

## Quick Guide: How do I end?

Last month we looked at how to start letters and emails. But ending your writing also needs thinking about. While there are lots of different letters that you will write and they will each need a different ending, here are the **top ten tips** to get you thinking about how to end your letters and longer emails in the future:

- 1. Think about what your ending paragraph needs to do.** It usually needs to summarise the points made; to state what will happen next; to offer further help; and to end positively. Think about what you would say if you were talking to each other.
- 2. Avoid ending with wordy old fashioned phrases** like 'Assuring you of our best attention at all times.' or 'We look forward to a long, prosperous and fruitful association with your company.' Yuck! Consider what you are trying to say, then say it simply and sincerely.
- 3. Keep what you've written in the reader's mind by looking forward.** For example: 'I am confident you will agree that this service is ideal for your company and can guarantee that sales will increase by 25% in the first quarter.'
- 4. Often the ending will include the action** that is going to be taken by you, the reader or both of you. Ensure this is clear by stating what will be done, by whom and by when.
- 5. If you need a reply or information** by a particular time avoid ending with '... at your earliest convenience', '... as soon as possible', '... in due course'. Be specific with a date or try to give a reason for needing something. For example, 'So that I can complete your case on time, please let me have your information by Friday 4 June.'
- 6. Leave the door open** so that the reader can come back to you. A very common ending is 'if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me'. While not wrong it is overused and uses very standard wording. Make your ending more personal: 'If you require further information on XYZ please call me on my direct line: 020 7614 9800.'
- 7. If you need to follow up the letter yourself,** you could end by writing 'Please take some time to look over our proposal and I will contact you next week to discuss how we can take this forward.'
- 8. Sometimes you will have offered your reader** everything you can and want to redirect them to somebody else for more information: 'I hope the enclosed will help you with your situation; however, if you require more information, please contact XYZ on ... who may be able to help you further.' (Where I have written 'situation' it would be better to be specific and refer to the subject matter itself.)
- 9. If there is nobody else** that you can redirect your reader to, you could say 'I hope that the enclosed information will help you to make your decision and wish you all the best for the future.'
- 10. Finally, end your letter with the correct sign off.** If you have addressed your letter to a named person, which is best, end with 'Yours sincerely'. If your letter is to Dear Sir etc then end with 'Yours faithfully'.

**Compiled by Judith Di-Castri**