priced at $100. Colors include white, beige, brown, and green. There is a $25 installation charge. Please, no telephone orders.

Please turn to the next page.
You would like to have a medium-sized air conditioner, priced at $75 in beige. So--you commence to put the pen to paper.

Would you send the following letter? If you WOULD, please turn to the bottom of page 29. If you WOULD NOT, please turn to the bottom of page 33.

437 Brookshire Drive
Muncie, IN 47304
May 14, 19

Ball Stores, Inc.
Order Department
Charles at Walnut Streets
Muncie, IN 47305

Dear Sirs:

Please send me a $75, beige Frigidare air conditioner which you advertised in the Sunday Muncie Star.

A check for $75 is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Jane E. Fruth

Enclosure
You are on your way! This is interesting! You have found that Dean Bell is really something and you are letting him know it. You are thinking of your reader which must always be first priority. Other interesting facts that could be noted are things such as an individual's published books, articles, previous speeches, research, deeds of civic service, etc. These things interest the reader because they are about him! Just as Dale Carnegie always said: "The sweetest sound to a person's ear is the sound of his name." So, on paper his name is also important and his achievements ring loud and clear, too. Watch out! Do not flatter! You may turn your potential speaker off and you may in turn receive a letter of regret. Always be sincere, especially on paper. A good example of the entire letter to Dean Bell can be found by turning back to page 24.

This was a tricky one. Please, do not mail a letter like this one! There were several good points, though. "Order Department" in the inside address and ultimately on the envelope is an excellent safeguard that the letter will get where it is supposed to go. The price is noted, also the color—that is good. No beating around the bush. The check is enclosed and the amount noted. Now the not-so-good things. "Dear Sirs" is about as outdated as you can get! "Dear Sir" is used if you are writing to one person such as "Advertising Manager." (Sorry all of you Women's Libbers!) Always use "Gentlemen" for the salutation when writing to an unknown group or a specific department. Remember to match your salutation with the first line of the inside address. (Please refer to page 74 in the Appendix.) Please return to page 28 and read the letter again.
May 14, 19

Ball Stores, Inc.
Order Department
Charles at Walnut Streets
Muncie, IN 47305

Gentlemen:

Please send me one beige, Model 405-E Frigidaire air conditioner as advertised in the Sunday Muncie Star.

Delivery may be made on Tuesday, May 22 or Wednesday, May 23 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Enclosed is my check for $100 which includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 405-E Air Conditioner</td>
<td>$ 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation Charge</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sincerely,

Jane E. Fruth

Enclosure

There it is--the better letter! Order Department was used in the second line of the inside address. The letter was concise, included all of the necessary information and a run down was given on the enclosed check. Include everything and you will get everything you ordered.

Please turn to the next page.
Reservation or Appointment Letters

These letters also fall into a close-knit category. Have you ever telephoned a reservation in, arrived at the hotel on the appropriate date, and found that you had no room reserved? If you just take the time to WRITE a reservation and receive formal confirmation, you may save a great misunderstanding later. In your reservation letter be certain that you explain what type of accommodations you want—twin beds or double beds? Do you want air conditioning or a special view of the lake? What rates are you willing to pay? Would you like a ground floor room or are you willing to walk eleven flights of stairs? These are just a few of the details you should thoroughly check out now and not complain about later.

Which of the following sentences would NOT be necessary in a typical reservation letter?

1. I am scheduled to arrive at O'Hare Airport at 7:30 p.m. (Turn to page 32.)
2. Please confirm my reservation. (Turn to the bottom of page 34.)
3. Please reserve a single room with bath. (Turn to the top of page 33.)
This sentence is NOT necessarily needed in the letter. You will arrive at the airport at a specific time but what time will you be arriving at the hotel? Now that you know what NOT to include, let's look at a typical reservation letter with all of the RIGHT information.

408 South McKinley
Muncie, IN 47303
March 31, 19__

Indianapolis Hilton
7010 Capitol Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46626

Gentlemen:

Please reserve a single room with bath, not to exceed $25, for the night of Wednesday, June 1.

I shall arrive at the hotel at approximately 6 p.m. that day; please hold my room until I arrive.

