

# STYLE CARD

## Sample Letters

### Block Letter Style with Open Punctuation



**Pots and Pantries, Inc.**  
123 Colville Avenue Spokane, WA 89001

**Begin 2" from top or 1/2" below letterhead**

● **Dateline**

July 24, 2015

● **Letter address**

José Navarro  
Purchasing Department  
Pots and Pantries, Inc.  
123 Colville Avenue  
Spokane, WA 89001

● **Salutation**

Dear Mr. Navarro

● **Body**

Welcome to the most unique designs in glassware available in the U.S. Our expert buyers tour every region of the world to find the most innovative creations in kitchen and dining glassware.

Because of your current favorable credit rating, we are pleased to provide you with a \$15,000 credit line subject to our standard 2/10, n/30 terms. By paying your invoice within ten days, you can save 2 percent on your glassware purchases.

You can use our convenient online ordering system to search our extensive line of glassware products and to place your orders. If you need additional assistance, please call our 24-hour service line, where you will be assisted by our number one-rated customer service personnel.

The most innovative glassware designs are now available to you and your customers, so please take some time to familiarize yourself with our extensive line.

● **Complimentary close**

Sincerely

● **Signature block**

*Luther Crosby*

● **Reference initials**

Luther Crosby  
Credit Manager  
JM:tw

● Begins all lines at left margin; uses easy-to-read jagged right margin and single-spaced, unindented paragraphs.

● Omits colon after salutation and comma after complimentary close in open punctuation style.

● Signs legibly in available space and identifies writer.

● Identifies person keying document.

The document illustrates contemporary spacing with 1.15 spaces between lines. If using traditional single spacing (1.0), tap Enter 2 times to double-space between paragraphs and 4 times to quadruple space after the dateline and the complimentary close.





## Letter and Punctuation Styles

Decisions about page format impact the effectiveness of the message. Many companies have policies that dictate the page layout, letter and punctuation style, and other formatting issues. In the absence of company policy, make your format choices from among standard acceptable options illustrated on this style card.

### • Page Layout, Punctuation, and Letter Style

The default margins set by word processing software typically reflect the standard line length to increase the efficiency of producing business correspondence. Letters are balanced on the page with approximately equal margins on all sides of the letter, a placement often referred to as fitting the letter into a picture frame. Short letters (one or two paragraphs) are centered on the page; all other letters begin 1 inch from the top of the page. Side margins may be adjusted to improve the appearance of extremely short letters.

Current word processing software has increased the default line spacing and space between paragraphs for easier on-screen reading. If you prefer the tighter, traditional spacing, simply adjust the line spacing to 1.0. Also, to conserve space but keep the fresh, open look, try reducing the line spacing in the letter address but retaining the wider line and paragraph spacing in the body of the letter. Another new default is a crisp, open font such as Calibri (replacing the common Times New Roman) designed for easy reading on monitors.

#### NEW DOCUMENT LOOK

July 24, 2015 **Tap Enter 2 times**

Mr. Abbie S. Jackson

1938 South Welch Avenue

Northwood, NE 65432-1938 **Tap Enter 1 time**

Dear Mr. Jackson **Tap Enter 1 time**

Your recent article, "Are Appraisers Talking to Themselves?" has drawn many favorable comments from local real estate appraisers.

**Tap Enter 1 time**

The Southeast Chapter of the Society of Real Estate Appraisers ...

#### TRADITIONAL SPACING

July 24, 2014 **Tap Enter 4 times (QS)**

Mr. Abbie S. Jackson

1938 South Welch Aven

Northwood, NE 65432-1938 **Tap Enter 2 times (DS)**

Dear Mr. Jackson **Tap Enter 2 times (DS)**

Your recent article, "Are Appraisers Talking to Themselves?" has drawn many favorable comments from local real estate appraisers.

**Tap Enter 2 times (DS)**

The Southeast Chapter of the Society of Real Estate Appraisers ...

# STYLE CARD

**PUNCTUATION STYLES.** Two punctuation styles are customarily used in business letters: mixed and open. Letters using mixed punctuation style have a colon after the salutation and a comma after the complimentary close. Letters using open punctuation style omit a colon after the salutation and a comma after the complimentary close. Mixed punctuation is the traditional style; however, efficiency-conscious companies are increasingly adopting the open style (and other similar format changes), which is easier to remember.

