Formal Letters

Opening Salutations

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| **Sehr geehrte Frau…,** | Dear (for a woman whose name you know) |
| **Sehr geehrter Herr…,** | Dear (for a man whose name you know) |
| **Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,** | Dear (if you happen to not know the name of the person you’re writing to) |
| **Sehr geehrte Frau prof. Schneider** | Dear Professor Schneider (When writing to a doctor or professor, it also pays to mention the title in the opening greeting) |

Body of the Letter

1. Unlike in English, the first word following the salutation starts with a small letter. For example:

Sehr Geehrte Frau Schneider,

ich schreibe Ihnen…

There are no indentations before the next paragraph when writing a handwritten letter (the same obviously applies for emails as well).

1. Don’t forget to use **Sie** (you) and **Ihr/e** (your) in formal writing. *Du* should NOT appear in a formal letter/piece of writing.

* Haben *Sie* meine Email bekommen? – Have *you* received my email?
* Ich habe *Ihre* Anzeige in der Zeitung gelesen. – I read your advert in the newspaper. (*Ihre* is used instead of *Ihr* here because Anzeige is a feminine word).

Letter Conclusions

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| Ihr(e) [your name] | Yours… (Ihre is used if the recipient is female and Ihr if he’s male.) |
| Mit freundlichen Grüßen | This is one of the most popular and widely used conclusions for formal letters. Roughly translated to “with friendly greetings”, it applies to both known and unknown recipients. |
| Mit herzlichen Grüßen | With warm greetings |
| Beste Grüße (aus Berlin) | Best regards (from Berlin) |

Other Useful Phrases

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| --- | --- |
| I am writing to you with regards to… | Ich schreibe Ihnen mit Bezug auf (+acc) |
| Ich wäre sehr dankbar, wenn Sie… könnten. | I would be very grateful if you could… |
| Ich möchte Sie fragen, ob… | I would like to ask you whether… |
| Ich bin an… interessiert und würde gerne wissen… | I am interested in… and would like to know… |
| Vielen Dank im Voraus. | Many thanks in advance. |
| Ich hoffe, bald von Ihnen zu hören. | I hope to hear from you soon. |

Please see the following website for additional phrases:

<https://en.bab.la/phrases/business/letter/english-german>