Business Letter Assessment Answer Key

1. B
Explanation: The informal, personal style of this letter makes certain errors acceptable. Sometimes, grammatical correctness can introduce unwanted awkwardness or stiffness, which can disrupt casual qualities that make messages feel more personal.

2. C
Explanation: Although this is a formal business letter, the subject matter and client history (the holiday season, being a “Legacy” client, returning “year after year”) warrants a more personal approach.

3. B
Explanation: To declare that the message has been sent “Sincerely” or “Cordially” is unnecessary because the content of the letter already expresses those sentiments. “Thank You” is problematic because it would not be clear what the recipient is being thanked for. “As Always” is similarly vague and imprecise. “Yours Truly” is the best choice because it addresses the recipient again (“Yours”) and is recognized as being a more personal rather than formal closing statement. This approach would not ordinarily be suitable in a business letter, but its context justifies a personal approach and thus it should be used consistently throughout.

4. D
Explanation: The sender’s title is optional, so you should consider its use with respect to the context and tone of the message. As noted in the explanations for questions #1 and #2, this letter adopts a more personal approach than a typical business letter; therefore, it is consistent to omit the sender’s title. Moreover, it is safe to assume that the recipient, having visited the lodge “year after year,” recognizes the name as that of the owner/manager.

5. C
Explanation: This letter contains many references to the feelings of the sender and also uses the emotional aspects of the holiday season to communicate goodwill. Its underlying goal is to build on the client relationship and generate repeat sales, but overtly its focus is on feelings and emotions.

6. A
Explanation: The phrase “As the holiday season approaches...” introduces the context of the letter, that is, the circumstances which led to and/or justify its message.

7. B
Explanation: The word “good” is repeated in this passage, reinforcing one of the most important, albeit unstated, messages behind this letter: that the lodge, its
staff, and its owner/manager are all—like the holidays, friends, and family—associated with "good" things in the recipient's life.

Explanation: The technique used is repetition. Each of these words (or a form of them) are used at least twice in this letter: "year" four times, "blessing" three times, "home," "good," "friends," and "special" two times each. What is important to recognize is how the repetition of words like these also serves to infer positive qualities that characterize the relationship between this business and its client. The message, for example, is that the relationship is enduring, exceptional, or personal.

9. 1.) "As . . . we are/as . . . we are"
   2.) "forward, friends, family"
   3.) 
      "[we are] . . . thinking, [we are] . . . hoping"
Explanation: Parallelism is most closely associated with grammatical structure, such as using the same verbal form (#3). However, parallelism can also be developed by wording phrases similarly (#1) or by using literary devices based on repetition: #1 is anaphora, #2 is alliteration, and #3 is rhyme. The key to effective parallelism is the repetition of sounds or structures that tie content together.

10. It repeats 1) the name of the lodge and 2) (a form of) the word “blessing” in the first and last paragraphs.
Explanation: While it is only logical for this letter to mention the lodge, repeat references to the lodge are not really necessary in the close, except as doing so ties the goodwill expressed in the letter back to the experiences the client had at the lodge. Similarly, “blessing” is a somewhat religious word, which ties in well with Christmas as a religious holiday. However, using the word “blessing” in the closing as well as in the opening also drives home the more subtle point that the business values the client (i.e., is “blessed” by having the individual as a client) and, hopefully, the client also values the business (and so will plan to revisit it). These tactics make sense given the letter’s relationship-building and repeat-business goals.

11. D
Explanation: There is no need to repeat contact information if it is already present, regardless of where it is located.

12: No
Explanation: Simple business letters should contain no more than three paragraphs. Also, too many short paragraphs produce choppy content that lacks the flow and coherence of a good letter.

13: C
Explanation: The textbook points out that it is the body of the letter—paragraph two in this case—which should articulate the letter’s message. As a result,
options A and E are technically incorrect. Meanwhile, if B were the central message, its vagueness would make it a very weak one. C and D are both good, explicit messages, but as a central message, D does not reflect the altruistic spirit in which the letter was written.