**LETTER STYLES.** Business letters are typically formatted in either block or modified block letter styles. The Sample Letters card has examples of these two styles:

- **Block.** Companies striving to reduce the cost of producing business documents adopt the easy-to-learn, efficient block format. All lines (including paragraphs) begin at the left margin.
- **Modified Block.** Modified block is the traditional letter format still used in many companies. The dateline, complimentary close, and signature block begin at the horizontal center of the page. Paragraphs may be indented one-half inch if the writer prefers or the company policy requires it. However, the indentation creates unnecessary keystrokes that increase the production cost. All other lines begin at the left margin.

## • Standard Letter Parts

Professional business letters include seven standard parts. Other parts are optional and may be included when necessary.

1

**DATELINE.** When the letterhead shows the company name, address, telephone and/or fax number, and logo, the letter begins with the **dateline**. Use the month-day-year format (September 2, 2015) for most documents prepared for U.S. audiences. When preparing government documents or writing to an international audience, use the day-month-year format (2 September 2015). Company policy may require another format.

2

**LETTER ADDRESS.** The **letter address** includes a personal or professional title (e.g., Mr., Ms., or Dr.), the name of the person and company receiving the letter, and the complete address.

3

**SALUTATION.** The **salutation** is the greeting that opens a letter. To show courtesy for the receiver, include a personal or professional title (for example, Mr., Ms., Dr., Senator). Refer to the first line of the letter address to determine an appropriate salutation. "Dear Ms. Henson" is an appropriate salutation for a letter addressed to Ms. Donna Henson (first line of letter address). "Ladies and Gentlemen" is an appropriate salutation for a letter addressed to "Wyatt Enterprises," where the company name is keyed as the first line of the letter address.

4

**BODY.** The **body** contains the message of the letter. Because extra space separates the paragraphs, paragraph indention, which requires extra setup time, is not necessary. However, for organizations that require paragraph indention as company policy, the modified block format with indented paragraphs is the appropriate choice.

5

**COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE.** The **complimentary close** is a phrase used to close a letter in the same way that you say good-bye at the end of a conversation. To create goodwill, choose a complimentary close that reflects the formality of your relationship with the receiver. Typical examples are "Sincerely," "Regards," "Cordially," and "Respectfully." Using "yours" in the close has fallen out of popularity (as in "Sincerely yours" and "Very truly yours"). "Sincerely" is considered neutral and is thus appropriate in a majority of business situations. "Cordially" can be used for friendly messages, and "Respectfully" is appropriate when you are submitting information for the approval of another.

## Letter and Punctuation Styles

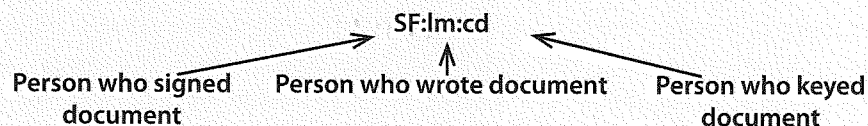
### 6

**SIGNATURE BLOCK.** The *signature block* consists of the writer's name keyed below the complimentary close, allowing space for the writer to sign legibly. A woman may include a courtesy title to indicate her preference (e.g., Miss, Ms., Mrs.), and a woman or man may use a title to distinguish a name used by both men and women (e.g., Shane, Leslie, or Stacy) or initials (E. M. Goodman). A business or professional title may be placed on the same line with the writer's name or directly below it as appropriate to achieve balance.

Title on the Same Line	Title on the Next Line
Ms. Leslie Tatum, President	Ms. E. M. Goodman
Perry Watson, Manager	Assistant Manager
Quality Control Division Head	Richard S. Templeton
	Human Resources Director

### 7

**REFERENCE INITIALS.** The *reference initials* consist of the keyboard operator's initials keyed in lowercase below the signature block. The reference initials and the signature block identify the persons involved in preparing a letter in the event of later questions. Reference initials are frequently omitted when a letter is keyed by the writer. However, company policy may require that the initials of all people involved in preparing a letter be placed in the reference initials line to identify accountability in the case of litigation. For example, the following reference initials show the indicated level of responsibility. The reference line might also include department identification or other information as required by the organization.



