Inquiry Letter

Inquiry letters are written for the purpose of asking for something from the recipient. Inquiries can be sent as a formal business letter (outside of your company) or as an e-mail. Before sending your inquiry, you should be certain that the information is not available through other means, such as the company website.

1. **Types:** There are three primary categories of inquiry letters:
   A. Status inquiries are typically sent to request references or recommendations.
   B. Routine inquiries are letters written to an individual or company for the purpose of gathering specific information.
   C. Sales-related inquiries are written to a company or individual to obtain information about a product or service and may be the first step of collecting information for a report.

2. **Components:**
   A. **Introduction:** The purpose of the introduction is to provide your audience with the basic information of who, what, and why.
      I. Introduce yourself and where you are from.
      II. Provide a statement of purpose.
      III. Include some subtle flattery, but only if the purpose is not sales-related.
   B. **Body:** The purpose of the body is to provide the recipient with the inquiry—what you want from him or her and what you will do with that information.
      I. In a sales inquiry, you might include the dimensions of the product, quality, price, availability, discount rates, return rate, service terms, or any other pertinent information.
      II. If you are sending an inquiry for information, you will list no more than five questions.
   C. **Conclusion:** The conclusion functions to establish goodwill and express gratitude.
      I. Thank the recipient for his or her time and consideration. You are not thanking him or her in advance; instead, you are thanking him or her for the time he or she has spent reading the letter and considering your inquiry.
      II. Include any permission you may need for quoting him or her in your work (if you are seeking information).
      III. Provide your contact information: address, e-mail, phone number, etc.

3. **Characteristics:**
   A. Write clearly and concisely.
   B. Be considerate and provide a sufficient timeline.
   C. Provide a route for a response, such as a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE).