

CATHLENA MARTIN
(personal letterhead here with your address)

Date

Name of person letter is to

Address of person letter is to

Dear students:

I am writing to describe some basic rules about business letter format that have been helpful to me. If you have any questions, beyond the scope of these guidelines, please let me know.

The text of a business letter, and your correspondence with parents and other teachers should be considered a business letter, should be single spaced, with double spacing between paragraphs. The most common style these days, called *block format*, requires a flush left margin, which means that every line should begin on the left margin. Eleven-point font or twelve point font is used in virtually all business documents, usually in Times New Roman. Consider using subheadings or bulleted lists for ease of reading.

For the salutation you have several options:

- If you have no particular addressee, you may use a subject line rather than "Dear So-and-So." For example, a subject line for this letter might read, Subject: Business Letter Format.
- Another possibility is to address a potential group of people, for example, "Dear Colleagues" or "Dear Members."
- "To Whom It May Concern" is a last resort that can be used when you don't know the name of your addressee or when you are writing a form letter. You will probably never use this one.

Though each of these options is acceptable, your letter should be addressed to a particular person, whenever possible.

The first paragraph (as exemplified above) should simply introduce the purpose of the letter in a very efficient manner and a business-like, no-nonsense tone. Toward the end of the letter, try to offer your addressee something positive if the letter has contained any negative information. Finally, the complimentary closing should be appropriate in tone for the addressee.

Sincerely,

[sign by hand and in ink after printing your letter out]

Cathlena Martin