### • Optional Letter Parts

**DELIVERY AND ADDRESSEE NOTATIONS.** A *delivery notation* provides a record of how a letter was sent. Examples include Air Mail, Certified Mail, Federal Express, Registered Mail, and Fax Transmission. Addressee notations such as Confidential or Personal give instructions on how a letter should be handled.

**ATTENTION LINE.** An *attention line* is used for directing correspondence to an individual or department within an organization while still officially addressing the letter to the organization. The attention line directs a letter to a specific person (Attention Ms. Laura Ritter), position within a company (Attention Human Resources Director), or department (Attention Purchasing Department). Current practice is to place the attention line in the letter address on the line directly below the company name and use the same format for the envelope address. The appropriate salutation in a letter with an attention line is "Ladies and Gentlemen."

**REFERENCE LINE.** A *reference line* (Re: Contract No. 983-9873) directs the receiver to source documents or to files.

**SUBJECT LINE.** A *subject line* tells the receiver what a letter is about and sets the stage for the receiver to understand the message. For added emphasis, use initial capitals or all capitals, or center the subject line if modified block style is used. Omit the word *subject* because its position above the body clearly identifies its function.

# STYLE CARD

**SECOND-PAGE HEADING.** The second and succeeding pages of multiple-page letters and memorandums are keyed on plain paper of the same quality as the letterhead. Identify the second and succeeding pages with a **second-page heading** including the name of the addressee, page number, and the date. Place the heading one inch from the top edge of the paper using either a vertical or horizontal format as illustrated. The horizontal format is more time-consuming to format but looks attractive with the modified block format and may prevent the document from requiring additional pages.

## Vertical Format

Communication Systems, Inc.

Page 2

January 19, 2015

## Horizontal Format

Communication Systems, Inc.      2      January 19, 2015

**COMPANY NAME IN SIGNATURE BLOCK.** Some companies prefer to include the **company name** in the signature block, but often it is excluded because it appears in the letterhead. The company name is beneficial when the letter is prepared on plain paper or is more than one page (the second page of the letter is printed on plain paper). Including the company name also may be useful to the writer wishing to emphasize that the document is written on behalf of the company (e.g., a letter establishing an initial customer contact).

**ENCLOSURE NOTATION.** An **enclosure notation** indicates that additional items (brochure, price list, résumé) are included in the same envelope. Key the plural form (Enclosures) if more than one item is enclosed. You may identify the number of enclosures (Enclosures: 3) or the specific item enclosed (Enclosure: Bid Proposal). Avoid abbreviations (Enc.) that may give the impression that your work is hurried and careless and may show disrespect for the recipient. Some companies use the word *Attachment* on memorandums when the accompanying items may be stapled or clipped and not placed in an envelope.

**COPY NOTATION.** A **copy notation** indicates that a courtesy copy of the document was sent to the person(s) listed. Include the person's personal or professional title and full name after keying "c" for *copy* or "cc" for *courtesy copy*. Key the copy notation below the enclosure notation, reference initials, or signature block (depending on the optional letter parts used).

**POSTSCRIPT.** A **postscript**, appearing as the last item in a letter, is commonly used to emphasize information. A postscript in a sales letter, for example, is often used to restate the central selling point; for added emphasis, it may be handwritten or printed in a different color. Often handwritten postscripts of a personal nature are added to personalize the printed document. Postscripts should not be used to add information inadvertently omitted from the letter. Because its position clearly labels this paragraph as a postscript, do not begin with "PS."

**COMPUTER FILE NOTATION.** A **computer file notation** provides the path and file name of the letter. Some companies require this documentation on the file copy to facilitate revision. Place the computer file notation a single space below the last keyed line of the letter.

