

Important Concepts . . .

Preview Review



Language Arts

Grade 9

W1 - Lesson 3: The Business Letter

Important Concepts of Grade 9 Language Arts	Materials Required
W1 - Lesson 1Paragraph Structure W1 - Lesson 2 The Persuasive Paragraph W1 - Lesson 3The Business Letter W1 - Lesson 4 Business Letter Assignment W1 - Lesson 5Paragraphs and Business Letters W1 - Quiz W2 - Lesson 1 The Five-Paragraph Essay W2 - Lesson 2 The Body of the Essay W2 - Lesson 3 The Concluding Paragraph W2 - Lesson 4 .. Editing and Publishing Your Essay/Essay Review W2 - Lesson 5 Five-Paragraph Essay Review W2 - Quiz W3 - Lesson 1The Short Story W3 - Lesson 2 More Story Elements/Planning Your Story W3 - Lesson 3Story Building W3 - Lesson 4Advanced Story Writing Techniques W3 - Lesson 5 Short Story Review W3 - Quiz	Textbooks <i>ResourceLines 9/10</i> <i>SightLines 9</i>

Language Arts Grade 9
Version 5
Preview/Review W1 - Lesson 3

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Preview/Review Concepts for Grade Nine Language Arts



***W1 - Lesson 3:
The Business Letter***

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should

- be aware of the many purposes of business letters
- recognize the parts of a business letter
- be familiar with both full block and modified block formats for letters
- understand the difference between formal and informal tone in writing
- understand the importance of using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling in business letters

GLOSSARY

Refer to *ResourceLines* 9/10

complimentary close - signs off the letter (Usually uses *Yours truly* or *Sincerely*)

full block format - is the most common format in which each section of the letter lines up at the left side of the page (Nothing is indented.)

greeting or salutation - begins with “Dear” followed by the formal title – Mr., Mrs., or Ms, and last name (Remember to use a colon (:) after the name.)

heading - contains the writer’s address and the date

inside address - contains the recipient’s name, job title (if applicable), department (if applicable), company name (if applicable), and defining address – street, postal box number or RR number, town/city, province, and postal code

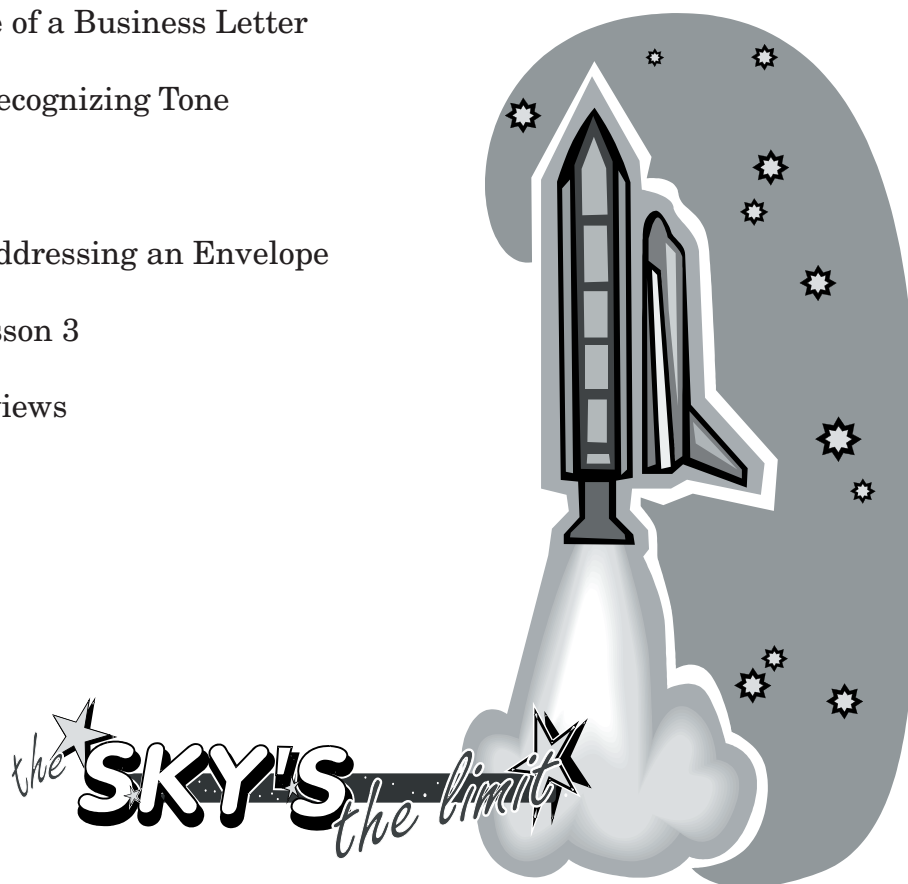
modified block format - provides heading, closing, signature, and name all lined up at a point a little more than halfway across the page (Other sections, including the notation, if any, line up at the left margin.)

