

## GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans

Area/Skill - LA, Writing	Cognitive Skill Level - Application	Correlation to Framework - 01.04, 01.05	Lesson Number - 13
<p><b>Activity Title - Writing – Business Letters</b></p> <p><b>Goal/Objective</b> To provide students with the skills needed to recognize and create effective business documents.</p> <p><b>Lesson Outline</b> <b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Students should understand the purpose for writing a business letter and how choosing the right style and format can enhance the effectiveness of their writing. Many students indicate that they never write letters, however it is important that students understand real-life situations where a letter would be required. Solicit from the students the times that a letter might be the most appropriate form of communication. Business letters are generally written for one of the following reasons: to request something; to confirm a spoken arrangement; to respond to letter or request received; to follow-up (by reminding someone of something, updating someone, or thanking someone); or to conduct some type of business (like placing an order).</p> <p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>Distribute some examples of business letters that you have obtained either at home or through work. If possible provide a variety that includes different formats and style. You may want to include some sample business letters that are trying to get you to apply for a new credit card or purchase something through the mail. Use real-life letters to provide students an opportunity to work with documents similar to those they will see on the GED Language Arts, Writing Test. Review the different writing styles (formal and informal) and the proper layout, from the heading to the postscript using the handout on Business Letters. When the review is complete, have students write their own business letter in response to a classified ad that you have pulled from the local newspaper.</p> <p><b>Debriefing/Evaluation Activity</b></p> <p>Have students share their letters with their peers. Use the Business Letter Handout to check to see that the student used an appropriate style and format.</p>			<p><b>Materials/Texts/Realia/Handouts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout—Style and Format</li> <li>• Handout—Basic Components</li> <li>• Handout—Business Letter</li> <li>• Sample business letters from home or work</li> <li>• Classified ads from the local newspaper</li> </ul>
<p><b>Real-Life Connection</b></p> <p>Have students write two classified ads, one for a job for which they are qualified right now. The second ad should be for a their "dream" job. When the students have completed their ads, have them write letters of application in response to the ads.</p>			<p><b>Extension Activity</b></p> <p>Provide students with 2 classified ads and have them pretend they are someone else and write letters in response he ads. The student can be creative in developing his or her own "alter ego" to respond to the ads.</p> <p><b>ESE/ESOL Accommodations</b></p> <p>Have students highlight key words in the handout, such as body, closure, etc.</p> <p>Provide students with a format that includes each part of the business letter as a header so the student will be reminded of each part he/she needs to include in the letter.</p>

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### Activity Title— Writing –Business Letters

#### Introduction

*Say:* Today's lesson is about writing business letters. *Ask:* Why would we need to write a business letter? Write the students responses on the board.  
*Say:* As you can see we write business letters for a variety of reasons. Today, we are going to review some of those kinds of letters and focus on the style and proper format for business letters.

#### Main Activity

Distribute some examples of business letters that you have obtained either at home or through work. If possible provide a variety that includes different formats and style. You may want to include some sample business letters that are trying to get you to apply for a new credit card or purchase something through the mail. Use real-life letters to provide students an opportunity to work with documents similar to those they will see on the GED Language Arts, Writing Test. *Say:* We are going to begin by reviewing some business letters that other people have written. When we finish, you are going to have a chance to write your own letter. *Ask:* How many of you have ever written a letter asking for a job interview or an application? Writing effective letters can be very helpful when searching for employment.

Distribute the handouts and have students review the real-life business letters with the information on the handout. Have them compare the styles from various letter writers. When students have finished the review provide students with some classified ads. *Say:* Pretend you are someone else and write a cover letter in response to one of the ads. Remember, you can be anyone you want to be when writing this letter. When you are finished we will review the letters together and see who has provided the most creative and effective response.

#### Debriefing/Evaluation Activity

*Say:* Your business letter acts as your ambassador out in the world. It represents you. If it is professional, courteous and well organized the receiver of the letter will think the same of you. If it is sloppy and poorly organized...I promise you the receiver will probably think the same thing about you. Have students share their letters with their peers. *Ask:* Did the letter writer get his/her message across? Was it easy to understand? Did the letter writer use a proper format for the letter? Have students evaluate the letters and make any suggested changes to the letters.

