

onlinebrief24

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Abstract

`onlinebrief24` is a LaTeX class for DIN 5008 type-B business letters calibrated for use with [onlinebrief24.de](https://www.onlinebrief24.de). It provides a plain letter layout, a modern variant with header and footer, an optional DIN-style information block, and a technical guides mode for layout inspection. [onlinebrief24.de](https://www.onlinebrief24.de) is a hybrid mail service for business customers: documents are submitted digitally, and the service handles printing, enveloping, franking, and postal delivery.

1 Status

The class is verified with pdfLaTeX, XeLaTeX, and LuaLaTeX. The supported and hardened use case is one letter per document. The package is aimed at German business letters and loads `babel` with `german` by default (configurable via the `lang=` class option).

2 Installation

Install via your TeX distribution's package manager:

```
tlmgr install onlinebrief24
```

Then load the class in your document:

```
\documentclass{onlinebrief24}
```

3 Engine Support

- pdfLaTeX: verified
- XeLaTeX: verified
- LuaLaTeX: verified

With pdfLaTeX the class uses `fontenc` and `tgheros` (TeX Gyre Heros). With XeLaTeX and LuaLaTeX it uses `fontspec`; Arial is preferred if installed, otherwise it falls back to TeX Gyre Heros.

The `modern` style additionally loads `sourcesanspro` and `fontawesome5` (for footer icons). Both packages are part of `texlive-fonts-extra`.

4 Minimal Example

```
\documentclass[basic,lang=english]{onlinebrief24}

\setreturnaddress{Jane Smith, 12 Oak Street, Bristol BS1 4DJ}
\setrecipient{
  Example Services Ltd. \\
  Mr. John Smith \\
  24 Market Road \\
  London SW1A 1AA
}
\setsubject{Subject}
\setplace{Bristol}
\setdate{\today}

\begin{document}
\begin{letter}{}
\opening{Dear Mr. Smith,}

This is a sample letter.

\closing{Kind regards}
\end{letter}
\end{document}
```

5 Options

Option	Meaning
<i>basic</i>	Plain layout without header and footer.
<i>modern</i>	Modern layout with header, footer, and accent color.
<i>infoblock</i>	Show a DIN-style information block in the upper-right header area. Only fields that are set are rendered.
<i>guides</i>	Technical overlay mode for checking the calibrated layout zones, fold marks, and text start area. This mode is for inspection, not final production output.
<i>footercenter</i>	Center the footer in modern mode.
<i>blue</i> , <i>orange</i> , <i>green</i> , <i>red</i> , <i>purple</i> , <i>grey</i> , <i>burgundy</i> , <i>black</i>	Accent-color schemes for modern mode.
<i>lang=name</i>	Document language passed to <i>babel</i> (default: <i>german</i>). Any valid <i>babel</i> language name is accepted. The <i>infoblock</i> labels are localized for <i>german</i> , <i>english</i> , <i>french</i> , <i>spanish</i> , <i>italian</i> , <i>dutch</i> , and <i>polish</i> .

6 Main Commands

Command	Purpose
<code>\setreturnaddress{...}</code>	Mandatory one-line sender line for the address window.

Command	Purpose
<code>\setrecipient{...}</code>	Recipient block for the address window. Mandatory unless it is passed via <code>\begin{letter}{...}</code> .
<code>\setsubject{...}</code>	Subject line above the opening.
<code>\setdate{...}</code>	Date, defaulting to <code>\today</code> .
<code>\setplace{...}</code>	Place printed before the date.
<code>\encl{...}</code>	Enclosures listed below the closing; standard KOMA-Script command.
<code>\setyourref{...}</code>	Information-block field for the recipient's reference.
<code>\setyourmessage{...}</code>	Information-block field for the recipient's dated message.
<code>\setourref{...}</code>	Information-block field for your own reference.
<code>\setourmessage{...}</code>	Information-block field for your own dated message.
<code>\setcontactname{...}</code>	Information-block contact name.
<code>\setcontactphone{...}</code>	Information-block contact phone number.
<code>\setcontactfax{...}</code>	Information-block contact fax number.
<code>\setcontactemail{...}</code>	Information-block contact email address.
<code>\setfromfirstname{...}</code>	Modern-mode first name for the header.
<code>\setfromlastname{...}</code>	Modern-mode last name for the header.
<code>\setfromaddress{...}</code>	Modern-mode address line in the header.
<code>\setfromlandline{...}</code>	Optional modern-mode footer field.
<code>\setfromphone{...}</code>	Optional modern-mode footer field.
<code>\setfromemail{...}</code>	Optional modern-mode footer field.
<code>\setfromweb{...}</code>	Optional modern-mode footer field.
<code>\setfromlinkedin{...}</code>	Optional modern-mode footer field.
<code>\setfromname{...}</code>	Legacy fallback if first and last name are not split.
<hr/> <i>Extensibility</i> <hr/>	
<code>\addfooteritem {icon}{text}</code>	Append a custom item to the modern-mode footer. The icon is a <code>fontawesome5</code> command. Multiple calls append in order.
<code>\addinfoblockrow {label}{value}</code>	Append a custom row to the DIN-style information block. Empty values are silently omitted.
<hr/> <i>Layout tuning</i> <hr/>	
<code>\setinfoblocktopoffset{dim}</code>	Vertical offset from the page top to the information block (default: 50mm).
<code>\setinfoblockrightedge{dim}</code>	Horizontal distance from the left page edge to the block's right edge (default: 200mm).
<code>\setinfoblockcolwidths {label}{sep}{value}</code>	Column widths for the information-block tabular (defaults: 30mm, 2mm, 43mm).