notation - signals specific information about the letter, such as an enclosed item

Overview

This lesson contains the following topics and activities:

- Glossary
- Overview
- Why Write Business Letters?
- Learning Check 1: Reasons for Writing Business Letters
- Parts of a Business Letter
- Format of a Business Letter
- Learning Check 2: Format and Parts of Business Letters
- Tone and Appearance of a Business Letter
- Learning Check 3: Recognizing Tone
- The Envelope
- Learning Check 4: Addressing an Envelope
- Summary of W1 - Lesson 3
- News, Clues, and Reviews



Why Write Business Letters?

Business letters are written for several reasons. A business letter is a formal communication written by an individual to a business, a business to an individual, or a business to a business.

Eventually, you *will* need to write business letters. For example, one common type of business letter is a covering letter that accompanies a résumé when a person applies for a job.



Learning Check 1: Reasons for Writing Business Letters

Can you think of more reasons people write business letters? Brainstorm as many reasons for writing business letters as you can. If you are in a classroom situation, your teacher may ask you to do this activity in pairs or in small groups.

Reasons for writing business letters:

Did you think of a variety of ideas? If you are in a classroom situation, your teacher may ask you to share those ideas with the class.

Parts of a Business Letter

You may have already learned about the friendly letter in previous grades. A business letter has the same parts as a friendly letter, plus a few more. Be sure to note the differences between a friendly letter and a formal letter.

Heading

This contains your (the writer's) address and the date. It does not include your name. If you are using letterhead that contains your organization's name and address, you need to add the date only.

Guidelines for writing the heading:

- Do not use periods or commas to indicate the ends of the lines.
- Leave a blank line or two before the heading.
- If the letter is very short, leave more blank lines before the heading so your letter is nicely centered on the page (or use your word processor's vertical centering feature).
- Leave two blank lines after the heading.
- Leaving a blank line between the address and the date is common, but not absolutely required.

The heading is formatted like this:

Building Number and Street Name
City or Town, Province Postal Code
Month, Day, Year

2 spaces



Inside Address

The inside address contains the recipient's

- name
- job title (if applicable)
- department (if applicable)
- company name (if applicable)
- address

Do not use periods or commas to indicate the ends of the lines. Leave two blank lines after the inside address.

The inside address is formatted like this:

Name, Title or Position
Company or Organization Name
Building Number and Street Name
City or Town, Province Postal Code

2 spaces

Greeting or Salutation

This is the part that begins with *Dear*. In a business letter, you should almost always use the person's title (Mr., Mrs., Ms, Dr., etc.) and last name unless you know the person very well. **Also, in a business letter the greeting ends with a colon instead of a comma.** All the words in the greeting should begin with capital letters. Leave one blank line after the greeting.

Body

This is the main part of the letter. Be brief, but be sure that you give enough information and details so the recipient can understand the situation. Begin a new paragraph when you start a new topic. Do not indent the first line of the paragraph. Leave a blank line between paragraphs. Leave one blank line after the last paragraph.

Often, the body of a business letter contains three paragraphs:

1. State your purpose for writing.

"I am writing to inform you of the many problems I've had with the MP3 player I bought from your company on April 27 of this year. I hope that you will be able to correct the situation."

2. Give the necessary information and details.

"This MP3 player has not worked properly since the first day I had it. The sound is staticky. Also, the buttons stick, and it is difficult to change tracks or turn the power on and off. Finally, the battery cover broke the third day I had this MP3 player. I am very disappointed in the quality of this product."

