

What will you learn in this chapter ?

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Outward appearance of a business letter
- 3.3 Matters that make the appearance of a letter attractive
 - 3.3.1 Selection of paper
 - 3.3.2 Typing
 - 3.3.3 Margin
 - 3.3.4 Folds
 - 3.3.5 Envelope
 - 3.3.6 Superscription

3 1 Introduction

We learnt about commercial communication and the meaning and types of commercial correspondence. We realised its importance and also noted that letters; especially when used for business purpose, seven important characteristics are to be taken care of. Some of them are conciseness, correctness and clarity. In addition to that we also learnt about different styles of letter writing.

3 2 Outward Appearance of a Letter

A letter is drafted with proper prior planning but if the outward appearance is not attractive, the receiver will be least interested in reading it and it may affect the business of the writer

adversely. The outward appearance of a business letter includes envelope, superscription, quality of paper used, its folds, typing etc. which could be evaluated at a glance. These elements determine the outward appearance of a business letter. Therefore the letter writer must take into consideration the size of the envelope, paper quality, its folds and of course, the write-up.

3 3 Matters that make the appearance of a letter attractive

- Paper
- Margin
- Envelope
- Typing
- Fold
- Superscription

Let us now consider them in detail :

3 3 1 Paper and its selection The paper on which a business letter is written should be taken into consideration from three different angles; size, colour and quality. Generally the paper used for letter writing is of A-4 size that provides ample space for presenting a write-up. These days, almost all the countries follow the measurement of A series of paper size and accordingly for commercial correspondence or printing attached to computer, paper size A-4 is used and the dimension of that is 8.3" × 11.7". The paper colour generally remains snow white. Certain firms do prefer pastel shades for letter writing and light sky blue, yellow or pink colours are preferred. 'Ink should not spread on paper' principle remains the sole factor for determining paper quality. In addition to this, since an official letter is to be punched and filed, paper of good quality does not threaten the possibility of tear.

3 3 2 Typing In the present times, commercial correspondence, generally, does not take place in the form of hand-written letters. These letters are generally drafted on computers and printed.

Hand-written letters have remained limited to writing of personal letters. Typing should be legible. For computer typed letter, fonts of different types and sizes are available. Simple fonts with least cursive variations increase legibility and therefore they are generally used for commercial correspondence. Proper care in typing provides elegance and brilliance to the write-up and letter both. In addition to that line spacing adds attractive look to the letter. The commonly preferred line spacing is 1.0, 1.15 or 1.5.

3 3 3 Margin It is pretty obvious that a letter stretched from the top to bottom, i.e. from the top left corner to the down right corner does not please our eye. Thus keeping margins and leaving space on all four sides attribute beauty to a letter. Margins are kept on the left and right hand sides of the paper and left margin is kept larger as compared to the one at the right. Generally on the right margin is 1" broad and on the left, 1.5". Commercial letters are to be filed and preserved. Letters are punched on the left to be filed and therefore broader space on the left remains convenient. The similar logic is applied for the space left on the top and bottom of the page. At the bottom it is generally 1" and at the top it remains 1.5". whereas, many letter writers prefer identical space pattern on top and bottom.

3 3 4 Fold When we take proper care about the paper, margin and typing of business letters, equal amount of care should be taken while the paper (letter) is folded and kept in the envelope. To select the envelope of proper size is very important. If the paper (letter) is folded three to four times horizontally and vertically and compressed in a small envelope, then it will take much time and also fail to create good impression about the letter-writer in the mind of the reader. Therefore let us know about the common practice of folding a letter. The paper (letter) can be given maximum three folds before putting it in an envelope. First would be a vertical fold covering the space spared for margin on the left. Thereafter keeping into consideration the size of the paper, it can be given two or three horizontal folds so that the paper is divided into three or four equal parts by folds. This provides convenience to the reader while he opens the envelope to read the letter and also when it is filed.

3 3 5 Envelope The first thing that reaches the receiver is the envelope. He would read the content of the letter after opening the envelope, therefore one should be precise in the matter of selecting envelope. Many a times, with the letter, several papers are enclosed. In such cases using envelope of small size is not proper. Generally a rectangle and vertical envelope is used for business letters. The paper of envelope should match with the higher quality paper and shade of paper used for letter writing. This gives attractive look. If the paper is white, the envelope should be white as well. If paper of pastel shade is used for letter, the envelope should match it. For business letters, envelope with vertical access on right is used.

Certain Firms, Banks and LIC use window envelopes to dispatch especially receipts. In this type of envelopes, a window is made by cutting the portion where receiver's address is written. Transparent paper is attached on the cut space so that the receiver's address, which is written as part of inside address is clearly read. With this type of envelope the letter is folded in such a manner that the inside address finds its place beneath the window; i.e. the transparent paper and receiver's address is properly seen. As a result, the receiver's address has not to be retyped on the envelope. Generally, for letters containing confidential matters, window envelopes are not used.

3 3 6 Superscription The envelope generally contains the receiver's as well as the writer's address with pin code. In addition to this in the top middle part, instructions regarding the dispatch of letter like 'Book-post', 'Registered A.D.', 'Local', 'Personal' are written. Thereafter towards the right hand side the receiver's name, address, name of the place, pin code etc. is written. The writer's address is generally printed in the lower horizontal band or written in the left down corner. When invitation letters or circulars are dispatched in envelopes, the sender's address is printed at the back of the envelope.

What did you learn in this chapter ?

We considered that letter is an important medium of communication and that too contains prime significance as it is an inevitable tool for business. Letter, carrying such importance, if lacks in any of the six attributes of outward appearance like paper, typing, margin, folds, envelope or superscription then it fails to create desired impact. And in such a case, there are all possibilities of the development of business getting hampered. Also the letter writer is devalued. Therefore, it becomes necessary to be careful about the outward appearance of letter in addition to its content and style.

Exercise

1 Select appropriate option from the options given

- (1) Before putting a business letter into an envelope, how many maximum folds should be made ?
(A) Two (B) Three
(C) Four (D) Five
- (2) Generally what is the size of paper used for business letters ?
(A) A-2 (B) A-1
(C) A-4 (D) A-3

2 Answer the following questions in detail

- (1) What are the three matters considered for the selection of paper used for a business letter ?
- (2) Write about the proportionate space left on all four sides of a business letter.
- (3) Explain the importance of envelope and writing on it in a business letter.

3 Write short notes on the following

- (1) The selection of paper for a business letter.
- (2) The caution for the folds of a business letter.
- (3) Explain 'typing' of a business letter.

