



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

July 20, 2006

Sample

Dr. John Doe
Crops Research Center
1111 Street Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada 12345-6789

Dear Dr. Doe:

This is an example of a formal letter. Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation line, block and flush with the left margin. Begin each main paragraph two lines below the last line of the preceding paragraph and flush with the left margin. Double space letters of one paragraph (10 lines or less). Single space the body of letters longer than one paragraph.

The formal letter is suitable for those situations when the writer knows that the addressee would expect a more personalized letter (congratulatory, condolence, or disciplinary actions). Always use the formal letter for letters addressed to the President; Vice President; members of the White House staff; Members of Congress; Justices of the Supreme Court; heads of departments and agencies outside the Department; State Governors; mayors; and foreign government officials.

When there is a reason to break a paragraph into subparagraphs, they may be lettered and numbered as follows:

a. Main paragraphs are typed in block style. Subparagraphs are indented four spaces as shown in this example (begin typing with the fifth space). Subparagraphs are typed single spaced with double spaces between them.

(1) When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions.

(a) When paragraphs are subdivided, lettered, and numbered, they fall in the following sequence: 1, (1), 1, a, (1), (a).

(b) When a paragraph is cited, the reference numbers and letters are written without spaces; for example, "paragraph 3a(2)©."



(2) A paragraph is begun near the end of the page only if there is space for two or more lines on that page. A paragraph is continued on the following page only if two or more lines can be carried over to that page.

b. Type the second and succeeding pages of a letter on plain bond paper. Starting with the second page, type the name of the addressee exactly as it is shown on the first page (excluding title) about 1 inch from the top of the page and flush left with the left margin. Type the page number on the same line flush with the right margin. Continue the text two lines below the name of the addressee. Allow side and bottom margins of 1-inch.

The complimentary closing is typed two lines below the body of the letter, flush with the left margin. Use the closing “Sincerely,” in most cases. Use the complimentary closing “Very truly yours,” for disciplinary letters.

Type the signer’s name in all caps four or five lines below the last line of the complimentary close, flush with the left margin. Type the signer’s title (initial caps only) on the next line. Do not repeat organizational names such as Division or Area if it already appears on the letterhead.

When material accompanies a letter, identify it in the text or in the bottom notation as an enclosure, not as an attachment. When an enclosure is identified in the text, type the word “Enclosure” flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the signer’s title. For more than one enclosure, use the plural form and indicate the number of enclosures. When an enclosure is not identified in the text, follow the example below identifying the enclosure.

When material referred to in the text is to be sent under separate cover, type “Separate Cover.” flush with the left margin, two lines below the signer’s title or the enclosure notation (if used). List the material, whether or not identified in the text. Send a copy of the letter with the material sent under separate cover.

The “cc” notation is typed flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the signature element or the enclosure or separate cover listing. If there isn’t enough room as in this example, type “cc:” on the line with the signer’s name, starting at the center of the page. Below the “cc:” notation, list the name and office abbreviation or company name of the “cc:” addressee. List “cc:” addressee’s one below the other. Mark or highlight each copy for the respective “cc:” addressee.

Sincerely,

BILL BROWN
Director

Enclosure:
NPA Secretarial Handbook

cc:
J.S. Smith, HRD
R.D. Boy, GSA
T.D. Jones, FMD
C.A. Brown, NPS