

## Reference Letters Structure/Template

- ▣ Addressee name and address if known
- ▣ Date
- ▣ Salutation ('To whom it may concern', or 'Dear Sir or Madam', or 'Dear <title> <surname>')
- ▣ Confirm dates, job title(s) capacity, and salary and benefits details if required/appropriate.
- ▣ Confirm that the person's performance and attitude was (at all times) satisfactory/exceeded expectations or standards.
- ▣ Briefly explain the person's responsibilities (optional)
- ▣ Briefly describe their skills/qualifications/strengths/characteristics (optional)
- ▣ State that you would willingly re-employ the person if the opportunity arose (optional, and very re-assuring for the reader)
- ▣ Offer to provide more information if required (optional)
- ▣ 'Yours sincerely' if writing to a named addressee

N.B. It's a matter for your own discretion how much praise and positive information to include in the reference letter, hence the **optional** items.

## Character or Personal Reference Letters

Who should you ask to provide a personal reference or write a character reference letter for you? Certain situations require character reference letters of a more personal nature, such as character testimonials or references for a position in non-business organizations such as councils, clubs, or societies. Neighbours and acquaintances may be willing to write a reference for you. Business acquaintances, professors/academic advisors, customers, and vendors can all make good references. If you volunteer consider using leaders or other members of the organization as personal references. Have you participated in the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, a similar organization or in school sports? Ask your group leader or coach to write a personal letter of reference for you. If you've baby-sat or dog-sat or shovelled snow, ask the people you worked for if they will write a reference letter for you. In these cases, follow the same principles: do not defame a person in writing or verbally when providing a reference; state only positives or nothing at all. Always ask the writer if it would help to provide them with a draft. Writing reference letters is time-consuming and difficult for many people - offering to provide a draft may sound cheeky, but it is often necessary and much appreciated by the reference giver.

## Example & Template for Personal or Character Reference Letter

Date

To whom it may concern

I confirm that I have known (name) for (number) years. (State relationship - social, business, working together in some other capacity, club, activity, project, etc.)

At all times I have found (name/him/her) to be (state characteristics - eg, dependable, reliable, hard-working, conscientious, honest, courteous, etc - to be as helpful as possible think about what the reader will most prefer to see, in terms of satisfying concerns, or seeing evidence of relevant required skills or characteristics).

I'm happy to provide further information if required.

Sincerely, etc.