

Letter Writing Do's and Don'ts

1. Think about what you want to accomplish with the letter.
2. Find out the correct spelling of the name, title, and mailing address of the person you are writing to.
3. Use the proper business letter format, as in the GOOD SAMPLE LETTERS on the next page.
4. Write a draft of the letter and review it for spelling, grammar, and factual information. Have someone else review it, too.
5. If the letter is handwritten, make it neat and easy to read. If typed, check it for typos.
6. Include a way for the recipient of the letter to contact an adult volunteer from your group.
7. End the letter by thanking the person for her time, and let her know you look forward to her reply.

Address the letter to "Dear _____," and use the person's last name and preferred courtesy title such as Ms. or Mr.

Hello!

It should be "you're" not "your." Check for typos!

Be clear about what you want. Write: "Now my group would like you to visit with us to talk about energy and energy efficiency."

How are you doing? I hope your doing fine. I am having so much fun with my Girl Scout Junior group. We made recycled paper and saved all our trash for one week. We made a pledge to walk places as much as we can.

Now my group wants you to come and visit us. It'll be fun.

We meet at the hall on Wednesday after school. So come if you can! You can call me if you want to. Thankyou for your help.

Signed,

"Thank you" should be two words.

[Your name]

Ask the person to call you to let you know whether or not she can come. That way, your Girl Scout group can "Be Prepared"!

Use "Sincerely" rather than "Signed."

Where do you want the person to be and at what time? Use the full name and the address of the place where you meet and the date and time you want her to arrive.

Include a phone number where the person can reach your trusty adult volunteer.

Two Good Sample Letters

[Your name, address, and the date, all on separate lines]

Samantha Speaker
1234 Friendly Lane
Your Town, ST 12345

Dear Ms. Speaker:

My Junior Girl Scout group is on a journey all about energy. We are interested in learning from people who know about the energy in our world, and ways to use it wisely.

We would like to invite you to visit with us to talk about your research with elephants and other endangered animals. We get together every Wednesday afternoon at the Community Hall in Your Town. We will be meeting every week through the end of June. It would be wonderful if you could join us at one of our gatherings.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the invitation. You can call my adult volunteer, [name], at [telephone number] to let me know if and when you are available. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

RELATE AND COMMUNICATE

When is it best to use a letter to communicate? When is electronic communication (texting, e-mail) more useful? When is it not?

How do Communication Do's differ for letters and talking? How are they similar?

[Your name, address, and the date, all on separate lines]

The Honorable [full name]
United States Senate (or House of Representatives)
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator [last name]:

As a Girl Scout in (insert your town name), I have become aware of how important it is for all of us to use energy wisely in everything we do.

One of the values of the Girl Scout Law is to use resources wisely. Another is to make the world a better place. I urge you to join us in living those values by making buildings—especially school buildings—more energy-efficient.

Buildings are a big part of our lives. Most people hardly notice how energy-efficient or inefficient buildings are. But I have learned that energy use in buildings has a significant impact on our planet's precious resources.

The first step in making buildings more energy-efficient is to perform an audit, as I have done to earn the Girl Scout Junior Investigate Award. Recently, my Girl Scout group has been searching for ways to make buildings, such as (give an example of the building that you examined), less wasteful.

Please ask the State Department of Education to take action by conducting energy audits of all school buildings. I'm counting on you to make our state more responsible.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

READY TO ADVOCATE FOR ENERGY?

Use this sample letter as your guide when you're ready to write to your legislator to seek support for energy audits of all schools in your area.