3. State what action, if any, you would like the recipient to take.

"I am very disappointed in this product, and I would like my money back. I have enclosed a copy of my receipt."

You may wish to add a brief, fourth paragraph that thanks the reader.

"Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter."

Complimentary Close

This is where you sign the letter. Examples of a complimentary close are *Yours truly*, or *Sincerely*. The complimentary close ends in a comma, and only the first word begins with a capital letter.

Signature

Sign your name after the letter is printed or typed. Use black or blue ink. Do not use any punctuation. If you are word processing or typing the letter, leave about four blank lines between the closing and the typed name (below) to provide a space for you to write your signature.

Name

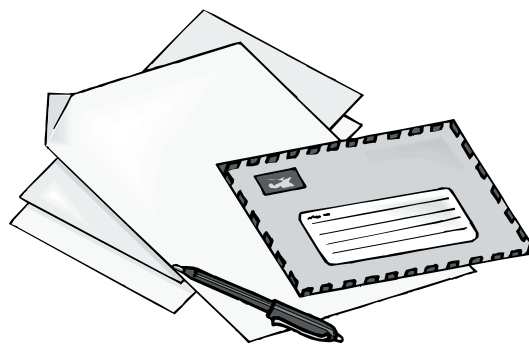
Type (or print, if you are handwriting the letter) your name below the space you leave for the signature. If you are writing on behalf of a company, club, or organization, state your job title, too. Do not use any punctuation.

Notation

Give specific information about the letter in a notation. For example, the notation tells that

- something is enclosed with the letter (Encl.).
- a copy of the letter has been sent to someone else (Cc. followed by the other person's name)
- the letter has been typed for you by someone else (YI/ti) (your initials in uppercase followed by typist's initials in lowercase). The uppercase initials belong to the person who signs the letter.

Notice that special abbreviations are used in the notation. A business letter has a notation only if the situation calls for one. If you have not enclosed anything or sent a copy to someone else, and if you have typed your own letter, you will not use a notation.



Format of a Business Letter

A business letter is written in block format or modified block format.

Block Format or Full Block Format

In block format, each section of the letter lines up at the left side of the page. Nothing is indented. Block format letters are single-spaced within paragraphs and double-spaced between paragraphs. Full block format, seems to be the most commonly used format in business today.

Sample Business Letter in Full Block Format

Notice that this letter in the following example gives very specific information about the time and date of the problem, the people involved, and the details of the problem. The manager can do little about the problem if he or she does not know these details. The writer also states clearly the action she would like.

Also, notice that, although this is a letter of complaint, the writer remains polite. She does not rant or swear. She knows that the manager would probably not take her seriously if she exhibited *that* sort of behaviour. If the letter was rude, the manager would probably think that the customer had also acted rudely to the cashier and would take the cashier's side. A business letter is *always* formal and courteous.



Example:

123 Side Street Anytown, AB T4U 4U2 March 16, 2003	HEADING
<i>leave 4 blank lines (one line if the letter is handwritten)</i>	
The Manager Gree-sie Fast Food Restaurant 456 Main Street Anytown, AB T4U 1U8	INSIDE ADDRESS
<i>leave 4 blank lines (one line if the letter is handwritten)</i>	
Dear Sir or Madam:	GREETING
<i>leave 1 blank line</i>	
<p>I am writing to complain about a hamburger that I had at your restaurant on Monday, March 12, 2003.</p> <p>I believe that I deserve some compensation for the damage caused. It was inedible. It was so overcooked that it was as hard as a hockey puck. When I tried to bite into it, I chipped a tooth. I tried to return it and get a fresh hamburger, but the cashier, Myron, refused. He insisted that there was nothing wrong with the hamburger. I showed him my chipped tooth, but he just shrugged his shoulders and said that I should not have come in so close to closing time. He said that the cook had already gone home, so I could not get another hamburger.</p> <p>I am outraged at both the bad food and the poor service. I feel that I am entitled to a refund on my meal and reimbursement for the cost of having my tooth fixed. I have enclosed the meal receipt and the dentists' estimate. Please mail a cheque reimbursing my expenses, to the address at the top of this letter. Also, I hope that you will take steps to improve the food and the service at your restaurant.</p>	
<i>leave 1 blank line</i>	
Yours truly,	CLOSING
<i>Martha Steward</i>	SIGNATURE <i>leave about 4 blank lines after the closing if you are typing this, and sign in pen in the empty space</i>
Marsha Steward	NAME
<i>leave 1 blank line</i>	
Encl.	NOTATION

Modified Block Format

Modified block format is similar to block format in spacing. However, the heading, closing, signature, and name all line up at a point a little more than halfway across the page. The other sections, including the notation (if any), line up at the left margin. This format is more common with handwritten letters or letters typed with a typewriter. Some people prefer it because it has a more traditional appearance.

