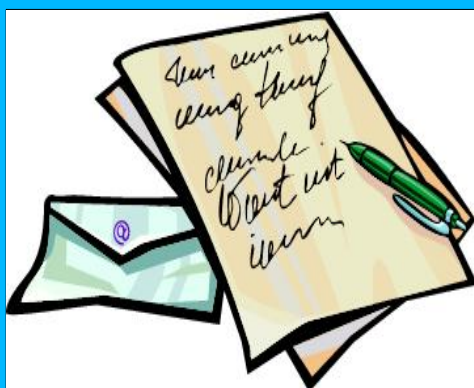




National Archives and Records Administration

Guide for Preparing NARA Correspondence:

A Supplement to NARA 201, NARA Correspondence



Background

The Guide for Preparing NARA Correspondence is based on the *United States Government Correspondence Manual* (1992) sponsored by the U.S. General Services Administration. NARA's guide contains detailed guidance on preparing NARA correspondence and provides samples collected from NARA offices. Follow this guide in all internal and external NARA correspondence.

There may be times when you want to refer to the *U.S. Government Correspondence Manual* for a further explanation of correspondence management or for areas this guide does not cover. The *U.S. Government Correspondence Manual* is available at www.va.gov/publ/gsa/corresp/.

Guide for Preparing NARA Correspondence

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1. General Formatting

1.1 Margins

One-inch margins are recommended for all NARA correspondence.

1.2 Spacing

Use single-spaced lines in a paragraph. Double-space between paragraphs.

1.3 Font

Use Times New Roman, 12 point.

1.4 Indentation

Type correspondence with all elements flush with the left margin (flush left).

1.5 Date

- a. When the date the document will be signed is known, include it when preparing the memorandum for signature. (See example 1.)
- b. If the date is unknown, leave a blank line for the date and begin the address on the second line below the blank line. (See example 2.) After the correspondence has been signed, the office that signed or dispatched the letter will type or stamp the date on the original and all copies.

1.6 Carrying Over to the Next Page

- a. Begin a paragraph at the end of the page only if there is room for at least two lines.
- b. When continuing a paragraph on the following page, carry over at least two lines.
- c. Typing a single line or less (unless it is a single-line paragraph) at the top or bottom of the page is not recommended.

1.7 Signature

Do not use titles (e.g., “Ms.,” “Mr.,” “Ph.D.,” or “Dr.”) in the signature block.

1.8 Signature in the absence of regular signing official

- a. **Acting** – If the signing official is a person appointed in a formal acting capacity (i.e., by formal personnel action), type his or her name and the word "Acting" before the title in the signature block. For example:

ALICE B. CLARK
Acting Executive for Research Services

- b. **For** – If an official is acting informally for the regular signing official, he or she signs his or her name in the signature block of the regular signing official and writes the word "for" before the regular signing official's name. Mark copies with the actual signer's name.



for JOHN T. BROWN
Assistant Archivist for
Administrative Services

1.9 Signature of more than one signer

When more than one signature is required, arrange the signature blocks side by side or one beneath the other. If you position the signature blocks one beneath the other, leave four blank lines after the last line of the prior block.

1.10 Official Record Copy Information

- a. Make sure you include this information only on file copies (official, reading, information, and blind courtesy copies) of the originating unit and recipients of the copies. (See example 3.)
- b. Do not include this information on the copy sent to the addressee(s).
- c. For the official record copy information to include, see NARA 201, par. 201.23.

1.11 Electronic file

If you save an electronic copy of a letter or memorandum for reference purposes, delete the letterhead and footer from the electronic file. This reduces the cumulative strain on NARANET servers. (See example 3.)

1.11 Spaces after periods

Use two spaces after periods.

2. Letters

2.1 Letters

Letters are correspondence addressed to external entities. They generally consist of five parts: heading, salutation, body, complimentary close, and signature, but may also include an optional attention line. Letter templates are available on NARANET through Microsoft Word.

2.2 Heading

In the heading, include the date, title, name, and address of the intended recipient(s). For detailed guidance on form of addresses, see chapter 4 of the U.S. Government Correspondence Manual.