Please confirm this reservation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Nancy Burton

Please turn to the top of page 34.
A comment like this is essential in the letter. You must let the management know what type of accommodations you want. Remember: Be specific. Go back to page 31 and re-read the alternatives--choose another.

You are right! This letter will not get the job done. This was tricky since "Dear Sirs:" is a NO NO and "Gentlemen:" should be used instead. (Please turn to page 74 of the Appendix for appropriate salutations related to the first line of the inside address.) Obviously, or hopefully, you realized that all of the information was not included in the letter. What happened to the installation charge? The model number? There IS a better way to order something--this air conditioner for instance. Please turn to page 30 for the answer.
The letter requesting an appointment is very much like the one you would write for a reservation. You want your appointment confirmed so be sure to mention this.

Cancellations of Reservations or Appointments

Again, be short and to the point, but BE COURTEOUS! If at all possible, give a reason for the cancellation. You want to keep a good image with the company, firm, or hotel.

Please turn to the next page.

This sentence would definitely be needed in the letter. Confirmation of the reservation is the major reason you are writing this letter! Return to page 31 and look over those other alternatives.
Letters of Transmittal

What on earth is a letter of transmittal? Good question! Many times when checks, reports, applications, or other items are sent in the mail, a letter explaining what it is you are sending and why is in order. Most people may refer to these things as "cover letters," but "letter of transmittal" is a much more appropriate term. You are transmitting information to your reader as to what and why you are sending him all of this stuff! As with all correspondence, it is good policy to keep copies of what you have sent, this is especially true with legal papers and money. This is proof that you actually sent it!

Here is a letter of transmittal for the annual report of the Student Center Governing Board at Ball State University.

STUDENT CENTER GOVERNING BOARD
Ball State University

May 28, 19___

Dr. James Marine
Dean of Student Programs
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Dear Dr. Marine:

Enclosed is the 1972-73 Annual Report of Student Center Governing Board. The members feel that it reflects the success of this year's events and may also be of assistance to next year's members.

Sincerely,

Debbie Campbell
Secretary

Enclosure

Please turn to the next page.
As usual, be short, courteous, and to the point. You are telling what you are sending and why, do not go off on a tangent and explain every nit-picky detail of the report or application, or whatever. If you go overboard in the letter, then you really would not need to send that report, application, or whatever--would you?

Please turn to the next page.
The Claim Letter

A study of claim or adjustment letters is, unfortunately, needed in this guide. Surely you have purchased something that did not measure up to the standards the company advertised it would.

When an item or service is manufactured or distributed locally, personal requests for the adjustment are much more effective. That is, go to the Consumer Relations (Complaint) Department in person. Telephone calls or letters will not have quite the effect when you only live across town.

When you do need to write a claim letter, don't EVER EVER write it while you are still steaming! COOL OFF! You want to get some action, not give the guys and gals back at the Complaint Department a good laugh. Too often a laugh or chuckle is just what claim letters bring. Instead, you want better service, a prompt replacement, or an adjustment. You are NOT Bob Hope! You want to complain to the right people and get things back on the right track. When you are upset, your letter shows it. You need to think clearly, state the facts, and be COURTEOUS! You will go much farther in adjusting that claim if you remember that being courteous on paper is just as important as being courteous "eyeball-to-eyeball."

There are basically four things you want to include in your claim letter:

1. What went wrong?
2. Stating the inconvenience that was caused
3. An effort to motivate your reader(s) toward the action you want taken
4. A definite statement of what you want done

Please turn to the next page.
Avoid words such as:

<table>
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<th>bad</th>
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<th>poor</th>
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<td>careless</td>
<td>disgusted</td>
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<td>displeased</td>
<td>unsatisfactory</td>
<td>failed</td>
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<tr>
<td>inferior</td>
<td>worthless</td>
<td>your fault</td>
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<td>wrong</td>
<td>mistake</td>
<td>unfortunate</td>
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Claim letters are tricky little monsters. In the first paragraph state what exactly is not quite right with the product, merchandise, or service. In the second paragraph use friendly persuasion to motivate the reader to do what you want done. Then, in the third paragraph, state what it is you want done. The second paragraph is a buffer for the action wanted in the third paragraph.