Example:

1	123 Birch Street Anytown, AB T4U 4U2 March 16, 2002
2	Guy Toothless, Captain Anytown Ants Hockey Team Box 300 Anytown, AB T4U 1U8
3	Dear Mr. Toothless:
4	On behalf of the Junior Ants Fan Club, I would like to thank you and your teammates for speaking to our club at our fund-raising festival last week. We enjoyed your presentation very much, and we appreciate you taking the time from your busy schedule for us. With your help, we raised over three hundred dollars for our club. This will help us to take a trip to one of your out-of-town games. We will all be in the stands cheering you on in the playoffs next month. Thank you, again, and good luck!
5	
6	Yours truly, Chris Rooter
7	Chris Rooter President, Junior Ants Fan Club

Again, this business letter is brief and on topic. The purpose is clearly stated right away. The tone is polite and formal.

In this example, the writer does not require the recipient (receiver) to take any action; therefore, no specific request for action is made.

Notice that Chris has put his title and the name of the club he represents after his name. You should do this if you are writing on behalf of a company, club, or organization.

Learning Check 2: Format and Parts of a Business Letter

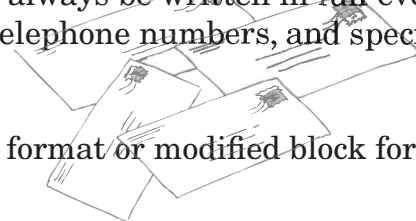
In the modified block format example above, identify the parts of the letter.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. How many blank lines should you leave between the heading and the inside address in a typed letter?
 - A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4
9. How many blank lines should you leave between the body and the closing in a typed letter?
 - A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4

10. What colour ink should you use for the signature in a business letter?
- A. red only
 - B. blue only
 - C. blue or black
 - D. it doesn't matter

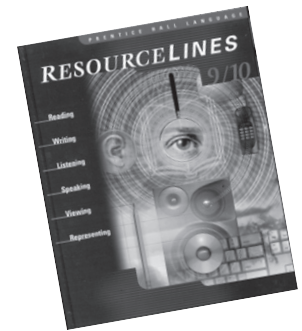
Tone and Appearance of a Business Letter

- A business letter is usually typed or word-processed. Only handwrite a business letter if you absolutely do not have access to a word processor or typewriter. Even then, business letters used to apply for a job should not be handwritten. Use a computer at the library, at a school, or at a friend's house.
- Use blue or black ink if you are handwriting the letter. Use a plain, black font, such as Times New Roman if you are word-processing the letter.
- If you do handwrite your letter, use plain, unlined, white paper. You may wish to place a lined sheet of paper underneath the plain paper as you write, to help keep your writing even.
- A business letter always has a formal tone. Avoid contractions, slang, or swearing.
- The greeting and closing should also be formal. For example, use *Dear Mr. Mumbles*, not *Hi Jim!* or *Yo, Jimbo!*
- Never use Internet abbreviations or symbols in a business letter. For example, type *you* instead of *u*. Internet abbreviations are a type of slang. They are informal. Also, the recipient may not be familiar with them. Do not use Internet abbreviations or symbols even if you are submitting your letter by e-mail.
- If you include an e-mail address in your business letter, be sure that the address gives a businesslike impression of you. If necessary, open another free e-mail account to use for business correspondence.
- No abbreviations or contractions should appear in the body of the letter. Numbers should be written in full (three, not 3), unless they are more than two words long. Numbers at the beginning of sentences should always be written in full even if they are more than two words long. Dates, addresses, telephone numbers, and specific amounts of money are written as numbers, however.
- A business letter is written in either full block format or modified block format.



