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
Visit the Hanson CTC

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 Schedule now on the Hanson Center website

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