

Lecture 22

Types of Letters

22.1. Complaint Letter Writing

When writing a complaint letter, you want to keep it short and to the point to help ensure that your letter will be read in its entirety.

The complaint letter should be addressed to the customer service/consumer affairs department or the head office if there is no customer service department. The address and contact information of the customer service department should be available on the company's products or website.

A hard-copy complaint letter should be written in the business letter format, while an email should be sent in the same format but without the heading (your return address, their address, and the date). In the first paragraph, you should identify what the issue is and any relevant information that you believe is important. Be sure to include the following information if it's applicable to the situation: the date/time of the issue, location and other applicable details including name of person on duty and product, what the problem was, account number, model number, price, warranty information and reference number. Be sure to stick with the facts and avoid putting emotions into your letter.

The next paragraph should state what you would like done to resolve the situation. If you received poor service, you could request an apology or a coupon. If a product malfunctioned, you could request that you could exchange the product for a new one or request a refund.

The last paragraph should thank the reader for the time. You can also throw in some compliments about something you liked about their company's product or service.

You should include your telephone number/email address after your printed name so that they can contact you as soon as possible, if necessary.

Be sure to keep a copy of the letter for yourself and include photocopies of any relevant documents and enclose them with your letter.

22.2. Cover Letter

A cover letter is a brief one-page letter sent along with the résumé to potential employers. The purpose of the cover letter is to present yourself to potential employers and to let them know what position you are interested in and why you would be a good fit to the position and company.

22.2.1. Cover Letter Format

A hard-copy cover letter should be written in the business letter format, while an email should be sent in the same format but without the heading (your return address, their address, and the date).

22.2.2. Cover Letter Writing

Generally, the cover letter will consist of three paragraphs. The first paragraph is an introductory one

which introduces yourself. You want to include information on the position you are applying for, how you heard about it and why you are interested in the position and/or company.

The second paragraph should provide information on your skill, strengths, education, qualifications and/or experience. This paragraph should be concise and give specific examples of why you are the ideal candidate and not simply restate your résumé.

The final paragraph should close the letter by requesting an interview and possibly suggest times that

are convenient for you or stating that you can come in at a time that's convenient for the employer. Also, you should let the recipient know what the best way and/or time to contact you is (you should let them know both your contact email and phone number so that they can contact you in their preferred

method). Or you can let them that you'll follow up the letter with a phone call in several days. You should thank them for their time to close the letter.

Each cover letter that you send out should be unique and tailored to the specific company and position you are applying to. Using one cookie-cutter cover letter will lessen your chances for landing an interview. Also, be sure to check for grammar and spelling and keep the letter to one page in length.

22.3. Good and Bad News Letter

Letters can also be classified based on their content or message. Letters that contain good news, a good message or favorable information are good-news letters. Letters that contain bad news, a bad message or an unfavorable information are bad-news letters. Not only personal letters but also some official

letters can be classified on this basis. A letter sanctioning a loan to a customer or an over-draft facility to a concern, a letter of appointment or promotion or a letter acceding to the request of a client are good-

news letters.

Unfortunately, in business, one must undertake the unenviable job of communicating bad news as well. It may be the rejection of a loan application, the denial of a due promotion or rejection of a client's request.

Business organizations have also got to write letters that contain neither good or bad news from the stand point of the receiver. It may be the announcement of a change of office hours or premises, or an announcement of a new product, such letters contain neutral messages and can be called neutral-news letters.

A good news letter is easy to write because of its content. A bad news letter should be written in an unoffending tone. Neutral letters are usually unsolicited letters. The receiver may treat it as junk mail. Thus, care should be taken to write them well so that customer's/recipient's interest is aroused and he or she responds to them, as desired by the sender.

These classifications of letters as official or personal, formal or informal as good news letters, bad-news letters and neutral message letters are classifications based on general criteria and are broad classifications based on content. Business letters can be classified based on the nature of business they transact or take care of. Of course, all business letters take care some area of the business.