- A business letter should be polite. Even if you are angry and writing to complain, your letter will get a better response if you remain courteous.
- A business letter should be brief and to the point. Do not ramble or include unnecessary information. However, the letter must give enough information to allow the reader to understand the situation fully.
- Be sure to use correct grammar and spelling. You will make a better impression, and your recipient will take your letter more seriously.
- A business letter should end by stating the action or response requested.

Read pages 128 to 130 in *ResourceLines 9/10* for another discussion of the correct tone and format for business letters.



Learning Check 3: Recognizing Tone



Mark Twain, or Samuel Clemens, was a well-known author. One of his best-known and best-loved works is the novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Because he was famous, many people wrote to him. Following are five letters written by Twain in the two years before his death. Some of the letters are to people Twain knew well. Others are to his fans or to his lawyers. For each of the following letters, determine the tone (formal or informal) and decide whether Twain knew his recipient well. Give two reasons for your decisions.

If you are in a classroom situation, your teacher may ask you to work in pairs or small groups for this activity.

Letter A

REDDING, CONNECTICUT,
Oct. 2, '08

DEAR MRS. PATTERSON,

The contents of your letter are very pleasant and very welcome, and I thank you for them, sincerely. If I can find a photograph of my "Tammany" and her kittens, I will enclose it in this.

One of them likes to be crammed into a corner-pocket of the billiard table—which he fits as snugly as does a finger in a glove and then he watches the game (and obstructs it) by the hour, and spoils many a shot by putting out his paw and changing the direction of a passing ball. Whenever a ball is in his arms, or so close to him that it cannot be played upon without risk of hurting him, the player is privileged to remove it to any one of the 3 spots that chances to be vacant.

Ah, no, my lecturing days are over for good and all.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

1. The tone of letter A is mainly formal / informal. (Circle your choice).
2. I think the recipient is well-known / not well-known to Twain. (Circle your choice).
3. Two reasons for my above answers are
 - a.
 - b.

Letter B

STORMFIELD, REDDING, CONN.,
Jan. 18, '09

DEAR HOWELLS,

I have to write a line, lazy as I am, to say how your Poe article delighted me; and to say that I am in agreement with substantially all you say about his literature. To me his prose is unreadable—like Jane Austin's. No, there is a difference. I could read his prose on salary, but not Jane's. Jane is entirely impossible. It seems a great pity that they allowed her to die a natural death.

Another thing: you grant that God and circumstances sinned against Poe, but you also grant that he sinned against himself—a thing which he couldn't do and didn't do.

It is lively up here now. I wish you could come.

Yrs ever,

MARK

4. The tone of letter A is mainly formal / informal. (Circle your choice).
5. I think the recipient is well-known / not well-known to Twain. (Circle your choice).
6. Two reasons for my above answers are
 - a.
 - b.

Letter C

STORMFIELD,
REDDING, CONNECTICUT,
3 in the morning, Apl. 17, '09

(Written with pencil.)

My pen has gone dry and the ink is out of reach. Howells, did you write me day-before-day before yesterday, or did I dream it? In my mind's eye I most vividly see your hand-write on a square blue envelope in the mailpile. I have hunted the house over, but there is no such letter. Was it an illusion?

I am reading Lowell's letter, and smoking. I woke an hour ago and am reading to keep from wasting the time. On page 305, vol. I. I have just margined a note:

"Young friend! I like that! You ought to see him now."

It seemed startlingly strange to hear a person call you young. It was a brick out of a blue sky, and knocked me groggy for a moment. Ah me, the pathos of it is, that we were young then. And he—why, so was he, but he didn't know it. He didn't even know it 9 years later, when we saw him approaching and you warned me, saying, "Don't say anything about age—he has just turned fifty, and thinks he is old and broods over it."

(Well, Clara did sing! And you wrote her a dear letter.)

Time to go to sleep.

Yours ever,

MARK.

7. The tone of letter A is mainly formal / informal. (Circle your choice).
8. I think the recipient is well-known / not well-known to Twain. (Circle your choice).
9. Two reasons for my above answers are
 - a.
 - b.

