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Mr. Feathers McTicklin
150 Aviary Ct.
Toucan Alley, NM 54893

Dear Mr. McTicklin,

I am writing to you in order to demonstrate the basic structure of a formal letter. As you well know, it is imperative that the letter be formatted properly. This includes making sure that there is a return address and a date. As well, the letter should include a salutation—usually “Dear XXX”—and a farewell—usually “Sincerely.” The text of the letter should be organized into paragraphs. That is about all there is to it!

The only other thing that I can add is that when students are composing imaginary letters set in the past, they should consider small historical details, like the fact that zip codes were introduced in the United States by the U.S. Postal system only in the 1960s. Any letter before that decade will not have a zip code.

Well, my good sir: Thank you for your kind attention to my students’ needs. I hope that I have not overtaxed your patience. With all due respect, I remain

Sincerely,

Robert A. DeLossa

p.s. If you or anyone you know needs further information about writing formal letters, the OWL (Online Writing Laboratory) at Purdue University has useful information: <owl.english.purdue.edu>.