



**HANSON CENTER
FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION**
Teaching Engineers to Express Their Expertise

Writing Effective Thank You Letters

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Why write a thank you letter?

Scholarship donors deserve the courtesy of a thank you—a short, clear, but personal letter that makes them feel that their gift has made a difference.

The following slides contain tips for writing letters that do credit to you and the institution that you represent.

Three Paragraph Strategy:

1. Introduction: identifies you as recipient and expresses gratitude
2. Personal snapshot: gives reader a picture of you as a student
3. Conclusion: explains the significance of the gift

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- Begin with a statement of gratitude.
- Explain how the scholarship has helped you personally.
- Do not refer to the dollar amount of scholarship; instead, use the official scholarship name.

Paragraph 2: Personal Snapshot

- Explain your history:
 - Hometown
 - Origins of interest in engineering
 - Why you chose Iowa
- Give the donor a specific sense of your college experience:
 - Major
 - What excites you about your field of study
 - Student organizations, internships/co-ops, or study abroad programs in which you participate or have participated

Paragraph 2: Personal Snapshot continued

- (Optional: Can make this part a new paragraph if desired.)
- Give a sense of what you have done or learned in college so far.
- State your short- and long-term plans:
 - What you hope to accomplish this year
 - Career goals

Paragraph 3: Conclusion

- Restate your thanks to the donor(s).
- Explain the significance of this gift: how this scholarship not only helps you now, but affects your academic future and/or potential career goals.

Format of the Letter

- Business format
 - Date the letter
 - List the recipient's name and address
 - Use a formal salutation (E.g. *Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith*)
 - At the end, use “Sincerely” and leave a space for a signature, then type your name below

August 28, 2014

Dr. Frank and Mrs. Lisa Polk
1111 Main Street
Citysville, Iowa 11111

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Polk:

I would like to take a moment to thank you for your contributions to the John and Agnes Gleeson Scholarship Fund. With rising education costs, support by donors such as yourself provides me with opportunities I may not have otherwise – opportunities I am extremely grateful for.

This fall marks my junior year of electrical engineering studies at the University of Iowa. But from the time I was young, I knew I wanted to be a Hawkeye. I grew up in Des Moines, and Saturday mornings during football season meant a two-hour trek to Iowa City with my father, an Iowa alumnus and diehard football fan. By my senior year of high school, my motivation to attend Iowa shifted from an athletic to an academic focus once I decided to study engineering.

Through effort and dedication, I've made the most of my first two years in Iowa City, building a problem solving foundation that will serve me well for an entire career to come. I've also pushed myself to expand my experiences beyond engineering, taking Russian literature and Chinese history courses and starting a show on the campus radio station. Additionally, I work for the College of Engineering as a student tutor, aiding fellow students in introductory courses.

Two years of hard work paid off this past summer when I had the opportunity to spend twelve weeks living in Fargo, North Dakota, and supporting John Doers's principal electronic design team. My tasks were both challenging and rewarding, exposing me to circuit theory and technology I hadn't yet seen in the classroom. My internship experience gave me a new appreciation of the complexity of industry-standard design and a new passion for electronics.

With two years of electrical engineering study left and an entire career to follow, I believe anything is possible in my professional life. I feel grateful for this sense of opportunity, and, in return, I am motivated to make the most of it. Thank you again for your support of students such as myself.

Sincerely,

Sign your name in pen

Type your name below your signature

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Bring a draft of your letter to the HCTC (2224 SC, in the Student Commons area). Our peer tutors will help you achieve clarity, coherence, and a professional tone.

To sign up for an appointment, select

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<https://www.engineering.uiowa.edu/current-students/academic-support/hanson-center-technical-communication>