Letter D

"BAY HOUSE," BERMUDA,
March 21, 1910

DEAR MISS SULAMITH,

I think it is a remarkable dream for a girl of 13 to have dreamed, in fact for a person of any age to have dreamed, because it moves by regular grade and sequence from the beginning to the end, which is not the habit of dreams. I think your report of it is a good piece of work, a clear and effective statement of the vision.

I am glad to know you like the "Prince and the Pauper" so well and I believe with you that the dream is good evidence of that liking. I think I may say, with your sister that I like myself best when I am serious.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

10. The tone of letter A is mainly formal / informal. (Circle your choice).
11. I think the recipient is well-known / not well-known to Twain. (Circle your choice).
12. Two reasons for my above answers are
 - a.
 - b.

Letter E

HAMILTON, BERMUDA.
April 6, 1910

DEAR MR. LARK,

I have told Paine that I want the money derived from the sale of the farm, which I had given, but not conveyed, to my daughter Jean, to be used to erect a building for the Mark Twain Library of Redding, the building to be called the Jean L. Clemens Memorial Building.

I wish to place the money \$6,000.00 in the hands of three trustees,— Paine and two others: H. A. Lounsbury and William E. Hazen, all of Redding, these trustees to form a building Committee to decide on the size and plan of the building needed and to arrange for and supervise the work in such a manner that the fund shall amply provide for the building complete, with necessary furnishings, leaving, if possible, a balance remaining, sufficient for such repairs and additional furnishings as may be required for two years from the time of completion.

Will you please draw a document covering these requirements and have it ready by the time I reach New York (April 14th).

Very sincerely,

S. L. CLEMENS.

13. The tone of letter A is mainly formal / informal. (Circle your choice).
14. I think the recipient is well-known / not well-known to Twain. (Circle your choice).
15. Two reasons for my above answers are
 - a.
 - b.

The Envelope

Address the letter of a business envelope as follows:

Diagram illustrating the layout of a business envelope:

- Top Left (Return Address):** SENDER'S NAME, RETURN ADDRESS LINE 1, CITY PROVINCE POSTAL CODE
- Top Right (Stamp):** Stamp
- Middle (Attention Line):** ATTENTION LINE
- Bottom (Recipient Address):** COMPANY NAME, RECIPIENT'S ADDRESS LINE 1, RECIPIENT'S ADDRESS LINE 2, CITY PROVINCE POSTAL CODE

- Use capital letters.
- Type the envelope or print neatly. Use blue or black ink.
- Do not use punctuation unless it is part of a proper noun (e.g. St. George's Road). Also, do place a comma between a person's name and his or her position or title (e.g. Mr. Lanny McDonald, Team Captain).
- Do not use an envelope that is too small. You should be able to fit the letter in the envelope by folding it into thirds (two folds). For business letters, this is usually at least a #10 envelope (4.5" x 9.5").

Here is an example of an addressed envelope. Because this example is addressed to an individual, no company name or attention line is used.

Example of an addressed envelope:

- Top Left (Return Address):** JOE STUDENT, 10 4251 54 AVE, EDMONTON AB T4B 0G1
- Bottom (Recipient Address):** MS JANE DOUGH, 1704 MACKIE RD NE, CALGARY AB T7S 2E9

Learning Check 4: Addressing an Envelope

Print the following information into the correct area on the blank envelope. Use an attention line.