Let's take a look at a typical claim letter. Would you put this in an envelope and mail it?
208 South McKinley
Muncie, IN 47303
April 18, __

Pepsi Cola Bottling Company
2120 South Meridian Parkway
Chicago, IL 60601

Gentlemen:

Upon receiving my "Turn of the Century" tray and set of glasses, two of the glasses were broken. I was looking forward to owning a set like this.

This is such a nice offer to customers during your 75th anniversary. May I suggest, though, that more padding be put around each glass since they are so delicate.

Would you please replace the two broken glasses? I understand shipping time should be no longer than five weeks.

Sincerely,

Jane Ellis

If you WOULD send this letter, please turn to the top of page 45.
If you WOULD NOT send this letter, please turn to the top of page 43.
Another type of claim or adjustment letter written more than any other concerns magazine subscriptions. These are actually very easy to write. Remember the rules: Be brief, state the facts, and be courteous. Another thought—when you are dealing with subscriptions, ALWAYS ALWAYS include your mailing label from the last issue received. (If you never received that first copy, well, that is another matter—time for a full-fledged claim letter!) It is so much easier on the people in the subscription department if they have that address label to go by.

Here is a good example of a letter asking that undelivered issues be sent.

310 South Clay Street
Muncie, IN 47305
June 27, 19__

Psychology Today
Circulation Department
P.O. Box 2990
Boulder, CO 80320

Gentlemen:

The May and June issues of Psychology Today have not arrived. I have a two-year subscription to your magazine which ends in February of 19__.

Attached is a label from the April issue. The address is correct and should be the same in your records.

Please send me the May and June issues as I would like to keep the complete series.

Sincerely yours,

Alan E. Bates

-----LABEL-----

Please turn to the next page.
A special note is in order here. Some magazines may include a telephone number for subscription inquiries which may be called toll free (by use of the WATTS line). USE IT!!!!! Also, many magazines print a small form either near the beginning or end of the issue for subscription corrections or address changes. FIND IT--USE IT! When you do not have a special form like that, attach the label directly to the letter by neatly gluing it on. NEVER use paperclips or staples in the mail.

Enough said for claim or adjustment letters. You should get all the action you want now!

Please turn to the next page.
The Sympathy Letter

It is difficult to write letters in most categories, but the letter of sympathy is one not often written. The busy American way of life has prompted us to run down to the nearest card shop and pick out the card that we think expresses our true feelings. A condolence letter thoughtfully written will be long remembered. Sympathy cards may ultimately find themselves in a wastebasket years hence, while a personal letter may not.

Sympathy letters are unique. In these letters you may break all the rules. You may say "I'm sorry" and other phrases or deep emotions not quite acceptable in any other personal-business correspondence. You may use vague terms rather than concrete or to-the-point words. Always keep in mind that you want to console someone with your letter, not remind them of something they would rather forget.

Jennifer Reed was a good friend of yours. While driving on the nearby interstate last week, a drunk going the wrong way collided with her--head-on. She was killed instantly. You want to put into words your feelings and send them off to her mother. Which of the following statements would you definitely EXCLUDE from your letter?

1. My feelings are very hard to put into words at this time, but the loss of my good friend Jennifer is a profound one to me as I know it must certainly be for you. (Turn to the top of page 46.)

2. I was so sorry to learn that Jennifer was killed in an auto accident yesterday. The roads seem to become more dangerous by the hour. (Turn to the bottom of page 43.)

3. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you or Mr. Reed. (Turn to the bottom of page 45.)
You had best return to page 37 and re-read the explanation of a claim letter. You want action, NOT revenge!

Sadly enough, you are right. You would want to EXCLUDE this one. Death is many times hard enough to accept, but an auto accident which may take friends and loved ones suddenly is even more difficult to realize. NEVER remind your reader of something he may not want to remember or something he may not have come to grips with. Be sincere in your condolences. Otherwise, there are no hard and fast rules for a sympathy letter. Please turn to page 44.
The Thank You Letter

Last, but not least, in this chapter of general personal-business letters comes the thank you. Too often, this type of letter is abused and oozing with worn-out, flowery language because people just "did not know what to say." What an excuse! What would you say face-to-face? Then say it on paper! PEOPLE read what you write. Write naturally. This is true for all kinds of letters but thank you’s get the most abuse.

