# **Project #3: Correspondence**

The purpose of this assignment is to practice common types of professional correspondence. To do this, you will practice writing as both an individual (yourself) and as the representative of an organization. You will produce two documents: a **one-page inquiry letter** from an individual to an organization or individual and a **one-page response letter** from an organization to an individual. **The revised draft of your inquiry letter should be no more than 1 page single-spaced. The revised draft of your response letter should be no more than 1 page single-spaced.**

**Tip 1:** It helps to write an inquiry letter related to an experience or interest you have had. You might, for example, base a claim letter on a real complaint you have had as a customer or user. An inquiry asks for a response to a request or question—questions about a product or research for a project, for example.

**Tip 2:** When you write your response letter, remember that any organization you represent will have standards about how its representatives should communicate. In this case, you can use the Course Code of Ethics, found in your syllabus.

**To be considered complete, your final draft should include:**

* **Your revised inquiry letter of no more than 1 page single-spaced**
* **Your revised response letter of no more than 1 page single-spaced**
* **Your revision note, which includes a discussion of your revisions**

**To get started**, brainstorm about situations when you needed to ask an organization (a restaurant, a car manufacturer, a school) to respond to a request or a question. From your list, choose a scenario for your inquiry letter—it helps to choose a scenario that you think would be likely to receive a response.

**When you’re ready to begin writing your inquiry letter**, think about the following:

* How can you introduce yourself to your audience, letting them know at the same time who you are, and your purpose for writing?
* What type of tone should you adopt? If you are requesting information, how should you present yourself? What about if you have a complaint?
* What details or evidence will you need to explain your situation?
* How can you compose your questions or requests so that you give the audience the clearest possible message about your needs?
* How can you encourage your audience to respond to you? Should you include information about how and when to contact you for a follow-up? Should you ask for an in-person or video conference? A refund or gift certificate?

Now, draft your inquiry letter. Keep in mind what we’ve learned about other types of correspondence: paragraphs should be tightly focused on one main idea; design should be neat, clean, and follow standard letter format; and you should present yourself and your requests as professional and polite.

In class, you will find a partner and send them a copy of your inquiry letter. You will use your partner’s inquiry letter as the basis for your response letter. This means **you will write a response letter as a representative of the organization to whom your partner wrote**.

**When you’re ready to begin writing your response letter**, think about the following:

* Can you clearly identify the subject of the inquiry or request? How serious or urgent is the inquiry or request? Use this information to plan both the content and tone of your response.
* How has the writer asked your organization to respond to their inquiry or request? Are you, within reason, able to give the writer what they request?
* If your organization can grant the writer’s request, how can you clearly say so? If this is an inquiry, how can you be informative without disclosing privileged information? If this is a complaint, should you apologize? Will your organization give the writer something in addition to what they have requested? Will your organization change anything in response to this inquiry or complaint?
* If your organization cannot grant the writer’s request, how can you say so politely? How can you explain the reason you cannot grant this request, keeping in mind your reader’s feelings? Should you apologize or offer another form of compensation? Is there another person in your organization to whom the writer should reach out for further information?

**Here is an example** of what you might do:

Let’s say you decide to write about a problem you had with a flight you booked last winter break. Your seat on the flight was canceled at the last minute due to overbooking, so you waited for another flight. Unfortunately, the weather changed while you waited, and all subsequent flights to your destination were canceled. The airline would not refund your ticket price because they could not find you another flight due to bad weather. Since you had to cancel your plans, you think you should be refunded at least half the ticket price.

To put this in a letter, you need to put your frustrations aside, for the moment. Instead, think about the facts. What did the airline do that was unfair? What should they have done instead? What should they do to compensate you for the trouble?

In class, you find a partner who wrote to a computer parts company about a defective hard drive. Your partner is asking for a replacement hard drive and a refund on the purchase. Now, you draft your second letter. You respond to your partner as a representative of the computer parts company and address their complaint, choosing to say yes or no to their requests.

## Format & Layout

You can read more about the elements of inquiry and response letters as well as see sample letters in your textbooks for the course:

* *PSTC*, Chapter 9: Corresponding in Print and Online, “Writing Letters”
* *Handbook*, “Adjustment Messages,” “Complaints,” “Inquiries and Responses”

[Insert how you want students to format their paper. As the instructor, you can add more specificity to the prompt but do not change the scope or rigor of the assignment.]

Final submission should be **uploaded on Blackboard** as an Adobe PDF or Word file.

## Due Dates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Stage** | **Due** |
| Inquiry Draft | [MM-DD] |
| Response Draft | [MM-DD] |
| Peer Review | [MM-DD] |
| Conference | [MM-DD] |
| Final Draft | [MM-DD] |

## Revision Note

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 7, you must include a revision note at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your revision note must explain the revisions you made to your original drafts and why.

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have included a revision note as the first page of my assignment where I explain what revisions I made to my drafts and why.
* I have written an inquiry letter that requests information about a topic or compensation for a complaint.
* I have written a response letter to my classmate’s inquiry letter, from the perspective of a representative of an organization.
* I have used a recognizable letter format for both letters.
* I have formatted my assignment [as my instructor has described.]
* I have saved the document as a .pdf or .docx file for submission.