

- 8.5 Sales Letter Analysis**
- Your Task.** Select a one- or two-page sales letter received by you or a friend. (If you are unable to find a sales letter, your instructor may have a collection.) Study the letter and then answer these questions:
- What techniques were used to capture the reader's attention?
 - Is the opening effective? Explain.
 - What are the central selling points?
 - Does the letter use rational, emotional, or a combination of appeals? Explain.
 - What reader benefits are suggested?
 - How does the letter build interest in the product or service?
 - How is price handled?
 - How does the letter anticipate reader resistance and offer counterarguments?
 - What action is the reader to take? How is the action made easy?
 - What motivators spur the reader to act quickly?

Activities and Cases

E-MAIL

8.6 Persuasive Request: Please Write Me a Letter of Recommendation

As a student, you will need letters of recommendation to find a job, to apply for a scholarship or grant, or to enter graduate school. Naturally, you will consider asking one or several of your college instructors. You talk to a senior you know to find out how to get a busy professor to write you an effective letter. Your friend Paul has the following basic advice for you:

Ask only instructors who have had the opportunity to observe your performance and who may still remember you fondly. Two to five years after you attended a course of 20 to 40 students, your teachers may not recall you at all. Second, contact only professors who can sing your praises. If your grades were lackluster, don't expect a glowing endorsement. Some teachers may flatly refuse to write a recommendation that they cannot make whole-heartedly. Last, make it easy for them to agree to your request and to write a solid letter promptly by following these guidelines:

If possible, make the first request in person. This way, your former instructor will be more likely to remember you. Introduce yourself by name and try to point out something memorable you have done to help your professor recall your performance. Have a copy of the job description, scholarship information, grant requirements, or graduate school application ready. Carry a copy of a recent polished résumé. Alternatively, promise to e-mail these documents and any other information that will help your recommender recall you in a professional setting and understand the nature of the application process. Confirm any agreement by e-mail promptly, and set a firm yet reasonable deadline by which the letter must be received. Don't expect to get a letter if you ask at the last minute. On the other hand, if you give your instructor too much time, he or she may forget. In that case, don't be afraid gently to nudge by e-mail to remind the recommender when the deadline draws closer.

Your Task. Write a persuasive request by e-mail asking your instructor (or supervisor, manager) to write you a letter of recommendation for a job application, grant, scholarship, or graduate school application. Provide all relevant information to make it easy for your reader to write a terrific letter. Explain any potential attachments.

E-MAIL

8.7 Persuasive Favor/Action Request: Inviting an Alumna to Speak

As public relations director for the Business and Accounting Association on your campus, you have been asked to find a keynote speaker for the first meeting of the school year. The owner of a successful local firm, TempHelp4You, is an alumna of your university. You think not only that many students would enjoy learning about how she started her business, but also that some might like to sign up with her temporary help agency. She would need to prepare a 30-minute speech and take questions after the talk. The event will be held from noon until 1:30 p.m. on a date of your choosing in Branford Hall. You can offer her lunch at the event and provide