Time-worn phrases that are OUT include: Deepest thanks; may we express our deep gratitude; my sincerest thanks; we would like to take this opportunity to thank you. Never let the superlative creep into your correspondence--it sounds fakey!

The big 'NO NO' to the run-of-the-mill thank you letter is the use of the line at the end, "Thank you again for . . . ." It is definitely OUT! It is redundant. Those words at the end are a waste of space and energy. If you have not said thank you before the last line, you need to begin all over again.

Ready for a test run? OK. Which of the following three sentences would you feel comfortable INCLUDING in your thank you letter?

1. Our sincere thanks to you and Mrs. Anderson for the wonderful evening. (Turn to the bottom of page 46.)

2. May I extend our appreciation for the enjoyable evening at your home. (Turn to the top of page 59.)

3. Thank you for the enjoyable evening we spent at your home last Tuesday. (Turn to the bottom of page 51.)
You are absolutely correct! The writer was brief, explicit, and courteous. Also, a company such as Pepsi Cola should not turn away a request as well written as this one. Please return to page 40.

You will need to look through the responses again. It is perfectly all right to offer your help— but only if you genuinely mean it. Return to page 42.
No. You would not EXCLUDE this one. You are being sincere and thoughtful. Look through the options again. Return to page 42.

No, not quite. Perhaps a bit flowery. You are sincere in writing your letter of thanks. Do you need to attest to it? Watch for words like "wonderful." They are sometimes too goody-goody. Return to page 44.
The Application Series

The most important correspondence one may ever write is the application letter, the compilation of a personal data sheet, and all other correspondence related to securing a job. It is true that the paperwork only gets you the personal interview—the thing that makes the real difference, but if you do not have a clean-cut, informative application letter and a superior data sheet, you may never get that personal interview. Thus, you may never get the job you want.

When writing these letters you should use a marketing approach. You want to make the "sale," but at the same time you do not want to be too overbearing. Always put yourself in the reader's place. Try to be objective. Say to yourself, "Would I ask this applicant for an interview after seeing this letter of application or personal data sheet?"

Hopefully, both you AND your reader will say "Yes."

Planning is the key as you begin reading (and writing) in this chapter. Looking ahead will prevent snags later. One of the biggest problems comes when the applicant does not request recommendations PRIOR to applying formally for the job. What a NO NO! Although recommendations do not rank as high as related work experience and extra-curricular activities, they still carry a lot of weight in the eyes of prospective employers. But problems arise when applicants include names on their personal data sheets of those people whom they have not asked if they may use their names. It is almost a natural law that you do not ask someone to give you a recommendation if you think they will give you less

Please turn to the next page.
than a great one. But often we forget to ask BEFORE we include names. This is a serious breach of courtesy and, in the long run, may cost us a recommendation for a job.

The request for a recommendation is very much like the inquiry letter. You are asking your reader for a personal favor. Therefore, use tact and courtesy. Be sure the reader knows who you are. Has it been a long time since you have had some contact with your reader? Has there been any type of name change? Is there something that will bring you quickly and uniquely to the reader's mind? All of these things should be considered when writing your request.

Two types of letters may be written in relation to a recommendation request. In one, you may give their name as a reference. In another, you may ask that they write a specific recommendation to a specific company or firm concerning a specific position. The former is the most often used, but let's take a look at both types.

Rt. 2, Box 176
Yorktown, IN 47396
July 14, 19__

Dr. John P. Adams
Associate Professor of Art
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Dear Dr. Adams:

During the 1970-71 school year I was a senior in the Art Department and was a student in several of your classes. I know you are well aware of my knowledge in art education; therefore, would you please write a recommendation for me for a teaching position in the Fort Wayne Community School System?

While a student in your Art History Seminar, I was one of your assistants during the Picasso showing at the gallery. For the last

Please turn to the next page.