

Table 23-1 / Letter Writing Tips

Image & Presentation

- First impressions are lasting impressions
- Use businesslike letters to create a good impression.
- Type letters or print from your computer.
- Use quality paper. Do not use cute stationery with flowers or little animals.
- Include contact information – phone number, fax number, and/or email.

Set the Right Tone

- Do not demand. Do not apologize. Do not threaten to sue.
- End your letter with courtesy.

Write to the Right Person

- Who can resolve your problem? Write your letter to this person.
- Address your letter to a real person. Use the person's name and job title. No one likes to receive letters addressed "To Whom It May Concern."

Delivery Options

- Deliver important letters by hand. Log in the time and date, identity of the person who received the letter, what the person told you, what they were wearing, what was happening at the time.
- Do not send certified or registered letters to the school.
- Do not mark letters "personal" or "confidential."

How Long?

- In general, keep your letters short, no more than one page.
- Get to the point in the first paragraph.

What To Include

- Tell the reader why you are writing the letter and what you want the reader to do.
- Cite facts that support your position or request. Be sure your facts are correct.

Deadlines

- Set a time limit for a reply. Two weeks is fair. (Do not make demands!)
- Write, call, write. Write a letter. Wait 10 days, then call.

What to Do If They Do Not Respond

- If you do not receive a response, write a second letter, and include a copy of your first letter.
- If you get no response, set a short deadline before going higher. 10 days is reasonable.
- If you receive no response to the second letter, go higher in the chain of command.

"Letter Writing Tips" is from [Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy](http://www.wrightslaw.com/store/feta2.sm.store.html), (page 229). <http://www.wrightslaw.com/store/feta2.sm.store.html>