

lay/lie: The transitive verb *lay* means "to put or place" (the subject does the action to something); the intransitive verb *lie* means "to rest or recline" (the subject does the action):

Please lay your completed test on the table.

After that scare, I need to lie down.

Hint: Memorizing the principal parts of these two verbs will help you use them correctly:

Infinitive	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
lie (to recline)	(is) lying	lay	(have) lain
lay (to put)	(is) laying	laid	(have) laid

past/passed: *Past* is a noun that means "history", an adverb (e.g., He rode *past*), or a preposition (e.g., Go *past* the store and turn left); *passed* is the past tense of the verb *pass*:

In the past plagues wiped out vast populations.

Marcus rode past her house every day.

I passed Belinda in the hall.

real/really: *Real* is an adjective; *really* is an adverb that describes the degree of an adjective:

Her boyfriend bought her a real diamond.

Because I'm really tired, I'll go to bed now.

regardless: *Regardless* means "without regard"; there is no such word as *irregardless*:

Regardless of his natural talent, he did not make the team.



rise/raise: *Rise* means "to move upward" (the subject does the action); *raise* means "to lift or make something go up" (the subject does the action to something else):

I plan to rise early to go fishing.

The boy scouts will raise the flag at the ceremony.

said/says: *Said* is the past tense of the verb *to say*; *says* is the present tense:

Yesterday he said he wanted to quit.

My aunt always says, "Pretty is as pretty does."

slow/slowly: *Slow* is an adjective; *slowly* is an adverb:

The slow tortoise never wins races.

After spraining his ankle, he slowly crossed the finish line.

that/which: Use *that* to introduce essential clauses not set off by commas; use *which* to introduce nonessential clauses. (See pages 2 and 16 for more examples.)

The mirror that once hung in the front hall cracked. (no commas)
My car, which has a sunroof, gets good gas mileage. (commas)

their/there/they're: To show possession, use *their*; *there* is a place; and *they're* is a contraction for *they are*:

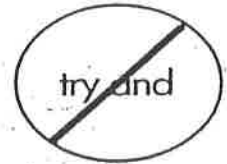
Their matching outfits make them look like twins.
I love the zoo; let's go there.
They're as slow as molasses in January.

to/too/two: *To* is a preposition that can mean "in the direction of" or it can form the infinitive of any verb. *Too* means "also" or is an adverb indicating degree. And *two* is a number:

Let's go to the mall. (preposition)
Jeff would like to go too. (infinitive and "also")
It will be too crowded. (adverb showing degree)
We will need to take two cars. (infinitive and number)

try to (not try and): *Try to* means "attempt"; never use *try and*:

Try to avoid waking a sleeping alligator.



well/good: *Good* is an adjective (modifies a noun); *well* is an adverb (modifies a verb) that means "capably" or an adjective that means "satisfactory" or "in good health":

The good boy got a sticker as a reward for doing his homework well.
I feel well.

who/whom: Who does the action; whom receives the action:

Who will feed the dragon?

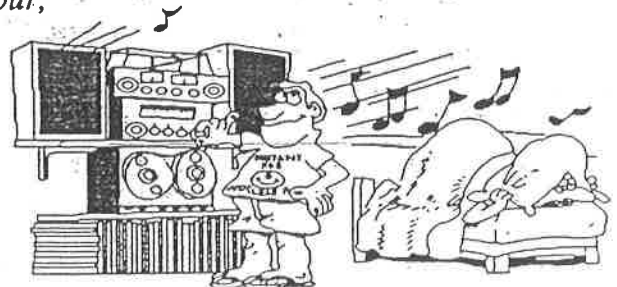
Whom will you take to the dance?

Hint: To test for *who/whom*, substitute *he/him* in the sentence. If *he* fits, use *who*; if *him* fits, use *whom*.


your/you're: To show possession, use *your*; *you're* means "you are":

Thanks for letting me share your apartment.

You're going to love this next tune.



Business Letter

 Make a **business letter** look professional and sound professional. Present your information, complaint, or request simply, clearly, and completely. Collect all the data you need for your letter and organize the information in a natural, persuasive order.

 Choose either **block style** or **modified block style** and then stick consistently to that format.

Block style: All parts of the letter begin at the left margin. Paragraphs are not indented.

Modified block: Heading, complimentary close, and signature lines begin at the center of the page. Paragraphs may be indented.

 Center your letter visually on the page. Use 1-inch margins for longer letters and 1.5-inch or even 2-inch margins for shorter letters.