7 Validation and Layout Guarantees

The class validates the mandatory address-window fields when a letter starts. Compilation stops with a clear error if the return address is missing, the recipient is missing, or the return address is too long for the single-line sender zone.

If the `infoblock` option is enabled, the information block is rendered independently from the body text flow. This keeps the text start stable while showing only the fields that are actually set.

For multipage letters, the address-window overlay, fold marks, and optional modern header and footer are restricted to page 1. Continuation pages start near the normal top margin instead of inheriting the first-page window offset.

8 Calibration

The layout is calibrated against the practical preview behavior of onlinebrief24.de, not only against the nominal measurement graphic. In practice, the class uses effective window zones of 50–52 mm, 52–72 mm, and 72–92 mm to match the real preview more closely.

9 Guides Mode

The `guides` option enables a technical overlay that visualises all DIN 5008 layout zones, fold marks, and the text-start line directly in the PDF. It is intended for calibration and debugging, not for final output.

```
\documentclass[guides]{onlinebrief24}
```

The overlay draws:

- **Zone 1** (blue, 50–52 mm from top): the 2 mm sender line.
- **Zone 2** (red, 52–72 mm from top): reserved area for postal codes and franking marks.
- **Zone 3** (green, 72–92 mm from top): the recipient address block.
- Fold-mark annotations at 105 mm and 205 mm from the top, matching the two fold positions for a DIN C6/5 window envelope.
- A dashed text-start line at 110 mm and a vertical text-alignment guide at the 25 mm left margin.

The `guides` option can be combined with `basic` or `modern`; remove it before submitting to the print service.

10 Extensibility

10.1 Custom footer items (modern style)

In modern mode the footer can be extended with additional contact fields using `\addfooteritem`:

```
\documentclass[modern]{onlinebrief24}
\addfooteritem{\faGithub}{github.com/example}
\addfooteritem{\faXTwitter}{@example}
```

Each item requires a `fontawesome5` icon command and a text label. Items are appended after the standard footer fields (landline, mobile, email, web, LinkedIn) and separated by the standard vertical-bar separator. The macro must be called in the preamble.

10.2 Custom infoblock rows (infoblock option)

Additional rows can be appended to the DIN-style information block:

```
\documentclass[infoblock]{onlinebrief24}
\addinfoblockrow{Department}{Engineering}
\addinfoblockrow{Project}{OB24-2026}
```

Custom rows follow the same column widths and typography as the built-in rows. Empty values are silently omitted, consistent with the built-in row behaviour.

10.3 Information block layout tuning

The position and column widths of the information block can be adjusted without editing the class file:

```
\setinfoblocktopoffset{55mm}           % vertical offset from page top
\setinfoblockrightedge{195mm}         % right edge from left page margin
\setinfoblockcolwidths{28mm}{2mm}{45mm} % label / gap / value widths
```

These macros must be called in the preamble after `\documentclass`. The defaults match the DIN 5008 Form B reference geometry.

11 Examples

The package ships with two focused example documents covering:

- the basic layout with the DIN-style information block
- the modern layout with the DIN-style information block

Both bundled example documents use English sample data so the generated PDFs double as immediately readable CTAN previews.

12 License and Project Status

This package is distributed under the LaTeX Project Public License (LPPL) 1.3c. It is a community project and has no official affiliation with letterei.de Postdienste GmbH. The trademark holders have formally authorized the maintainer to use the onlinebrief24.de mark in connection with this LaTeX class.