

6 Steps To Write an Apology Letter

If you would like to write an apology letter, there are several important steps that you need to follow. If you follow these steps from start to finish, there is a good chance that you have a solid apology letter in front of you. The steps include:

Step 1: Say That You Are Sorry

When you open your letter, the first thing you need to do is say that you are sorry. Even though this sounds difficult, this is the most common location where people make a mistake. If you do not open the letter by sincerely apologizing, the rest of your letter is going to be off. Therefore, make sure you say these exact words: "I'm sorry." If you open the letter with "I'm sorry, but..." you are off to a bad start. This is a sure sign that you are not actually going to take responsibility for what happened. Therefore, always open your letter with the words: "I'm sorry."

As an example of an apology letter, take a look at this one:

Dear Paul

I'm sorry...

There it is. A few simple words (and punctuation). The letter is already off to a good start. We will refer back to this example as the rest of the steps unfold. If you start your letter this way, you are off to a good start.

Step 2: Take Responsibility

The next thing you need to do is actually take responsibility for your mistakes. You need to make sure that you show the other person that you are willing to take responsibility for what happened. You should not put the responsibility on someone else. You should not try to divide responsibilities between you and the other person. You should not try to show that you are taking responsibility but, somehow, "it is also this person's fault."

It takes a big person to take responsibility for mistakes. After all, this is probably something that you were taught as a child. If you made a mistake, take responsibility for it. If you own up to your actions, the other person is more likely to appreciate this. As an example, let's refer back to the apology letter from above.

Dear Paul,

I'm sorry for not arriving at the airport to pick you up when I said that I would. It is my fault and I am sorry for arriving so late. There is no excuse for me to keep you waiting like that. You were probably wondering where your ride was. I cannot imagine what you were thinking or how worried you were. It is entirely my fault and I apologize.

As we move forward with the letter, you can see that this apology letter takes responsibility for exactly what happened. “It is entirely my fault” and “there is no excuse for me to keep you waiting like that.” It is not excessively long, it clearly states that the individual is sorry, and the person writing the letter obviously owns up to what happened.

Step 3: Describe Exactly What Happened During the Incident

After you take responsibility for what happened, you need to describe what you are taking responsibility for. Saying “I’m sorry” and “it is all my fault” is great, but what exactly is your fault? The other person needs to understand what happened and why it was so hurtful to that person. Make sure that you remain focused on your role. If it is just between you and the other person, try to refrain from mentioning anything else. Otherwise, it may seem like you are deflecting blame.

As we refer back to the letter from above, you can see that steps 2 and 3 often blend together. This is because you are describing what you are taking responsibility for as you are taking responsibility for it. As long as everything they are toward the top, you are going to be fine. Again, take a look at the example from above:

Dear Paul,

I’m sorry for not arriving at the airport to pick you up when I said that I would. It is my fault and I am sorry for arriving so late. There is no excuse for me to keep you waiting like that. You were probably wondering where your ride was. I cannot imagine what you were thinking or how worried you were. It is entirely my fault and I apologize.

During step 3, it is important for you to acknowledge what happened and why the other person was harmed by it. You can clearly see that in the letter above. “I’m sorry for arriving so late.” “You were probably wondering where your ride was.” These are clear, concise statements that show you are thinking about the impact your mistake had on the other person. If you focus on your role and how your behavior impacted the other person, you are going to complete step 3. Make sure you include this in your letter.

Step 4: Show That You Have a Plan

As the letter moves forward, you also need to make it clear that you are not going to let this happen again. Saying something like, “this will not happen in the future” is a great place to start. On the other hand, this would be more effective if you clearly explain to the person how you are going to prevent this mistake from happening again. Therefore, let's refer back to the letter above. The letter includes:

Dear Paul,

I'm sorry for not arriving at the airport to pick you up when I said that I would. It is my fault and I am sorry for arriving so late. There is no excuse for me to keep you waiting like that. You were probably wondering where your ride was. I cannot imagine what you were thinking or how worried you were. It is entirely my fault and I apologize.

This will never happen again, as I never intend to keep anyone waiting. In the future, I will use alerts on my calendar that notify me when your flight gets in. This alert will also let me know what flight you are on, which airport you are flying into, and where I can pick you up. If something happens and I'm going to be late, I will let you know in advance. That way, I do not keep you waiting.

Notice that the letter above clearly states what you are going to do next time to prevent this situation from happening again. In the example, you are going to use calendar alerts so you do not forget about the other person. Furthermore, you will also let the person know if you are going to be late. That way, you do not leave them hanging.

Step 5: Admit That You Were Wrong

As the letter comes to a close, you need to admit that you are wrong. If you are wondering how to do that, simply state the words, "I was wrong." It can take a lot for you to write that in a letter. After all, you will need to put your pride to the side. At the same time, if you do not admit you were wrong, it is not a full apology.

If you are wondering how to admit that you are wrong, simply state the words, "I was wrong."

Dear Paul,

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I was wrong. I needed to be there on time and I wasn't. I should have let you know I was going to be late and I did not. For that, I apologize.

Notice that this section is not very long either. You get straight to the point by admitting you were wrong. Then, you can move on.

Step 6: Ask for the Forgiveness of the Other Person

Finally, you want to make sure you ask for the forgiveness of the other person as well. After all, you do not want to destroy this relationship. If the other person is able to forgive you for what happened, everyone will be able to move forward. Take a look at the example above one last time:

Dear Paul,

I'm sorry for not arriving at the airport to pick you up when I said that I would. It is my fault and I am sorry for arriving so late. There is no excuse for me to keep you waiting like that. You were probably wondering where your ride was. I cannot imagine what you were thinking or how worried you were. It is entirely my fault and I apologize.

This will never happen again, as I never intend to keep anyone waiting. In the future, I will use alerts on my calendar that notify me when your flight gets in. This alert will also let me know what flight you are on, which airport you are flying into, and where I can pick you up. If something happens and I'm going to be late, I will let you know in advance. That way, I do not keep you waiting.

I was wrong. I needed to be there on time and I wasn't. I should have let you know I was going to be late and I did not. For that, I apologize. I humbly ask for your forgiveness, and I hope we can move forward as friends.

Sincerely,

John

A little vulnerability matters a great deal. Show the other person that you mean what you say.

If you are wondering how to write your apology letter, you are going to encounter several challenges. Keep in mind that:

Making an apology does not mean you are a bad person. You are apologizing for your behavior, not for your character as a whole.

You may have a tendency to get defensive. Try to avoid this. If you are defensive, you are not apologizing. You might be worried that you are going to open the floodgate to more accusations. Even though it is possible, you may feel resentment if you do not apologize. Of course, depending on the exact nature of the situation, your apology letter could change. For example, you may be a business owner taking

responsibility for the actions of your employee. If that happens, your apology letter is going to be a bit different.

Or, if you are writing an apology letter that is intended for a group of people instead of just a single person, you may need to alter the structure slightly.

Final Thoughts on Apology Letters

Without a doubt, it can be difficult to write an apology letter. After all, something bad has transpired, and you are taking responsibility for what happened. If you are able to write an effective apology letter, then you allow everyone to move forward and strengthen your relationship.

Website: [Developing Good Habits](#)