

## Business Writing: A Letter to Your Employer

**PURPOSE:** To convey information in a business letter

**AUDIENCE:** Your employer, a magazine editor

Many of the most moving documents from the Civil War era are letters. Some are personal letters, from sons to mothers, brothers to brothers, husbands to wives. Others are more formal. These include **business letters**, which are written with a tone and language suited to their audience. For example, a letter written from a sergeant on the battlefield to his commanding officer would be respectful in tone. The writer would present only the necessary information and would avoid using slang or jargon.


### CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

**Writing 2.5** Write documents related to career development, including simple business letters and job applications.



A letter about an important development during the Civil War might refer to food shortages. Here, women demand more milk.

### Organization & Focus

 You write for a magazine during the Civil War era. Your assignment is to write a simple business letter to your managing editor about a story you would like to cover. In the letter, you will present information purposefully and clearly and explain why the story should be included in your magazine.

**IDENTIFYING PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE** Your purpose is to both inform and persuade. You will inform your managing editor about an important event, person, or development from the Civil War era. You will try to convince him or her that this subject is worth writing about. Your audience is your supervisor, the managing editor of the magazine you work for.

**CHOOSING A TOPIC** Review the chapters in Unit 5. As you scan each one, note the events, people, and developments that interest you. Jot down details about what makes each one newsworthy. When you have finished, review your notes and decide which event, person, or development you think should be included in your magazine.

**FINDING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE** After making your choice, gather the facts and reasons you need to explain to your editor why the story you have chosen is the most important one to cover. Use this book and library and Internet resources for any additional support.

## OUTLINING AND DRAFTING

A business letter has five key elements: a heading; an inside address; a salutation, or greeting; a body; and a closing. This standard format is modeled in the letter to the right.

Use your own real address in the heading. Make up a name and address for the inside address. In the body of your letter, identify the subject you want to develop for the magazine and explain why you think it is important. Remember to maintain a respectful tone.

**Heading** Where the letter comes from and when

Sergeant Joseph Snow  
3rd Battalion  
Vicksburg, Mississippi  
April 10, 1863

**Inside Address**  
To whom the letter is sent

Captain John Simon  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

**Salutation** Greeting

The men and I have arrived and have set up camp on the outskirts of Vicksburg. As instructed, we are preparing for a long siege.

An inventory of our supplies reveals that we are well stocked with weapons and clothing. However, rations are low. The soldiers do not complain but show definite signs of fatigue. Therefore, I respectfully request that a shipment of salt pork, vegetables, and coffee be sent as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I await your further orders.

**Body** Text of the message

**Closing**

Sincerely yours,  
Joseph Snow

## Research & Technology

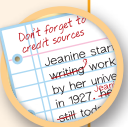


For a vivid sense of life during the Civil War, search for letters from the period on the Internet. There are many collections online that present original documents.

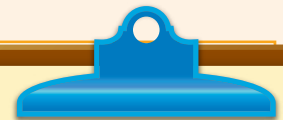


**Technology Tip** When you start typing your letter, your word processor will ask if you want help formatting it. Experiment with letting the computer help you.

## Evaluation & Revision



Exchange letters with a classmate for feedback on the format, tone, and content of your letter. Revise your letter until you are satisfied with it.

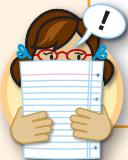


### Self-Check

Does my letter have . . .

- the five key elements of a business letter?
- information presented simply and clearly?
- the proper tone for a business letter?

## Publish & Present



If possible, print your letter on paper that resembles parchment and share it with your class.