

Guide to providing a Reference Letter

The preferred method for providing a reference for an employee is as a contactable referee, that is, by listing the referee's name and contact details in the candidate's resume. This enables a potential employer to validate a candidate's skills and abilities against the role they have applied for. If however, a reference letter is requested this guide may be helpful in preparing a reference letter.

Salutation

If you are writing a personal letter of reference, include a salutation (Dear Mr. January, Dear Ms. February, etc.). If you are writing a general letter, say "To Whom it May Concern" or simply don't include a salutation.

Paragraph 1

The first paragraph of the reference letter template explains your connection to the person you are recommending, including how you know them, and why you are qualified to write a reference letter to recommend employment.

Paragraph 2

The second paragraph of the reference letter template contains specific information on the person you are writing about, including why they are qualified, what they can contribute, and why you are providing a reference letter. If necessary, use more than one paragraph to provide details.

Summary

This section of the reference letter template contains a brief summary of why you are recommending the person. State that you "highly recommend" the person or you "recommend without reservation" or something similar.

Conclusion

The concluding paragraph of the reference letter template contains an offer to provide more information. Include a phone number within the paragraph or in your signature.

Example of a completed reference letter

6 August 2012

To whom it may concern

I highly recommend Billy Jean as a candidate for employment. I confirm that I have known Billy for eight years as his manager at Music Co. Billy has been employed as a Front Counter Receptionist for the past five years and as a General Administration Officer for three years prior to that. Billy was responsible for providing administrative office support including word processing, scheduling appointments, creating brochures, newsletters and other office literature.

Billy has excellent communication skills. In addition he is extremely organised, reliable and computer literate. Billy can work independently and is able to follow through to ensure the job gets done. He is flexible and willing to work on any projected assigned to him. Billy was quick to volunteer to assist in multiple work areas within the company and has a fantastic work ethic.

Billy would be a tremendous asset for your company and has my highest recommendation. If you have any further questions with regards to his/her background or qualifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

signature

Print Your Name
Title, company
Phone number

Sample template reference letter

dd month yyyy

To whom it may concern

I highly recommend (full name) as a candidate for employment. I confirm that I have known (first name) for (number) of years as his/her (state relationship – supervisor, manager, working together in some capacity/activity).

(Name) was employed by (organisation name) as a (position) from (date). (Name) was responsible for..... (state some tasks the individual undertook e.g. administrative support including word processing, scheduling appointments, creating brochures, newsletters and other office literature).

(Name) has excellent (work related skills - communication skills, work ethic, attention to detail etc). In addition he/she is (work related skills/personal qualities – is well organised, reliable and willing to work on any project assigned to him/her).

(Name) would be a tremendous asset for your company and has my highest recommendation. If you have any further questions with regards to his/her background or qualifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

signature

Print Your Name
Title, company
Phone number