

Letterhead tips

Building Your Article · By Simon Townsend · 4 min read

Letterhead Tips

1. Use your LETTERhead only on letters. Do not use a letterhead on any pages of your articles or your normal assignments. Each time you write me a letter, use your letterhead.
1. Keep your letterhead close (0.5cm) to the top edge of the paper and the letterhead itself should be no deeper than 4cm. Personally, I don't like a letterhead which is half up top and half down the bottom of the page. It's more efficient and businesslike to put all details up top where your addressee can see it quickly and efficiently - not go hunting for information.
1. YOUR NAME should be in the biggest typeface. You're not promoting your occupation or address or phone numbers. You're promoting YOUR NAME - always.
1. Also, think twice before using colour, or fancy design frames, or shading . . . they fax badly and confuse the receiver. It costs a lot more to use fancy ink colours. Use bold black only in letterheads please. Never use script, cursive or "running writing". It's unprofessional. Script is for personal letters.
1. Please don't put a logo, Tahitian scene or little motto your letterhead. Your old family crest or your favourite quote may be important to you, but it's un-businesslike to editors. It's also seen as egotistical . . . you are wanting to say something about you.
1. It's important to display your telephone numbers in the standard way. If you send your letterhead only within Australia, set out your details like this:

phone (07) 9399 7634

fax (07) 9399 9876

mobile 0417 333 765

chris.jones@zootmail.com.au

That is, enclose the area code inside brackets, a space, then the first four digits, a space, and then the last four digits. For mobiles write the first four digits, a space, then the next three digits, a space and then the last three digits. If you send your letterhead overseas, set out your phone details like this:

phone +61 7 9399 7634

fax +61 7 9399 9876

mobile +61 417 333 765

chris.jones@zootmail.com.au

A person overseas who is dialling you will first dial his own digits to connect to his international service and this is represented by the "+". All countries' international dial-out digits are different. Then your caller dials "61" which is Australia's country code. In dialling into an Australian phone from overseas, the zero is dropped from our four area codes (02), (03), (07) and (08). Also, the zero which is at the beginning of all mobile numbers is also dropped when dialling from overseas. If you put your mobile number without its first zero on a letter to an Australian, it can be confusing. So be careful. Some of my students prefer this double style:

Within Australia: From overseas:

Phone (07) 9399 7634 Phone + 61 7 9399 7634

Fax (07) 9399 9876 Fax +61 7 9399 9876

Mobile 0417 333 765 Mobile + 61 417 333 765

chris.jones@zootmail.com.au

1. Do not write "Email:" in front of your email address. Everyone realises what an email address looks like with its @ sign. Anyone who doesn't know, doesn't care.
1. Ensure every detail is easy to read. Don't have a line under your email address. To remove that line, select ("block" or "choose") the whole paragraph that contains the email address. Then hit Control+U (or point the cursor to the icon U and click) and EVERYTHING will be underlined. Then hit Control+U (or point to U and click) and everything will contain NO underlining.

Serif and sans serif typefaces

A serif typeface is like this typeface you are reading right now. "Serifs" are the little lines and flourishes hanging off most letters in a serif typeface:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xy Zy

serif sans serif

winters winters

As you see (above, right) a sans serif (without serif) typeface has no little lines and flourishes hanging off the letters:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xy Zz

Serif typefaces include Bookman Old Style, the one you are reading right now and the one I use mainly in my letters to you. Other serif typefaces include:

Times Roman Bernhard Modern Book Antiqua Garamond

Sans serif typefaces include the popular Arial, the one you are reading right now and one I often use. Other sans serif typefaces include

Century Gothic Comic Sans Berlin Sans FB Franklin Gothic Heavy

Which should you use? I firmly recommend:

- Use serif typefaces for your articles (because most publications use serif typefaces for articles) and always in Times Roman 14 point.
- Use serif typefaces for your letters and always in Times Roman 12 point .
- Use sans serif typefaces for your letterhead so your letterhead is distinctly different to your letters and your articles.
- You may use a sans serif typeface for article headings and your byline.

Why do most publications, particularly all newspapers, use the more "old-fashioned" looking typeface, the serif typefaces? Because, believe it or not, readability tests prove that people read faster and comprehend better when reading a lot of material if it is printed in a serif typeface as opposed to a sans serif typeface. Some magazines amazingly use BOTH.

I definitely recommend that in articles, letterheads and letters you do NOT use script-style, or "cursive" typefaces like this.

These typefaces should be kept for personal notes.

Some script typefaces can be difficult to read.

ABN 43 454 678 001 Joe Bloggs

Journalist Research Commentator

12 Smith Street your.name@bigpond.com.au Phone (08) 8207 4106 Smithville, S.A. PO Box 123 Fax (08) 8207 4107

Australia Smithville SA 5001 Mobile 0418 000 000

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