
CHAPTER 3

REQUEST LETTERS AND REPLIES TO REQUESTS

Outline

1. Characteristics and Organization of Request letters
2. Characteristics and Organization of Reply Letters
3. Grammar Review : Present Tenses

Main Ideas

1. Request letters are letters that ask for an answer. Certain characteristics of request letters are brevity, completeness and courtesy. The organization of request letters may be in either a direct or a persuasive approach.

2. Reply letters are letters that provide the information asked for or give the answer to certain questions. The characteristics of reply letters are promptness, helpfulness, completeness, courtesy and friendliness. The organization of reply letters in a direct approach when the request is granted, but if the request is denied, a tactful approach is used.

3. Present tenses and useful elements of grammar that enhance an effective business writing style.

Objectives

Students are able to :

- 1. Write request letters with brevity, completeness and courtesy in either a direct or a persuasive approach,**
- 2. Write reply letters with promptness, helpfulness, completeness, courtesy and friendliness in either a direct or a tactful approach.**
- 3. Use present tenses correctly in writing business correspondence.**

A request letter is a type of business correspondence that you, a business writer, have to write in many situations: to inquire about the price of a product; to ask for some product samples; to get more information on certain products, to learn more about the function and the effectiveness of a new product; to ask about an accommodation on a business trip; to make a business appointment; to inquire about a meeting facility in certain conference places or hotels; to ask for certain articles in a newspaper, etc. Questions commonly used in request letters include what, when, where, why, how and how much. It is a best policy to practice writing a request letter effectively to get the most useful information necessary for doing any business transaction.

1. Characteristics and Organization of Request letters

Request letters are similar to other kinds of business letter that need to be time efficient. It is, therefore, important that you pay attention to three characteristics of a request letter.

1.1 Brevity: Include only relevant and necessary details in request letters.

The following is an example of a letter that rambles :

I always want a new adding machine for my company. I have been talking to all my colleagues which would be the best model. Last week I saw your advertisement. I would like to know the cost and terms of payment. I would like to have it very soon, but I have to know all these terms so I could manage my budget.

I look forward to your answer very soon.

Remember to keep the letter short and direct to the point as in the following example :

85 Fairleigh Avenue

Auckland 3

New Zealand

10 May 19..

Miller Enterprises

30 Oakland Park

Detroit, Michigan 49445

USA

Dear Manager :

I would very much appreciate your sending me the information about the cost and terms of payment for the Atec adding machine, model A 375/90 which you advertised in Newsweek Magazine, April 19 . . issue.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Your truly,

Tom Wood

Tom Wood

1.2 Completeness: A request letter is concise and clear but complete. You as a writer of a request letter need to make the reader know exactly what the purpose of

the letter is. Include all the recess any details. Read the following request letter and discuss its appropriateness.

Dear Sir :

Please send me a list of your books.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Martin

Robert Martin

The reader of this letter will certainly need to write back and ask the write what kind of books he really wants.

The following is an example of a complete request letter :

St. Bernard Secretary School

15 George Boulevard

Chicago 37845, Illinois

7 January, 19. .

McGraw-Hill, Inc.

322 East 72 Street

New York, NY 1002 1

Dear Sir :

We have seen a list of newly published books on Business Writing for college student, in Book Review, December 1996 issue. We are very much interested in having the catalog and price list of the books in this field for our secretary students.

We would appreciate a prompt employ.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Martin

Robert Martin

1.3Courtesy: It is of best policy to write a request letter with polite words and expressions. Moreover, a request letter that is convenient for the reader to reply will

yield a fast result. An enclosed reply card shows the writer's courtesy and saves the reader's time.

The following are some examples of request letters that show courtesy :

**Mathew & Son Company
181 Arlington Drive
Arlington, TX 75421**

3 June 19..

Ronald Sweiber Inc.
7 1 Highland Park
Lovers Lane
Dallas, TX 76348

Dear Manager :

We are a manufacturer of office stationery] and we are now conducting a marketing research on the trademark of photocopying paper most consumed by office.

It will take only a minute of your time to fill out the information asked at the bottom part of this letter. Please detach along the dotted line and send the completed form in and attached postage-paid to us as soon as you can.

We would highly appreciate your kind cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mathew Johnson

Mathew Johnson

Research Director

.....

1. Please give the trademark of the photocopying paper used in your offices.

.....

.....

2. Please state the reasons for your choice

.....

Benson Empplies
7/71 Toa Payoh
Saranyoon, Singapore

17 May, 19..

Sneiber & Son Company

87 Rustic Avenue

Baroda, Singapore

Dear Manager :

Do you have any information about the advantages of using dictating machines? We are trying to find out about the experience of similar companies before we finally decide to install these machines. For that reason, we will appreciate your answers to these questions :

1. How many machines have you installed?
2. What savings have you got from this use?

Please write your answers on an enclosed postage-paid card and return it to us as soon as you can. We will be grateful for your kind cooperation.

Sincerely,

George Stevenson

George Stevenson

Managing Director

Not only must you a business correspondence writer, be aware of these three characteristics of a request letter, but you also have to be familiar with the organization of a request letter. Usually a request letter takes a direct approach. It

begins with a direct statement identifying the purpose of the letter. The second paragraph may container necessary details to support the purpose. The concluding paragraph shows the writer's good will.