“The Honorable” is a title of respect used to address, by name, current and former high officials (e.g., Presidential appointees, Federal and state elected officials and mayors):

The Honorable Jane Hart
Attorney General

You may use “The Honorable” with an official title but without a name, in certain circumstances (i.e., when addressing Cabinet officers and Governors of States):

The Honorable
The Secretary of State

The Honorable
The Governor of Maryland

Do not use “The Honorable” before a last name alone.

2.3 Attention Line (optional)

- a. An attention line expedites delivery of the letter to the person who will act on it.
- b. When appropriate, type “Attention:” or “ATTN:” two lines below the address, flush left. (See example 4.)
- c. The salutation should state the addressee of the letter, not the person named in the attention line.

2.4 Salutations

- a. Salutations are required in formal letters.
- b. Type the salutation on the second line below the address or attention line.

c. Use the same name and personal title that appears in the recipient's address, in the heading, followed by a colon.

Informal salutation – Unless the addressee holds a title such as Secretary, the salutation is usually “Dear followed by the appropriate courtesy title (Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss) and the addressee’s last name. For example:

Dear Mr. Adams:
Dear Mrs. Baker:
(Member of the House of Representatives)

Dear Senator Carter:

Top-ranking officials – In official correspondence, never use titles of top-ranking government officials (i.e., the President, Vice President, Chief Justice, Secretary, Ambassador) with the individual’s last name. Instead use:

Dear Mr. President:
Dear Madam President:

Dear Mr. Secretary:
Dear Madam Secretary:

Dear Chief Justice:

Formal salutation – “Sir:” or “Madam:” alone is sometimes used to address high-ranking Federal, state, local officials, or individuals representing private organizations.

Unknown Gender – When you do not know the gender of the addressee, it is recommended that you use the name as given. For example:

Dear Taylor Dole:

Dear E. English:

Unknown identity – When you do not know the identity of the specific addressee, call the addressee’s office in order to obtain the name. Use “Dear Sir or Madam:” or “Dear Sirs and Madams:” when this is unnecessary or not possible.

Modified or no salutation – You may elect to omit the “Dear” or the entire salutation for routine correspondence or correspondence in which an informal tone is desired for multiple addresses.

2.5 Body

a. Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation or previous text. Double-space one-paragraph letters of 10 lines or less.

- b. If responding to an incoming letter, begin the body with a brief reference to the letter to which you are responding – not just the date, but also a meaningful synopsis of the question, issue, or problem that it presented. (See example 5.)

2.6 Complimentary Close

Generally, the complimentary close should be as formal or informal as the salutation. Where the salutation is omitted, the complimentary close is omitted as well.

Generally, use “Sincerely,” as the complimentary close. Use “Respectfully,” when the letter is addressed to the President of the United States.

2.7 Signature

See par. 1.7 through 1.9 and NARA 201, par. 201.19.

2.8 Enclosures

- a. In letters, type “Enclosure,” two lines below the signature block. (See example 4.)
- b. When there is more than one enclosure, you may type “Enclosures” or indicate the number. For example:

Enclosures (3)

When enclosures have special importance or are not cited in the letter, list them by title or subject. For example:

Enclosures:

Sample directives plan

Priority codes

List of interim guidances in effect

2.9 Separate Cover

- a. When material cited in the text is sent under separate cover (i.e., in a different envelope), type “Separate Cover:” flush left, two lines below the last line of text.
- b. List the material, even if it has been identified in the text. For example:

Separate Cover:

Sample directives plan

Priority codes

List of interim guidances in effect

- c. Send a copy of the letter with the material sent under separate cover.

3. Memorandums

3.1 Memorandums

- a. Use memorandums for correspondence within NARA including within your office or unit.
- b. Various memorandum templates are available on NARANET through Microsoft Word.
- c. Memorandums are divided into three parts - heading, body, and signature, described in the following paragraphs. (See example 6 for a sample memorandum.)

3.2 Heading

The heading contains the Date, To, From, and Subject information.

3.3 Body

Begin the body of the memorandum three lines below the last line of the subject or previous text. Double-space one-paragraph memorandums of 10 lines or less.