Sender: Abel Student

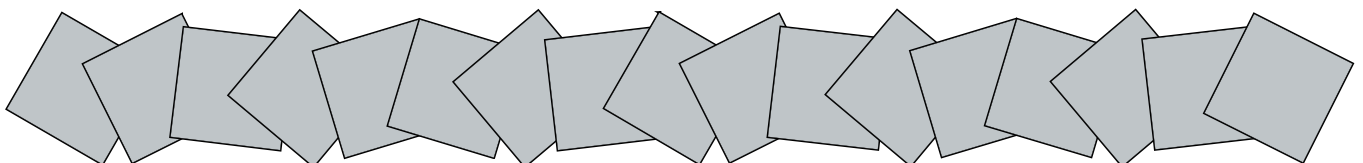
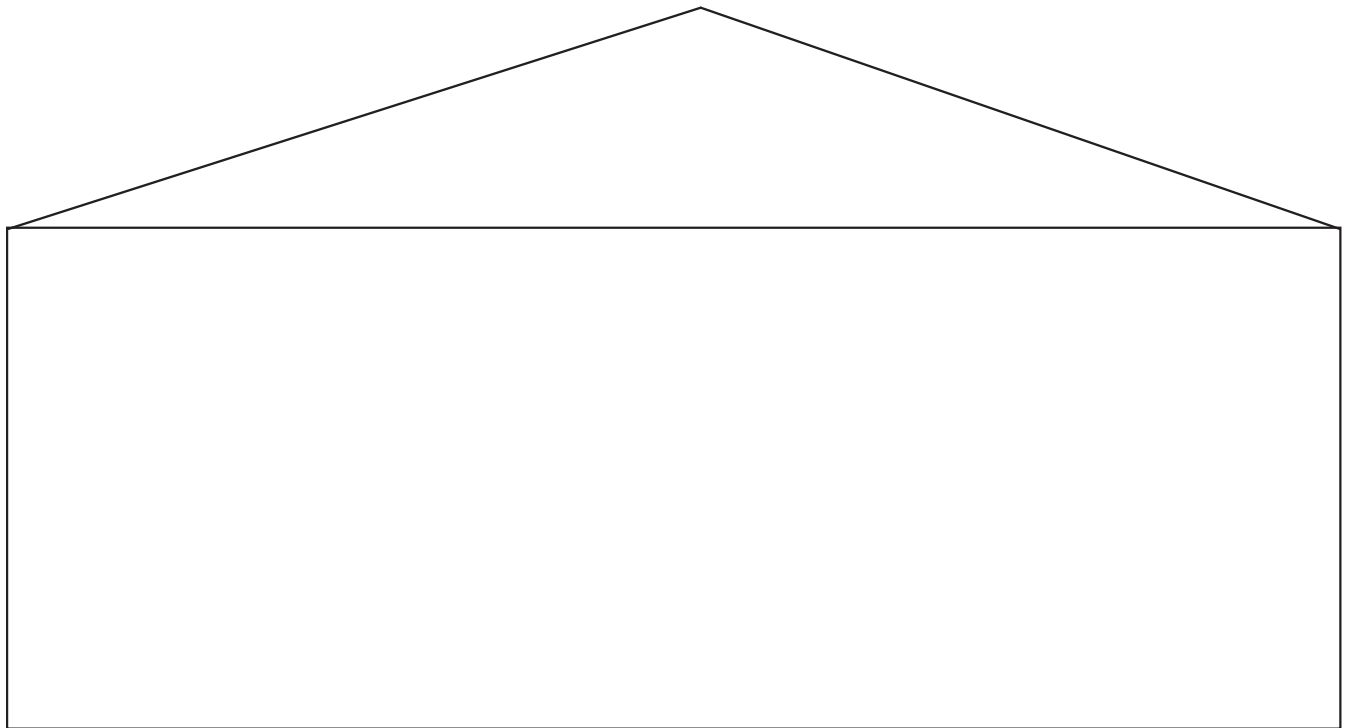
Recipient: Shirley Will

Sender's address: 123 River Road, Littleton, Alberta T1Y 2B7

Recipient's Address: 4259 Main Street, Bigtown, Alberta T0N 1L5

Recipient's Position: General Manager

Company Name: Weally Weird Widget Company



Summary of W1 - Lesson 3

- People write business letters for a variety of reasons.
- Use either block format or modified block format for business letters.
- The parts of a business letter are, in order: Inside Address, Heading, Greeting or Salutation, Body, Complimentary Close, Signature, Typed Name, and Notation.
- A business letter should be brief, but it should also include all necessary information.
- A business letter has a courteous and formal tone.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation for a business letter.
- Use blue or black ink or plain, black fonts on plain, white paper.
- Use a large enough envelope.
- Use capital letters and no punctuation (except for certain commas or punctuation in proper nouns) on the envelope on a business letter. Print neatly or type.



News, Clues, and Reviews

News

Extra! Extra! Here are three new ideas I learned in this lesson:



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Clues

Here is a question or an example I thought of for each of the above ideas. When I thought of a question, I tried to find the answer, and I wrote it below the question:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Reviews

Use the notes you made on this page to help you review for tests.

