

The Formal Letter of Introduction

Overview:

A formal letter of introduction is an epistle written by one person to another, offering an introduction to a third party.

A formal letter of introduction requires three different people: a writer, a recipient, and the person being introduced.

In this exercise, the recipient of the letter will be your teacher, the “third party” will be you, and the “author” of the letter will be a third person who knows us both. Please exercise your creativity: the “author” may be a real person, fictional individual, or imaginary character of your own devising.

Imagine a person who knows us equally well and has recently learned that you will be a student in my class. Upon hearing the news, this person has decided to write me a note to tell me about you, in that hope that his or her insights will help us to work together successfully. In short, this mutual acquaintance is trying to do a good deed for both of us!

As you anticipate creating your “author,” try to imagine as specifically as possible the two relationships the author shares with his audience (me) and his subject (you).

Keep in mind that every letter is comprised of three parts:

- Salutation (greeting)
- Body
- Valediction (saying farewell).

In the Body of the letter, the subject will be you! The author might consider but should not feel limited to these topics:

- How this “author” knows you AND how this “author” knows me
- How you came to be enrolled at CAC
- What your past school experiences have been like
- What your past writing experiences have been like
- Your reasons for wanting to be successful in your new English class
- Your favorite activities and hobbies and passions, especially the passions
- Any concerns you might have about your English class
- General assessments of your character.

N.B. The “author” understands that good writing does more than “tell”; it also “shows.” As a result, the letter will also offer at least one *anecdote*, or brief story, in order to reveal how well the “author” knows you and to reveal an important element of your character.

Requirements:

The letter of introduction must

- present all three parts of a letter (salutation, body, valediction)
- reveal that your “author” is a strong writer who can craft effective sentences in unified paragraphs
- include one anecdote about you in support of a claim about your character
- be submitted in Modern Language Association manuscript format. Please see below for instructions for creating documents in MLA ms format or use the template offered on our Moodle page.
- offer a minimum of 300 words, but no more than 500.

Due date: Class Meeting 2

Please note that you do NOT need to print a hard copy. We will upload digital copies to Turnitin.com at the start of our next class meeting.

Modern Language Association (MLA) Manuscript Format

All written work must be submitted in the MLA manuscript format unless the assignment offers different instructions. But do not let anxiety over essay format distract you from the real work of writing. Ask for help if you need assistance wrangling your software. Or use the template provided for you.

If you prefer to craft your own documents, please consult the manuscript preparation section of any standard writer’s handbook for more extensive instructions for the preparation of a manuscript in MLA style.

Essays must be word-processed in dark blue or black ink. Hard copies must be printed on one side only of 8.5-by-11-inch white paper. Leave a one-inch margin at the top and bottom of each page and on the left-hand side. The right margin should be as consistently close to one inch as possible, without right justification. Double-space lines throughout the paper, including long quotations of more than four lines, which are indented ten spaces from the left margin. Indent the start of each paragraph five spaces. On the first page of your assignment, type your name, your instructor’s name, the name of the course, and the date, each on its own line in the upper left-hand corner, double-spaced. Then double-space to your title, which should be centered on the page, and double-space again to begin your text. On each subsequent page, type your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top (learn to insert headers in any word processing program).

Errors discovered during proofreading may be corrected neatly in ink above the lines in which they occur.