The following is an example of a request letter with a direct approach :

**Virginia smith
81 Barneston Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55803**

22 August 19..

The Manager
Sports Complex, Inc.
1340 Sunrise Rood
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903

Dear Manager :

Please send me the name of a dealer in the Charlottesville area from whom I can purchase your Norman Trek Treadmill Machine, model KMX 102.

I have tried to locate several Sports Complex dealers in our area since I saw your advertisement in this month's USA Snorts. None of them carry this particular model.

I would very much appreciate receiving this information as soon as possible. I trust this brand name and look forward to owning this machine.

Sincerely yours,

Virginia Smith

Virginia Smith

In certain circumstances, some request letters may ask for favors or special service. In that case request letters require a persuasive approach. In other words, you need to convince the reader that there is a good reason to comply with your request. The persuasive approach begins with a statement that calls the reader's attention and that holds the reader's interest. The following paragraph shows how the reader's compliance to the request will benefit him or her. The conceding paragraph calls for action.

The following is an example of a request letter that takes a persuasive approach:

A.

The English Club
Ramkhamhaeng University
Bangkapi, Bangkok 10240

15 May 19..

Mr. Alexander Johnston
ABC Human Resources
87 Dindaeng Rd
Bangkok 15100

Dear Mr. Johnston :

You thought-provoking article on “Strategies for Job Promotion” in the April issue of Business World magazine prompted me to write you. The English Club, Ramkhamhaeng University is having its annual get-together Night on Saturday, June 10. Our members (we expect 300 people) are interested in hearing a likely talk on “Strategies for Job Application.” We are particularly interested in having our members will prepared for getting employment after their graduation. Our program calls for a **45-minute** presentation from the speaker.

Would you be able to address our audience on June 10? You can prepare your speech along the line of your article, if that suits you. We would be pleased to have you as our speaker on this special occasion.

I hope you can accept this invitation, Mr. Johnston. If you can, I will write you again giving you all the details-time, place, and complete program schedule.

Sincerely,

Metha Jaidee

Metha Jaidee

The President

B.

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas State University System

ALPINE, TEXAS 79832

Office of

(915) 837-8032

The President

FAX (915) 837-8334

EDUCATING YOUR FUTURE LEADERS

Government funding for higher education continues to decline and tuition costs continue to rise. At Sul Ross, we are working diligently to keep the cost

of an outstanding college degree affordable. Our Annual Fund Campaign goal for this year is \$300,000.

We are asking our friends this year to consider a minimum gift of \$50. Of course, all gifts of any amount will be appreciated. The cumulative effect of all our gifts will have a tremendous impact on the mission of our University.

We've had a great year due to your support and encouragement. Many very exciting and highly needed priorities were accomplished. Lawrence Hall is now a beautiful, modern facility for classes and the Museum of the Big Bend. The Museum is scheduled to open March, 1997. The Equine Science Center completion is a tremendous boost to our Range Animal Science program. Completion of the new tennis courts added a much needed recreational area for our students to enjoy.

We are looking forward to an even greater year of service in 1997. If we all do our part, we will exceed our goal and Sul Ross State University will be able to expand our excellent record of service.

Please consider making your gift to one of the following endowments :

- Scholarships - We have many students who can benefit from scholarship help either as a result of outstanding academic credentials

or based on financial need. Your investment in scholarships ensures educational opportunities for many students.

- Department Support - Invest in the department or academic area of your choice and help ensure high quality programs at Sul Ross. Your support of departmental endowments means the difference between a good education and a great education.
- Diamond Jubilee Support - The 75th Diamond Jubilee Endowment was established to help Sul Ross State University move into the 21st century as a great university.

We have included a special envelope so you can participate in our 1996 Annual Fund Campaign. I appreciate your continued support of the University. Sul Ross is very worthy of our investment.

Sincerely,

R. Vic Morgan

R. Vic Morgan

President

P.S. Almost 80 percent of our undergraduate students have financial need. Forty percent of our students have documented full financial need compared with a national average of 12.5 percent.

A Write of business correspondence needs to be familiar with both the characteristics and the organization of a request letter in order to write the letter effectively. Keep your letter brief, complete, courteous and conclude it with a goodwill. Be specific in your request. Moreover, be careful not to burden the reader with unnecessary questions. In other words, **if you** can obtain specific information from other sources or references, do not trouble the reader and waste his or her time. In addition, be courteous by not asking questions concerning secretive or exclusive information, or questions that will create uneasiness on the reader's part. Lastly, be sure to take the right approach, direct or persuasive, in organizing your request letter to suit your purpose the most.

The following are some expressions that you may find useful in writing a request letter:

May I please

May we request that

We would appreciate having

I will be grateful if you will

Will you please

Please send me

Would you please help us in

We would **like** to know if you can give us the information about

.....

Please supply us with

I would appreciate this help

I hope that we can count on your cooperation.

We would appreciate your prompt reply.

We will be grateful for this special service.

Activity 1 A

You are Paul Ankara of 12 North Avenue, Paramus, New Jersey 67090. Write a request letter to the Big Indian Mountain Club, 25 West 45th Street, New York, NY 11236 for a booklet on summer homes as advertised in The New Yorker on 10 July 1997.

Activity 1 B

You are the headmaster (headmistress) of St. Benedict School, 174 Elm Street, Cleveland, OH 44113. You want to expand the school library, but you lack the funding. Write a request letter to the Chamber of Commerce, 223 Corder Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44116 for a fund-raising project from all businesses in the Cleveland area.