Letter-Writing Tips

- Make your letter personal. Tell why you care about this issue.
- Stick to the facts as supported by your research. One inaccurate statement, accusation, or innuendo can invalidate an otherwise excellent letter. Be polite!
- Applaud positive environmental steps taken by the targeted corporation, agency, or government.
- Suggest why it is in the interest of the corporation, agency or government to prevent environmental destruction.
- A good letter will have proper grammar and will be concise with only one topic (more than one topic can be confusing and make the letter too long). Spell the name of the person you are writing to correctly, misspellings are often overlooked and can take away from the effectiveness of your letter.
- Ask for a reply to your letter.

Letter Content

- Your letter should have 3 parts:
  1. Identification of the issue (describe the case and say why it is important to you)
  2. A request for action that you would like the official to take
  3. Your “Thank you” for the official’s time and a request for a reply

Business Letter Format Requirements

- All parts of the letter should begin on the left margin
- Line #1 should consist of your street address (no abbreviations)
- Line #2 should consist of your city, state and zip code in the following format:
  - The city with a comma, a single space, a 2 letter state postal abbreviation (both letters capitalized, no punctuation), 2 spaces and a zip code
- Line #3 should consist of the date the letter was written in the following format:
  - The month (no abbreviation), a single space, the day of the month (number), a comma, a single space and the year (number).
- The next three lines should be blank between the date and the recipient’s address
- The recipient’s address should be in the same format as your address: name and title on the first line of the recipient’s address, company or organization (if any) on the second line, street address on the third line, and city, state, and zip on the fourth line (no date)
- The next line should be blank between the recipient’s address and the greeting
- The next line holds the greeting (Ex. Dear Senator Clinton) and should be followed by a colon (:).
- The next line should be blank between the greeting and the start of the body of the letter.
- Use single spacing in the body of the letter. You should have a minimum of 3 paragraphs, addressing parts 1-3 listed above.
- Leave one blank line between each paragraph
- Leave one blank line between the body of the letter and the closing.
- The next line should be the closing (Ex. Sincerely) and should be followed by a comma (,).
- Leave 3 blank lines between the closing and your name to allow space for your signature
- The last line should list your name and title if appropriate.
- When you address your envelope, use the recipient’s address as listed in your letter.

(continued on the next side)
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
United States Senate  
476 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Clinton:

Paragraph 1. Identification of the issue (describe the case and say why it is important to you)

Paragraph 2. A request for action that you would like the official to take

Paragraph 3. Your “thank you” for the official’s time and a request for a reply

Sincerely,

Stephanie C. Dockstader  
Biology Instructor  
Monroe Community College