

# **Preliminary Letter of Inquiry to a Foundation**

## ***(Going Fishing for Money)***

Many foundations will describe how to apply for grants on their web page. Others will simply indicate a willingness to accept a letter of inquiry which introduces your project idea. This homework assignment is aimed at the latter group and may be used to “go fishing” in the foundation world for a potential sponsor. This format might also help you describe your idea to others.

**HOMEWORK:** Write a one-page preliminary letter of inquiry to a foundation. This letter will use the 3-paragraph framework outlined below:

***Introduction*** (what) – an opening statement about why you are writing and briefly describing your “big hairy audacious idea.”

***So what*** – the rationale for your project (why they should fund you). It is not necessary to mention how much money you desire yet.

***Now what*** - a brief statement indicating a desire to have a follow-up conversation.

In addition, you should use a standard business format for correspondence (as outlined on the attached page).

You are writing to:

### **The Sustainable Money Bags Foundation**

The *Sustainable Money Bags Foundation* is a family foundation. The President, Mrs. Amanda DoGooder, likes to support young people and her only requirement is that you present a “big hairy audacious idea” that will help your local community become more sustainable. She likes food and farming related projects but will consider other ideas. She hates reading long proposals and will toss your letter out if it is longer than one page.

The foundation receives hundreds of letters each year and her secretary passes a few along to Mrs. DoGooder for consideration. If she likes your idea and your presentation, she will pay your travel costs to visit her in Asheville, NC to talk about your idea

Your name  
Your address  
Your organization (if any)  
Your phone number  
Your email address  
February 7, 2013

← (leave a minimum of 1 blank line) →  
President DoGooder  
Sustainable Money Bags Foundation  
1234 Walkabout Avenue  
Asheville, NC 23555

← (one blank line between inside address & greeting) →  
RE: Seeking your support ← (optional regards line used to indicate subject of letter) →  
← (one blank line between inside address & greeting) →

Dear President DoGooder, (greeting uses title and last name)  
← (one blank line between inside greeting & 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph) →

This sample letter presents an appropriate format for business correspondence. In a business letter, the first paragraph is designed to advise the reader of the contents of the letter and to grab the attention of the reader. Except for the last paragraph, all paragraphs in a business letter should have a minimum of three sentences. Each sentence should provide details and build from the topic sentence.

← (one blank line between paragraphs) →  
A business letter should have a minimum of three paragraphs, but usually no more than four paragraphs. The second paragraph enhances the detail of the letter and presents the factual information. In your letter, be sure you have correct placement of the date and that you leave one blank line between paragraphs. (one blank line between paragraphs)

The final paragraph is the summary and confirmation of the other parts of the letter and is frequently used to ask for action on the part of the reader. The third paragraph could be two or three sentences.

← (one blank line between last paragraph & salutation) →  
Sincerely yours,  
(leave 3-4 blank lines for signature)

Author O. Letter  
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**Note:** this is the full block style. You may also use a modified block style if you prefer with address and salutation on the left side of page. For help see:

<http://www.savvy-business-correspondence.com/FormatofBusinessLetters.html>