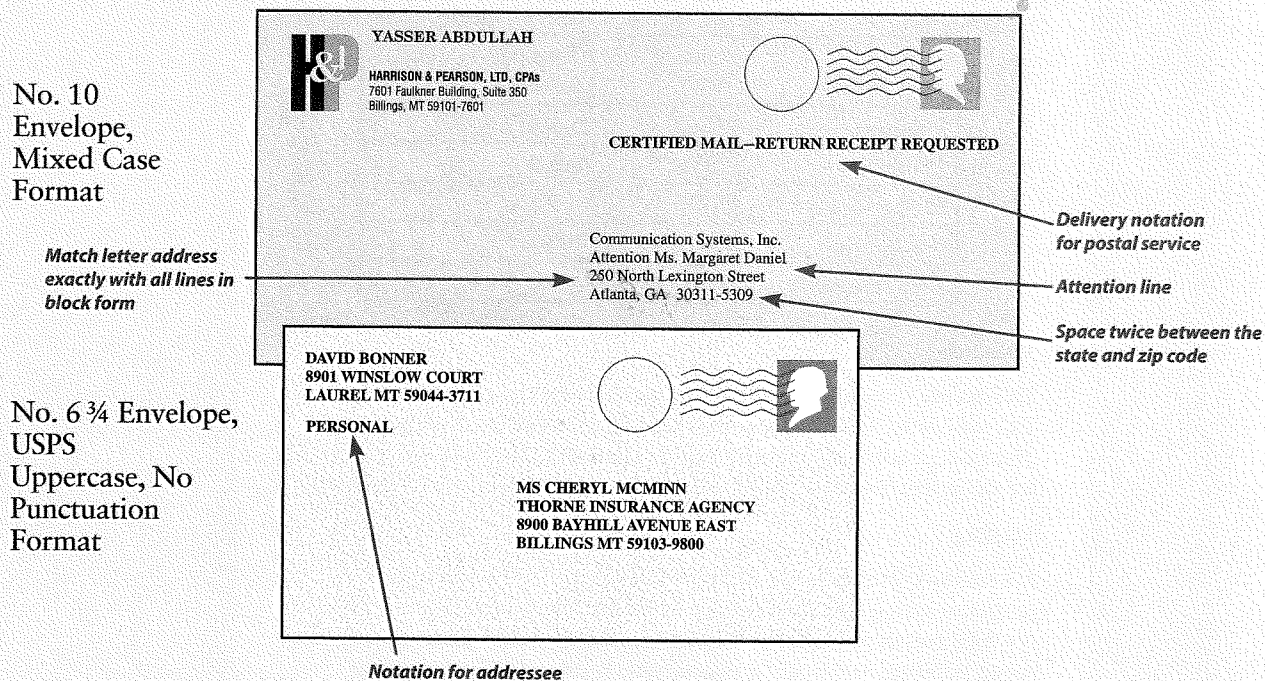
# STYLE CARD

## Envelope and Memo Styles

### • Envelopes

An envelope should be printed on the same quality and color of paper as the letter and generated using the convenient envelope feature of your word processing program. Adjust defaults as needed to adhere to the recommendations of the United States Postal Service (USPS). To increase the efficiency of mail handling, use the two-letter abbreviations for states, territories, and Canadian provinces. USPS official state abbreviations are available at [www.USPS.gov](http://www.USPS.gov).

Most companies today do not follow the traditional USPS recommendation to key the letter address in all capital letters with no punctuation. The mixed case format matches the format used in the letter address, looks more professional, and allows the writer to generate the envelope automatically without rekeying text. No mail handling efficiency is lost as today's optical character readers that sort mail can read both upper- and lowercase letters easily. Proper placement of the address on a large and a small envelope generated using an envelope template available with word processing software is shown here:



Additionally, to create a highly professional image, business communicators should fold letters to produce the fewest number of creases. Here are the proper procedures for folding letters for large (No. 10) and small (6 $\frac{3}{4}$ ) envelopes:

Folding and Inserting Procedures for Large Envelopes			Folding and Inserting Procedures for Small Envelopes			
<b>Step 1</b> With letter face up, fold slightly less than 1/3 of sheet up toward top.	<b>Step 2</b> Fold down top of sheet to within 1/2 inch of bottom fold.	<b>Step 3</b> Insert letter into envelope with last crease toward bottom of envelope.	<b>Step 1</b> With letter face up, fold bottom up to 1/2 inch from top.	<b>Step 2</b> Fold right third to left.	<b>Step 3</b> Fold left third to 1/2 inch from last crease.	<b>Step 4</b> Insert last creased edge first.