## **Business Letter Basic Components**

### **A. HEADING**

If you are writing personal business correspondence, you may want to create your own letterhead on a typewriter or word processor.

### **B. DATE**

The month, day and year is the first line. Don't abbreviate if at all possible  
June 19, 2006

### **C. INSIDE ADDRESS**

The inside address consists of the name of the person to whom you are writing (including a title such as Mr. or Ms.), that person's business title (if applicable); the name of the company; and the company's complete address.

Mr. Clarence Fisk, President  
The ABC Good Company  
9876 Beautiful Street  
Anytown, FL 44276

### **D. SALUTATION**

The salutation is a greeting to the recipient and should be the same as the first line of the inside address. You may use either a comma or a colon:

Dear Mr. Fisk,                      or...                      Dear Mr. Fisk:

### **E. SUBJECT LINE**

This is an optional feature. It is used to let the reader know what is covered in the letter.

RE: Job Application Request

### **F. BODY**

This body contains the text of your letter. It begins two lines after the salutation. The body should be single-spaced, with a double-space between the last line and the complimentary close. Most business correspondence uses double spaces between each paragraph. Most paragraphs in business letters are set up in block style and are not indented.

### **G. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE**

The complimentary close appears two lines after the last line of the body. The first word is capitalized, and a comma follows it. You may use either of the following closing comments.

Very truly yours,  
Sincerely,

### **H. SIGNATURE**

Leave approximately four spaces between the complimentary close and the writer's typewritten name and title for your signature.

Winston O'Mally  
Treasurer



## **Business Letters Style and Format**

### **1. Informal Style**

We write personal letters in the informal style. The style is similar to the way we talk, and as a result, puts the reader more at ease. It is only appropriate to write business correspondence in the informal style when you have developed a close working relationship with that individual.

Dear Marc,

Thanks for the invitation. I'll have to take a rain check on lunch for a few weeks. I'm going out of town until the first of the month. I'll call you when I get back.

### **2. Formal Style:**

The formal style is the most appropriate style for most business letters. Keep in mind that formal doesn't mean distant and unfriendly. Formal letters can be very warm. But they do so in a tone of respect and professional courtesy.

Dear Marc,

I regret that I must decline your invitation for lunch next week. I will be out of town until the first of the month. I will contact you upon my return so we can set something up for that week.

### **3. Business Letter Formats**

The appearance and layout of business letters will determine the impression your letter will make. Because this is so important, most companies have a standardized letter format that all letters must follow. Consistency is important, and your personal business letters should be consistent as well.

## **BUSINESS LETTERS WORKSHEET**

Select two of the following items and write an appropriate business letter for each.

1. Compose a formal business letter to Jack Magnetic, a local radio personality, asking him if he would conduct an auction at a neighborhood event you are having to raise money for a family who lost everything in a fire. Make up whatever details are needed to make the letter complete.
2. Write an informal business letter to your friend Jewel thanking her for her introducing you to some people in her office. Ask her for the address and phone number of someone she introduced you to that mentioned a possible job opening in which you are interested. Make up whatever details are needed to make the letter complete.
3. Write a formal letter to your office supply company placing a new order for supplies including paper, pens, printer cartridges, and other basic materials you need. Inform them that you received your last order, but there was a problem with one of the items that they sent to you. Ask for a refund for that item. As before, make up whatever details are needed to make the letter complete.
4. Write a cover letter in response to the following want ad:

Sales Assistance. Must have good people skill and understand how to deal with a variety of customers. Must be organized and require little supervision to handle the job. May be asked to deliver purchases to certain customers and will need a reliable car. Good benefits, pleasant atmosphere and room for advancement. Send resume and salary requirements to:

Human Resource Manager  
Credible Co.  
426 Orange Tree Dr.  
Gold Coast, FL 44281.