



Adjustment Letter

Adjustment letters are created to satisfy someone who has lodged a complaint against your company, and they are generated for various types of audiences: an unsatisfied client, unhappy employee, or a discontented supplier. Most adjustment letters are written in response to a claim filed against the company, but some are generated as a result of an internal discovery netting information about a faulty product or negligent service.

1. **Purpose:** Your letter should do the following:
 - A. Apologize.
 - B. Offer some type of conciliation—partial or full reimbursement, depending upon your company’s policy.
 - C. Restore good will.

2. **Tone and Style:** Because of the delicate nature of adjustment letters, the tone and style should maintain professionalism, project intimacy, and accept responsibility without blaming the client.
 - A. You will write in first person, using “I” or “we.”
 - I. Using first person singular provides a more intimate connection between the writer and the audience.
 - II. Using first person plural represents the entire company.
 - B. Avoid passive voice. When you write something like “a mistake was made,” you fail to take responsibility. Instead, write, “We mistakenly entered 1,000 instead of 10,000.”
 - C. Avoid assigning blame, or using words such as “faulty” or “defective.”
 - D. You will project the “you viewpoint.” Instead of writing, “We must receive the sales receipt before we can offer you a refund,” you should write, “So that you can receive your refund as quickly as possible, please mail or fax your receipt.”
 - E. Avoid over-using the pronoun “you.”
 - F. Be specific—avoid using too many adjectives or adverbs.
 - G. Avoid stringing too many clauses or phrases together—if you have a sentence with many clauses or phrases, consider bulleting.
 - H. Avoid clichés, euphemisms, slang, or heavy jargon.
 - I. Avoid stating the obvious—if you are writing to tell someone about an error, you do not have to say, “We were examining your files and found an error.”
 - J. Avoid filler language.
 - K. Avoid unnecessary prepositional phrases.

3. **Format:** The letter should follow the official business letter formatting. (**Refer to the Formatting a Business Letter resource.**) On the subject line, you should state the problem briefly and clearly.

4. **Content:** In your adjustment letter, you should do the following:
 - A. Acknowledge and describe the error.
 - B. Accept responsibility and describe the plan for compensation.



- C. Give instructions for returning merchandise, correcting an error, and/or receiving compensation.
- 5. Components:** (Three paragraphs)
- A. Paragraph one:
- I. After the salutation, introduce yourself and immediately follow with an apology or a regret statement. Your apology should include the reason for the letter. Always address your reader respectfully.
 - II. Describe the error using the pronoun “we.” Remember, the client has a relationship with the company, not the individuals in it.
 - III. After you acknowledge the problem, do not repeat it. Avoid using words like “faulty,” “error,” “negligence,” etc.
- B. Paragraph two:
- I. Specifically describe what must be done by the client and by the company.
 - II. Graciously offer a concession and an explanation, or, if there is not a policy for the concession, explain why.
 - III. Concisely describe a time frame for when your company’s obligation for repair will end. This is especially true if your company could incur penalties or interests.
- C. Paragraph three:
- I. Point out any steps that your company will take to prevent a reoccurrence.
 - II. End the letter with goodwill.