Business Letter Format

1234 Student Avenue
Grovetown, GA 30813
November 2, 2010

RETURN ADDRESS – The address of the person sending the letter. Do not include your name here (because it's at the bottom); include today's date – do not abbreviate (except for the state). The return address should be flush with the top 1" margin.

3 white spaces

Mrs. Kim Buchanan
Advanced Placement English Teacher
Grovetown High School
2010 Warrior Way
Grovetown, GA 30813

INSIDE ADDRESS – The address and title of the person receiving the letter. Include the person's name, title, and business address.

1 white space

Dear Mrs. Buchanan:

SALUTATION – addresses recipient and is followed by a colon due to formal context

1 white space

This first paragraph should clearly and specifically explain your general research/debate topic. What intrigued you about this topic? Why is the topic relevant and appropriate considering your audience?

In this paragraph, you are trying to prove to me that not only have you seriously considered your audience when choosing a topic but that you are also choosing a topic that you are personally invested in.

1 white space between paragraphs

The second paragraph should discuss your specific position/thesis/claim on the topic and your reasons for choosing this position. You should also discuss any prior knowledge you have regarding your topic. What possible objections do you anticipate from your audience? Why do you think that is? How do you SPECIFICALLY plan to overcome those objections?

In this paragraph, you are trying to prove to me that you have seriously considered the filter through which your audience will see this topic. Also, I need to know that you are prepared for their bias.

Paragraph 3 should discuss at least two scholarly sources you have located. For each discussed source, please give a brief summary as well as include the actual article/book title, author, source, and date of publication. What makes these sources credible?

In this paragraph, you are trying to prove to me that your sources are credible, timely, and useful for your purpose.

Paragraph 4 should discuss the rhetorical strategies that you will need to employ when building your argument. Be specific – yet concise – with your explanations.

In this paragraph, you are trying to prove that you understand the rhetorical situation as it applies to your argument.

This last paragraph should discuss what you hope to learn from this experience. How do you think this experience will benefit you? What do you foresee as potential personal weaknesses or strengths?

Sincerely,

CLOSING – must use a formal word or phrase

3 white spaces (room for your signature – blue or black ink only)

Harry J. Potter

TYPED NAME OF SENDER - Name should be typed exactly the way you sign official documents

Other points:

- Type the letter in 12-point, Times New Roman font
- Do not indent paragraphs
- To maintain formality, keep your letter to one page. If you have to adjust the letter to get it to do that, start by deleting one white space between the return address and inside address. If that isn't enough, start dropping your font size by .5. However, do not make the font any smaller than 10 point.
- Remember – professionalism is your number one priority. Your presentation in this letter is setting up my expectations regarding your debate (ethos).