

Berrigan

Business Writing Project Prompt; Genre: Persuasive Business Letter

For this assignment, you will write a Persuasive Business Letter to your customers. If you think back to our work with the Rhetorical Situation and Rhetoric, this Business Letter's goal is **rhetorical**, to persuade/convince/compel an audience. Our previous Business Writing assignments were rhetorical but also **informative/summative**. Of course, informing and creating context for an audience is a rhetorical move; we don't just try to persuade thinkers without any background/context. Within the framework of our class, this is the first time you are communicating outside of the company. You may address a single customer or your customer base as a whole.

Rhetorical Situation: There is an error/misstep/scandal/crisis within your company. This "issue" may be something small and innocuous or more significant such as the Volkswagen emissions [issue](#). Your goal is to convince/persuade your customer of a **specific** goal/task/outcome. Your persuasive goal will, of course, depend on the specific situation/context/rhetorical situation in which you are writing. **You must state on a separate page (NOT A SEPARATE DOCUMENT) of this assignment's GoogleDoc your rhetorical situation. This needs to include:**

- **Your company**
- **Your audience**
- **Issue addressed**
- **Specific goal/task of the letter**

Genre Conventions of Business Memos:

- Salutation and Closing
 - Business Letters have both a salutation and closing; the closing often includes business contact information.
- Length
 - Business Letters are often one page.
- Formatting/Paragraph structure
 - Business Letters are left justified which means NO INDENTS at the start of paragraphs. Business Letters have ragged edges like a Business Memo.
 - Business Letters **typically** have three paragraphs; the Volkswagen letter on the blog, for example, has more than three paragraphs. The following, from the Purdue OWL, describes the purpose of each paragraph/section:

- *The first paragraph of a typical business letter is used to state the main point of the letter. Begin with a friendly opening; then quickly transition into the purpose of your letter. Use a couple of sentences to explain the purpose, but do not go in to detail until the next paragraph.*
 - *Beginning with the second paragraph, state the supporting details to justify your purpose. These may take the form of background information, statistics or first-hand accounts. A few short paragraphs within the body of the letter should be enough to support your reasoning.*
 - *Finally, in the closing paragraph, briefly restate your purpose and why it is important. If the purpose of your letter is employment related, consider ending your letter with your contact information. However, if the purpose is informational, think about closing with gratitude for the reader's time.*
- Heading
 - Business Letters are headed like the following from the Purdue OWL:

March 16, 2001 (date)
Ernie English (name and address)
1234 Writing Lab Lane
Write City, IN 12345

Dear Mr. English: (salutation)
- Language
 - Business Letters often use a mixture of **direct** and **indirect language** depending on the Rhetorical Situation in which they are written. Business Letters are very formal, respectful, and neutral, especially when communicating outside the company to customers.
- Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling
 - As with all Business Communication, there should be no errors.
- Bulleted List
 - Business Letters rarely use bulleted lists.
- Additional Rhetorical Elements
 - The following may be used in order to compel/persuade your reader; think of how these Genre conventions relate to the three Greek appeals:
 - Establish credibility
 - Make a reasonable, specific request
 - Tie facts to benefits
 - Expect and overcome resistance