3.4 Signature

See par. 1.7 through 1.9 and NARA 201, par. 201.19.

3.5 Attachments

- a. In memorandums, type “Attachment” flush left two lines below the signature block. When there is more than one attachment, you may type “Attachments” or indicate the number:

Attachments (3)

- b. When attachments have special importance or are not cited in the memorandum, list them:

Attachments:

Sample directives plan

Priority codes

List of interim guidances in effect

4. Electronic Mail (e-mail)

4.1 E-mail

Use e-mail to send short messages quickly and easily to one or more addressee(s).

4.2 Standards for all e-mail

- a. Use meaningful subject lines.
- b. Try to keep messages under 25 lines long.
- c. Use short paragraphs separated by blank lines.
- d. When you are responding to questions, be sure to provide thorough answers.
- e. When presenting a solution to a request or problem, be sure to describe the appropriate course of follow-up action.
- f. Maintain a polite, positive, and personal tone.
- g. Proofread for misspellings, grammatical errors, and missing or duplicate words.
- h. Check to be sure attachments referenced in the message are linked to the message.

4.3 Additional standards for external e-mail

- a. In the message box, include a salutation, message, complimentary close, and signature equivalent.
- b. In the salutation, address the writer by name (e.g., “Dear Ms. Smith).
- c. In the message, reference the e-mail to which you are responding (not just the date, but also a meaningful synopsis of the question, issue, or problem that it presented).
- d. Write clearly and simply.
- e. Avoid jargon, idioms, and “emoticons” (i.e., representations of facial expressions, such as :) as a smile), or other creative punctuation.
- f. Include a complimentary close.
- g. Make it easy for the writer to contact you by concluding the message with a “signature equivalent” (your name, organizational unit, phone number, and e-mail address, plus your fax number, if appropriate).

See example 7 for a sample e-mail.

4.4 Additional standards for internal e-mail

- a. Internal e-mails may be more informal (e.g., deleting the more formal salutation and the complimentary close).
- b. Include message received from sender in your reply or provide a meaningful synopsis of the question, issue, or problem that it presented.
- c. Make it easy for the recipient to contact you by including your phone number, if appropriate.

5. Facsimile

5.1 Facsimile (Fax)

Use fax transmissions for official correspondence when there is not enough time to send documents through other mail services.

5.2 Cover Sheet

Use a fax cover as the first page of all fax transmissions to recipients. Use the standard NARA Facsimile Transmittal template available on NARANET through Microsoft Word.

5.3 Writing Standards

- a. Use meaningful subject lines on the transmittal.
- b. In the message section of the transmittal, reference the communication to which you are responding (not just the date, but also a meaningful synopsis of the question, issue, or problem that it presented).
- c. Try to keep the message under 25 lines long.
- d. Use short paragraphs separated by blank lines.
- e. When responding to questions, be sure to provide thorough answers.
- f. When presenting a solution to a request or problem, be sure to clearly describe the appropriate course of follow-up action.
- g. Maintain a polite, positive, and personal tone.
- h. Write clearly and simply (avoid jargon and idioms).
- i. Make it easy for the writer to contact you by completing the section headed "From the desk of..." (including your name, title, organizational unit, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address).
- j. Proofread for misspellings, grammatical errors, and missing or duplicate words.
- k. Check to be sure the total number of pages is accurately shown on the cover transmittal and that the attachments are clearly referenced in the message.

See example 8 for sample facsimile cover sheet.

6. Examples

Letters

1. Dated letter responding to reference inquiry
2. Undated letter to high government official
3. File copy of letter showing official record copy information and deleted letterhead and footer
4. Letter with attention line and enclosure line
5. Letter with initial reference to incoming correspondence

Memorandum

6. Correspondence within NARA

E-Mail

7. E-mail response to external e-mail request

Facsimile

8. Facsimile transmittal in response to reproductions price inquiry



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

October 21, 2002

Amy McCullough
200 Second Street
Erie, PA 16546

Dear Ms. McCullough:

This letter is in response to your requests for photographs related to the aftermath of the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August 1945.

