

# How to Write *Better* Business Letters

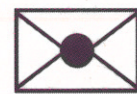
Third Edition

This useful volume shows you how to write clear, concise, effective business correspondence. It combines detailed instruction with sound advice and more than 70 model letters.

If you choose, you can adapt the letters to fit your personal needs—or simply use them as starting points for your own correspondence. Model letters include formal business announcements, credit applications, inquiry letters, sales letters, and many more.

New in this edition is advice for electronic communication, and pointers for using e-mail appropriately in business contexts.

Formal  
business  
announcements



Credit  
applications



Inquiry  
letters



Letters of  
recommendation



Letters of  
acknowledgment



Direct mail  
sales letters



ISBN 0-7641-1269-4



5 1395 >



9 780764 112690

\$13.95 Canada \$19.50

www.barronseduc.com

**BARRON'S**

# How to Write *Better* Business Letters

Third Edition • Andrea B. Geffner

Advice on making your point clearly and concisely  
Grammar, style, and formatting rules

*Includes 75 model letters for virtually every business need—*

Formal  
business  
announcements



Credit  
applications



Inquiry  
letters



Letters of  
recommendation



Letters of  
acknowledgment



Direct mail  
sales letters



*Many more*

*New in this edition*

Electronic communication • Tips on effective use of e-mail

**BARRON'S**



# How to Write *Better* Business Letters

Third Edition

Andrea B. Geffner

Former Dean

Taylor Business Institute, New York

President

ESCO, Inc., New York





For Marcus

© Copyright 2000 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

Prior © copyrights 1995, 1982 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

Excerpted in part from *Business English, Second Edition: A Complete Guide to Developing an Effective Business Writing Style* by Andrea B. Geffner

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by photostat, microfilm, xerography, or any other means, or incorporated into any information retrieval system, electronic or mechanical, without the written permission of the copyright owner.

All inquiries should be addressed to:  
Barron's Educational Series, Inc.  
250 Wireless Boulevard  
Hauppauge, New York 11788  
<http://www.barronseduc.com>

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 00-36284

International Standard Book No. 0-7641-1269-4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Geffner, Andrea B.  
How to write better business letters / Andrea B. Geffner.—3rd ed.  
p. cm.  
Includes index.  
ISBN 0-7641-1269-4 (pbk.)  
1. Commercial correspondence. I. Title.

HF575721 .H43 2000  
808'.066651 21; aa05 03-28—dc00

00-36284

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

9 8 7 6 5 4 3

# Contents

Table of Model Letters v

Introduction vii

1. **BUSINESS STYLE 1**  
Tone 1 • Expressions to Avoid in Business Letters 1 • Outlook 3 • The "You Approach" 5 • Organization 6 • Redundant Expressions 7 • Electronic Mail 9 • Sexist Language 10 • Practice Correspondence 10
2. **LETTER FORMAT 13**  
Parts of a Business Letter 13 • Arrangement Styles 15 • Punctuation Styles 17 • Postscripts 22 • Special Paragraphing 22 • The Envelope 22 • Practice Correspondence 24
3. **REQUEST LETTERS 25**  
Inquiries 25 • Orders 27 • Practice Correspondence 29
4. **REPLIES 31**  
Acknowledgments 32 • Follow-Ups 33 • Confirmations 34 • Remittances 35 • Order Acknowledgments 35 • Stopgap Letters 41 • Inquiry Replies 41 • Referrals 44 • Refusals 44 • Practice Correspondence 46
5. **CREDIT AND COLLECTION LETTERS 49**  
Credit Letters 49 • Collection Letters 55 • Practice Correspondence 58
6. **COMPLAINTS, CLAIMS, AND ADJUSTMENTS 61**  
Complaints 61 • Claims 61 • Adjustments 66 • Practice Correspondence 69
7. **SALES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS LETTERS 71**  
Sales Letters 71 • Public Relations Letters 75 • Practice Correspondence 79
8. **SOCIAL BUSINESS LETTERS 81**  
Letters of Congratulations 81 • Letters of Sympathy 83 • Letters of Appreciation 84 • Invitations 86 • Announcements 88 • Practice Correspondence 89
9. **EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENCE 91**  
The Resume 91 • Letters of Application 98 • Follow-Up Letters 103 • Letters of Reference and Recommendation 104 • Declining a Job Offer 106 • Rejecting a Job Applicant 107 • Letters of Resignation 108 • Letters of Introduction 109 • Practice Correspondence 110



<b>10. IN-HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE</b>	<b>111</b>
The Interoffice Memorandum 111 • Minutes 114 • Practice Correspondence 117	
<b>11. NEWS RELEASES</b>	<b>119</b>
Practice Correspondence 123	
<b>12. BUSINESS REPORTS AND PROPOSALS</b>	<b>125</b>
Informal Reports 126 • Formal Reports 131 • Proposals 137 • Practice Correspondence 141	
<b>LAST DETAILS</b>	<b>143</b>
A Glossary of Business Terms 144 • Catching Your Errors 147 • State Abbreviations 149	
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>150</b>

## Table of Model Letters

---

FIGURE		PAGE
2-1	The Parts of a Business Letter	14
2-2	Full-Blocked Letter Style	16
2-3	Blocked Letter Style	18
2-4	Semi-Blocked Letter Style	19
2-5	Square-Blocked Letter Style	20
2-6	Simplified Letter Style	21
2-7	Special Paragraphing	23
2-8	The Envelope	24
3-1	Inquiry	26
3-2	Order	29
4-1	Acknowledgment	32
4-2	Follow-Up	33
4-3	Confirmation	34
4-4	Order Acknowledgment	36
4-5	Delayed Delivery	38
4-6	Partial Delivery	39
4-7	Substitute Delivery	40
4-8	Inquiry Reply I	42
4-9	Inquiry Reply II	43
4-10	Refusal	45
5-1	Credit Application	50
5-2	Credit Inquiry	51
5-3	Credit Reference	52
5-4	Credit-Granting Letter	53
5-5	Credit-Refusing Letter	54
—	Collection Letter I	56
—	Collection Letter II	57
—	Final Collection Letter	57
—	Partial Payment Acknowledgment	58
6-1	Complaint	62
6-2	Complaint Response	63
6-3	Claim I	64
6-4	Claim II	65
6-5	Letter of Adjustment I	66
6-6	Letter of Adjustment II	67
6-7	Letter of Adjustment III	68
7-1	Direct Mail Sales Letter	72
7-2	Retail Sales Letter	73
7-3	Sales Promotion Letter	75
7-4	Public Relations Letter I	76
7-5	Public Relations Letter II	77
7-6	Public Relations Letter III	78
8-1	Letter of Congratulations I	82