 Include the **six parts of a business letter**:

1. **Heading:** give your complete address (but NOT your name) and the date.
2. **Inside address:** include the complete name, title, company, and address of the receiver; generally avoid abbreviations except for the two-letter postal abbreviations for states and the title, Miss, Mrs., Mr., or Ms.
3. **Salutation:** begin with *Dear* and the name of the receiver, preceded by Mr. or Ms. Miss or Mrs.; if you don't know a person's name, you may address *Dear Sir* or *Madame* OR *Ladies and Gentlemen* (include both genders); end the salutation with a colon, not a comma.
4. **Body:** single-space within the paragraphs but double-space between paragraphs; try to write at least two paragraphs; avoid long paragraphs because they make your letter uninviting to read.
5. **Complimentary close:** use *Sincerely*, *Yours truly*, *Sincerely yours*, or *Cordially*; capitalize only the first word and end with a comma.
6. **Signature lines:** leave four lines for your handwritten signature; type your name and title (if applicable); if you plan to enclose item(s) with the letter, type the word *Enclosure(s)* two lines below the typed signature.



Hint: Keep your audience in mind; make your letter appealing to the receiver. Select a **tone and vocabulary** that is appropriate for the "business" of your letter. Yet use a relaxed, natural writing style so that your receiver can imagine you talking.

Begin your heading 1 to 1.5 inches from the top edge of your paper.

Sample Business Letter

1234 Melrose Place
Los Angeles, CA 90215
December 10, 1999

Heading:
Your address & the current date; NO name

4 to 7 lines

Ms. Marsha Brady
226 Brady Bunch Road
Chicago, IL 60202

Inside address:
Name & address of receiver

Salutation:
Double-space before & after;
note the colon

Dear Ms. Brady:

I am happy to respond to your letter requesting information about letter styles. Businesses use their own letterhead stationery, but for personal business letters like this one, you would just type your home address and current date as the heading on good-quality, unlined, 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper.

Body:
Begin by stating the subject and purpose.

This letter is an example of the **block letter style**. Notice that all lines begin at the left margin. Not having to indent the heading, paragraphs, and closing saves typing time.

Double-space between paragraphs.

Pay attention to the special details of capitalization and punctuation in a business letter. For example, in the heading and inside address, place a comma after the city, use the two-letter postal abbreviation for the state, and do not use a comma before the zip code. Additionally, use a colon after the salutation and a comma after the complimentary close. Capitalize and spell out, rather than abbreviate, the names of cities, states, and months.

The middle presents details of the message.

Finally, in order to center your letter visually on the page, you may make several adjustments. Shorter letters can be typed with wider margins and longer letters with narrower margins. You may also adjust the number of lines between the heading and the inside address.

The ending requests action, shows appreciation, or motivates the receiver.

I have enclosed a pamphlet describing other letter styles and placement guidelines. If you have any other questions, please call me at 213-897-2001. Also, please tell your parents that I will call them next week when I'm in Chicago.

Sincerely yours,

Complimentary close:
Capitalize only the first word and end with a comma.

Carlos Lopez

Carlos Lopez
Communications Consultant

Signature lines:
Leave 4 lines to sign your name in ink; type your name beneath.



Writing Styles

Informal

Formal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May use numerals for numbers: 1, 5, 10, 20, 100, 500 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write out numbers of one or two words: one, two hundred, one million • Use numerals for numbers of three or more words: 201, 47.5, 1,005 • Use numerals for dates: July 19, 1997 or 20 May 1996 • Write out any number beginning a sentence: Twenty-five thousand dollars was more than he could afford.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May use contractions: can't, won't, shouldn't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write out all contractions: cannot, will not, should not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May use first, second, or third person pronouns: 1st I, me we, us 2nd you you 3rd he, she, it they, them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep writing entirely in third person, or use first person sparingly • Eliminate you entirely; substitute <i>he, she, they, a person, people, one</i>, or another noun. • Resist the temptation to overuse the impersonal one: Impersonal: <i>One</i> finds the hottest spots lie in . . . Revised: The hottest spots lie in . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May abbreviate to save time: U.S., Feb., TV, N.Y. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell out most abbreviations: United States, February, television, New York • Never use etc. or & • May use abbreviations in standard use—ones never written out: BC, Mr., Mrs., PhD, a.m., p.m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May use slang or colloquial expressions: a lot, kids, guy, jerk, mess around, dough, blab, narc, swipe, well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate slang and colloquial words and expressions: Substitute <i>many, much</i> or <i>a great deal</i> for <i>a lot</i>.