We examined the Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers and the Records of the Atomic Energy Commission and found several photographs that may be of interest. Enclosed are copies of photographs, which provide a sample of what I located, an order form, and purchasing information to use when ordering reproductions. To examine these records in more detail, you or your representative may visit our research room in College Park, Maryland.

If you have further questions, our Still Pictures Reference Team will be pleased to assist you. Direct written inquiries to the Still Pictures Reference Team, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS), Room 5360, National Archives and Records Administration, 8501 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001. You may call 301-837-1200, or e-mail nwcs@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

Henry K. GORDON
Archivist
Special Media Archives Services Division

Enclosure

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

The Honorable David Brady
315 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Brady:

On behalf of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), let me extend my welcome as you begin your service as a United States Representative. We at NARA will do all we can to assist you throughout your service here in Washington, DC.

NARA is our national records keeper. An independent agency created by statute in 1934, we safeguard records of all three branches of the Federal Government. Our mission is to ensure that Federal officials and the American public have ready access to essential evidence—records that document the rights of citizens, the actions of government officials, and the national experience. Through a national network of archives and records services facilities stretching from Washington to the West Coast, including Presidential libraries documenting administrations of Presidents back to Hoover, we meet thousands of information requests daily, ensuring access to records on which the entitlement of citizens, the credibility of government, and the accuracy of history depend. Additionally, we publish the *Federal Register*, administer the Information Security Oversight Office, and make grants for historical documentation through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

I would like to extend a personal invitation to you to visit the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, or the National Archives at College Park for a tour so that I can welcome you in person to one of our nation's most important public trusts. Your scheduler may contact NARA's Director of Congressional and Public Affairs, Anna Noteworthy, at 301-837-1100, or via e-mail at anna.noteworthy@nara.gov, to set up a convenient time.

Sincerely,

LAURA CONNER
Archivist of the United States

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>

Example 2 – Undated letter to high government official

Ms. Jessica Bell
Executive Director
Hartford Museum of Art
300 Third Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Ms. Bell:

The National Archives and Records Administration is pleased to lend the photograph, The First Family, requested for your exhibition "Fresh Faces." It is available for loan from January 5, 2004, through August 25, 2004.

Please review the enclosed loan agreement, sign both copies, and return the original to Mr. James Houston, Museum Programs (NWE), 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Houston at 301-837-1300.

Best wishes for a very successful exhibition.

Sincerely,

RUSSELL BEATTY, JR.
Acting Director of Museum Programs

Enclosure

Official: NWE
Reading: NWE
NWE: JDoe ams 06-14-2003 Revised: AJones 6-16-2003
p:/example.doc File Code: 223-2



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

The Honorable William Scott
President Pro Tempore
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Attention: Melanie Sanchez

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your willingness to join your colleagues on our Congressional Committee of Honor for the Rededication of the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom. The public ceremony will be held at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, September 17, 2003, which is, as you know, Constitution Day. We are expecting significant national press coverage and are currently on the President's schedule for the morning.

I have enclosed a tentative agenda for this most important ceremony and please note that we would be honored to have you participate as a speaker. Having all three branches of our Government represented as we unveil the re-encased Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and Bill of Rights is important for history and for the American people.

We are envisioning a ceremony of one hour in duration. That requires each of us to be brief, but your presence and your thoughts will make this a very special occasion. I truly hope that you are able to join us. Please have your scheduler contact Anna Noteworthy, our Director of Congressional and Public Affairs, at 301-837-1100 or via e-mail at anna.noteworthy@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

LAURA CONNER
Archivist of the United States

Enclosure

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

September 27, 2004

Sara Cleveland
100 First Street
Atlanta, GA 30301

Dear Ms. Cleveland:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of August 31, 2004, which was received in this office on September 1, 2004, and assigned our case number NW 25037.

The National Archives and Records Administration has limited authority to release national security or other sensitive information. Pursuant to 5 USC 552 (a)(6)(B)(iii)(III), if you have requested information of a restricted nature, in most cases it will be necessary to send copies of the documents to appropriate agencies for further review.

We have forwarded your request for selected records from our holdings to the appropriate office for further action.

