



Forms of address

The forms you are most likely to need for a VIP guest, on one page

CONFIRM

The guest's office decides. Ask how the guest prefers to be addressed, in writing and in speech, by the host and by the staff.

FIRST, THEN AFTER

Use the full form on first address and the short form afterwards: "Your Majesty", then "Sir".

WHEN IN DOUBT

"Sir" or "Madam". Never first names unless invited. Spouses do not share "Excellency".

PERSON	WRITE (ENVELOPE)	SAY FIRST	THEN
THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY			
The King; the Queen	His Majesty The King; Her Majesty The Queen	Your Majesty	Sir; Ma'am (as in jam)
Prince, princess, royal duke or duchess	His / Her Royal Highness The Prince of Wales	Your Royal Highness	Sir; Ma'am
BRITISH TITLES			
Duke; duchess	His / Her Grace the Duke / Duchess of [X]	Duke; Duchess (staff: Your Grace)	Duke; Duchess
Marquess, earl, viscount, baron	The Marquess of [X]; the Earl of [X]; the Viscount [X]; the Lord [X]	Lord [X]	Lord [X]
Their wives; a baroness	The Marchioness / Countess of [X]; the Viscountess [X]; the Lady / Baroness [X]	Lady [X]	Lady [X]
Baronet; knight; dame	Sir [Name] Bt; Sir [Name] KBE; Dame [Name] DBE	Sir John; Dame Mary	Sir John; Dame Mary
DIPLOMATS			
Ambassador, high commissioner, nuncio	His / Her Excellency [Name], Ambassador of [Country]	Your Excellency	Ambassador
United States ambassador	The Honorable [Name], Ambassador of the United States	Mr / Madam Ambassador	Ambassador [Surname]
ITALY			
Presidente della Repubblica	Al Signor Presidente della Repubblica	Signor Presidente	Presidente
Ministro	All'On. [Name], Ministro di [X]	Signor Ministro / Signora Ministra	Ministro
Ambasciatore; Prefetto	A Sua Eccellenza [Name]	Eccellenza	Ambasciatore; Prefetto
FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, SPAIN			
Président; ministre	Monsieur le Président de la République; Madame la Ministre	Monsieur le Président; Madame la Ministre	the same
Federal Councillor (CH)	Herr Bundesrat / Frau Bundesrätin [Name]; Monsieur le Conseiller fédéral	Herr Bundesrat; Monsieur le Conseiller fédéral	the same
King, Queen of Spain	Su Majestad el Rey; Su Majestad la Reina	Majestad	Señor; Señora
THE HOLY SEE AND THE CLERGY			
The Pope	His Holiness Pope [Name]	Your Holiness	Holy Father
Cardinal	His Eminence [First name] Cardinal [Surname]	Your Eminence (IT: Eminenza)	Eminence
Archbishop; bishop	The Most Reverend [Name], Archbishop / Bishop of [X]	Your Excellency (GB: Your Grace / My Lord)	Archbishop; Bishop
Monsignor; priest	The Reverend Monsignor [Name]; the Reverend [Name]	Monsignor; Father	Monsignor; Father
UNITED STATES AND THE GULF			
The President	The President	Mr / Madam President	Mr / Madam President
Governor	The Honorable [Name], Governor of [State]	Governor [Surname]	Governor
Gulf rulers	His Majesty King [Name]; His Highness Sheikh [Name], as the office writes it	Your Majesty; Your Highness	the same
Member of a ruling family	Sheikh / Sheikha [Name]	Sheikh / Sheikha [First name]	the same, never the family name alone

[X] is the title or place, [Name] the full name. Forms checked in October 2026 against the Royal Household, the UK Parliament, Debrett's, the US State Department's Foreign Service Institute, the Spanish official gazette and the Swiss federal administration, among others; the full tables, sources and the forms we could not verify are in *The Protocol Book*. Gulf styles vary between rulers: always take them from the office.