

Structure of Direct-Message Letters

Most letters take a **direct approach** to conveying information, putting the purpose and main point in the first paragraph. Once readers understand the purpose, they are able to use supporting information in the body to confirm and expand their understanding of the message.

The bulk of the letter is in the body, which can consist of one paragraph (or as many as it takes to convey your message). Give as many details as necessary, but do not stray from the principle *less is more*. If you include too many details, you make it harder for yourself and more complicated for your reader. (Screening out unnecessary details is a part of editing, not composing.)

The closing in a direct message is usually short; it states action or next steps that you intend to take or that you request your reader to take. The closing also expresses goodwill and opens the door for additional communication.

To simplify the structure, think of the direct message as a diamond, with the top representing a short introduction; the middle, the bulk of the information; and the bottom, a short closing. (See Figure 4.5.)

FIGURE 4.5 | Structure
of Direct-Message Letters

