

How to Write an Appeal Letter

Adapted from: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-an-Appeal-Letter>

There are situations at College, where an appeal of a decision might get you that second chance. Be sure to make the most of it. A letter of appeal is a business letter that must be clear and well written. To write a professional, effective letter of appeal, follow these step-by-step instructions. Your letter should be brief and concise. One or two pages should be sufficient to outline your position. Avoid irrelevant or tangential material.

Before you begin

Before you submit your appeal, take some time to consider your options and gather information. This will help you evaluate your case and prepare. When you file an appeal, you have to demonstrate that the decision you are appealing meets the criteria for an appeal. A simple disagreement with or dislike of the decision is not usually enough to support an appeal. It may be a waste of your time if you do not have a valid reason for submitting the appeal. Questions to consider:

1. What are your options if you do not appeal?
2. Does my position meet the criteria for an appeal?
3. Based on the available evidence, do you have a strong enough argument to make your case?

Step 1

Format your letter in business style. From top to bottom, the layout of a business style letter should be as follows:

- Letterhead. If you already have letterhead paper use it; otherwise, create a letterhead at the top of your document. Include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
- Date. When dating your letter, write out the full date instead of using an abbreviated form, for example "June 16, 2012" or "16 June 2012" and not "6/12/12" or "Jun. 12, 2012".
- Inside address. The inside address includes the recipient's full name and title, the name of the institution, agency or company, for which he or she works, and the mailing address.
- Reference line. This line starts with "RE:" followed by the subject of the letter. For example, "RE: Appeal". You may wish to include your name and student or employee identification number, case number, or other information that will allow the reader to identify you.
- Salutation. The salutation should use the recipient's title and last name, for example "Dear Dr. Smith" or "Dear Mr. Smith". If you are unsure of the recipient's gender, you should use his or her first and last name, for example "Dear Kim Smith". If you are unsure of the recipient's name, "Dear Sir(s)/Madam(s)", "Dear Ladies and Gentlemen", and "To Whom It May Concern" are appropriate salutations.
- Body. Leave some space here, as this is where you will write the actual letter. Where possible, use headers to alert the reader to the content of the paragraph.
- Closing. Like the salutation, the closing should be formal. "Sincerely," "Cordially," and "Respectfully," are all appropriate choices.
- Signature block. Leave about four lines of empty space after the closing, so that you can sign your letter after have printed it, and then type your name exactly as you will sign it. For

example, if you use your middle initial when you write your signature, use your middle initial in your typewritten name.

- Notations. If you intend to enclose additional documents with your letter, note this a few lines beneath your signature with the word “Enclosure” or “Enclosures”. Additional documents should be directly relevant to the arguments stated in the body of the appeal letter. Extraneous or irrelevant documents will not support your case. Number any pages you attach to your letter. Numbered pages help when you refer to content in your additional documents.

Step 2

Write an opening paragraph. You will want to establish the purpose of your letter in the first paragraph. This paragraph is not the place to get into the details. Briefly explain what decision or action you are appealing, give the name of the person who made the decision, and the date on which it was made. You also want to indicate the outcome that you desire.

Step 3

Write the second paragraph. This is where you tell your story. Explain what happened, in chronological order, or the order it happened. Be sure to include dates and all relevant facts. You should also mention any documentary evidence that you have and/or witnesses to the events and make specific reference to any supporting documents you have enclosed. As you describe what happened, be very careful to control your tone, it should remain calm, professional, and factual.

Step 4

Write the third paragraph. This paragraph should be used to describe why your appeal should be granted. Explain why what happened was unfair, against the rules and regulations, and/or why you should be given another chance. Where appropriate, quote and/or refer to guidelines, rules, policy section, appeal criteria or statutes that support your claims.

Step 5

Write a closing paragraph. In this paragraph, you should summarize your main points and state what it is that you want. For example, if you are asking for a change in a ruling made against you, you will want to clearly state that you are requesting a reconsideration of that ruling. You should then thank the reader for his or her time spent considering your appeal. This can be done with a simple sentence such as, “Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.”

Step 6

Print and sign your letter. Attach all documentary evidence mentioned in the letter and make a copy of everything for yourself. Mail or email the complete package to the recipient.