How to write a resignation letter

Getting ready to resign from a role? Whatever your reason, going on good terms can help you keep professional contacts, transition smoothly and at the very least, get a good reference.

It's best to leave any job on a positive note, says Russell Fairbanks, Managing Director at Luminary Partners QLD. He says you'll be remembered for how your employment ends.

Once you sit down with your boss to break the news that you're leaving, you'll need to put your resignation into writing.

Here we spell out the simple steps it takes to do this well.

5 steps to writing your resignation letter

1. **State the basics**
   This is a formal letter, so you need to outline some key details. Start with the date you're handing it in – the letter can act as evidence of how much notice you've given. Address your letter to the right person, which could be your manager or the HR department. Next, state that you're resigning. If you want to, you can simply and professionally say why – for example, to explore a new opportunity – but you don't have to do this. Don't forget to include the date you'll finish – it's best to check your contract to make sure you're giving enough notice.

2. **Be positive**
   Acknowledge the opportunities you've had or the experience you've gained from your time in the role. "Always spell out and look for the positives," Fairbanks says. "Ask yourself 'what did I take away from this job'?" This doesn't need to be emotional – just a simple and genuine few words will do

3. **Don't vent**
   Negative emotion shouldn't come into it, either. It's not the space to complain or point out failures. If you're tempted to be critical, just remember you could regret it later – resignation letters stay on record. "If it's in writing, you can't take it back," Fairbanks says. If you do have grievances you want to discuss or feedback to give, it's best to seek a verbal exit interview with HR or your manager. And no matter the situation, don't use social media to vent, Fairbanks says.

4. **Say thanks**
   You've probably picked up some useful skills or had a chance to gain experience in your

role, and your employer may have invested time or effort into training you. Take a moment to think about what you can acknowledge them for and write a few words to thank them.

5. **Build on relationships**
   Never burn your bridges, Fairbanks says. As well as a reference now, you might want one from a former colleague or manager in the future. Senior managers and HR staff could read your resignation letter, and you never know when a former colleague could be a useful career ally down the track. You might also like to state that you're willing to wrap up your current work, help with training your replacement, or prepare your team for your departure. Including your personal contact details can help to keep communication lines open and will come in handy if the company needs to contact you in the future. Finish up by saying thanks again and signing off.

Sample resignation letter template

Here's a starting point for you to customise with your own experience:

Dear <Manager's First Name>,

Please accept this letter as formal notice of my resignation from my position as <Job Title> at <Company Name>. My last day of employment will be <Day, Date>.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work in this position for the past <duration of your role>. I have thoroughly enjoyed working here and appreciate all of the opportunities you have given me. However, I have decided it is time for me to move on to my next challenge.

I would like to do anything I can to help with the transition, including wrapping up my responsibilities and training other team members. If I can be of any other assistance during this time, please let me know.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I wish you and <Company Name> all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

<Your full name>

You can download the free resignation template here.

When and how to hand in your resignation letter

If you plan to resign, the first step to making it official is a face-to-face meeting with your manager so you can verbally resign and give notice, offer your reasons for leaving and say thanks. If you

work remotely, you could consider a phone call or video chat.

Have your resignation letter mostly ready before you do this, then you can fine-tune any points before giving it to your manager or HR. It’s an official document so be sure to keep a copy of it for your own records.

Following these steps to writing a simple, positive and professional resignation letter will help you leave on a good note – and set you a big step closer to the next phase in your working life.