Please let us know if your address changes during the time that it takes to complete your request. Otherwise, if any correspondence to you from this office is returned as undeliverable (i.e., marked "no forwarding address"), we will presume you are no longer interested in pursuing the request and the case will be closed.

We will notify you as soon as the review by all parties is complete.

Sincerely,

ANN C. EVANS
Archives Specialist
Special Access and FOIA Staff

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>



National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

Date: September 20, 2004
To: Devon Sanderson, NPOL
From: NGC
Subject: Comments on draft requirements for government information (NARA Notice 2004-220)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the ICGI's "Requirements for Enabling Identification, Categorization, and Consistent Retrieval of Government Information" and "Recommendations for Searching Interoperability." NGC has the following comments:

1. While Appendix 1 of the Requirements document makes clear that the requirements are intended to be used for a universe of government information more limited in scope than the entirety of the world of electronic Federal records, it still seems to us that NARA should have a concern that any standard search methodology take into account minimizing the number of "false positive" hits generated during searching. The discussion of the concepts of "precision" and "recall" at sections 3.3 and 5.3 could be enhanced by some reference to the need to deal with this issue.
2. It also would be useful if the document included some discussion of Federal benchmarking standards for comparing competing search methodologies, to foster competition among vendors.

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact John Abogado at 301-837-1750.

MARK CONSIGLIO
General Counsel

NARA's web site is <http://www.archives.gov>

From: Robert Keller
To: roberta.johnson@xyz.net
Date: 1/24/04 4:40PM
Subject: Regarding certain testimony by Oliver North at the Iran-Contra hearings

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Your recent e-mail dated September 25, 2004, asked if we might provide you with additional information on Lt. Col. Oliver North's testimony about the purchase of an expensive home security system, at the Iran-Contra hearings in 1987. It has been alleged on the Internet that North testified that the reason he purchased an expensive home security system was fear of Osama bin Laden and that then-Senator Al Gore was North's interrogator. The official transcript of the hearings indicates, however, that the terrorist named by North was Adu Nidal, North's interrogator was John Nields, chief counsel for the committee, and the reason North was being questioned about the security system was that it was actually paid for by retired General Secord, who was a US Government contractor, making it an illegal gratuity.

A portion of the hearings transcript follows:

Mr. Nields: Were you aware that the security system was paid for by General Secord?

Mr. North:...The issue of the security system was first broached immediately after a threat on my life by Abu Nidal. Abu Nidal is, as I am sure you on the intelligence committees know, the principal, foremost assassin in the world. He is a brutal murderer....

You can find the printed transcript of the entire congressional hearing in any US Government Depository Library under the government documents (SuDocs) call number, Y4.In8/20:100-7/pt.1 and pt.2, or in the book published by Pocket Books entitled *Taking the Stand: The Testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. North*, which may be in the general collection of your public library, available through inter-library loan, or in bookstores in your area.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert Keller
Supervisory Archivist
Archives Library Information Center
National Archives at College Park, MD
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
301-837-1400

alic@nara.gov



National Archives & Records Administration

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

To: Cheryl Cook
Fax# 757-555-1340
Re: J.W. Fritz papers
Date: March 21, 2003
Pages: 3 Pages (including cover sheet)

This is in response to your telephone request for a quote for the cost of reproducing the donated papers of J.W. Fritz.

The Fritz papers consist of 53 pages. At a cost of 50 cents a page, your cost would be \$26.50.

If you wish to order the documents mentioned above by check or money order (payable to "National Archives Trust Fund"), send payment with one copy of the order form to the National Archives Trust Fund Board, P.O. Box 100793, Atlanta, GA 30384.

If you wish to pay by using an American Express, MasterCard, VISA, or Discover credit card, send the enclosed form (annotated with type of credit card, account number, expiration date, and your signature) to Trust Fund Cashier, National Archives at College Park, Suite 5100, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001. The second copy of the order form is for your records. Please do not send any remittance to this office.

From the desk of...

Andrew Deer

Special Access and FOIA Staff
8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, Maryland 20740
Telephone: 301-837-1600
Fax: 301-837-1650

Email: andrew.deer@nara.gov

National Archives and Records Administration

Example 8 – Facsimile transmittal in response to reproductions price inquiry