

Anatomy of a Letter

Place of Writing, Date of Writing

Salutation (with or without a name)

Updates on health: Wishes for good and/or restored health of recipient, health news from sender. This can take the form of a prayer.

List of earlier letters sent and received (if any), usually referenced by date and sender, and occasionally, place.

Main body/ text of the letter, this will vary widely depending on the purpose and intended recipient of the letter as well as when the letter was written. While specific types of letters have their own format (letters of introduction, official government or corporate documents, letters intended for publication, etc.) you often find personal, business, and general news mixed together.

Renewed wishes for good health. Anticipation of a response.

Sign off,

Signature

Date and place
of letter's composition
often found underneath

Name of recipient

Expected location of recipient

Addendum, with second date, often because the letter could not be sent immediately, or because something crucial (battle, business deal, health crisis) occurred between original composition and sending. Can have several of these in one letter. More likely to occur in letters that will be in transit for a long time.

Enclosure, can contain letters from other people, newspaper articles, official pronouncements, images, etc.

Envelope (if kept), Should have, at minimum, name and place where letter was sent, can usually tell if the letter was sent through an official postal system or delivered by hand.

Additional Dates, often letters are marked with date received (or viewed) and date docketed (date record entered into an official archive).