

THE JOB APPLICATION LETTER

A job application letter is usually written in response to a specific job advertisement. Its purpose is to convince an employer to read your resume and call you for an interview. The letter shows an employer how your training and experience meet the requirements of a particular position. If prepared well, it can create many employment opportunities for you.

COMPONENTS

The job application letter contains five basic sections: The **heading, inside address, salutation, body, and closing.**

The **heading** includes your complete home address and the date.

The **inside address** is the address to which the letter will be sent. **Always address your letter to a specific individual with his or her correct title.** In most cases, the job advertisement will list a contact person, along with the appropriate title. If a person's name is the only information given, call the company and ask what the person's title is. If no name is listed, call and ask for the name of the department head or personnel director. **MAKE SURE YOU SPELL ALL NAMES AND TITLES CORRECTLY.**

For the **salutation**, use only the name of the contact person. If you are responding to an ad giving only a post office box number, list the information given as the inside address, skip the salutation, and go on to the body of your letter.

The **body** is the most important section of the letter. Before you begin writing this section, analyze the job ad closely and identify the specific qualifications the position requires. Compile a list of the training and/or experience you have had which fulfills these job requirements. Group your strongest qualifications into one or two general topics (i.e., experience, personal interests, education, etc.) which best demonstrate your suitability for this job.

The body usually consists of four paragraphs. In the first paragraph, identify the job you are applying for and your source of information about the job (i.e., newspaper, placement agency, company newsletter, campus placement office, etc.). In addition, introduce your general topics.

In the second paragraph, explain why you are suited for the job by expanding on your topics. Briefly describe your training and experience, focusing on your strongest qualifications. Be sure to give specific, concrete details about your knowledge of equipment, languages, software, office procedures, etc. In addition, refer the reader to your enclosed resume.

In the third paragraph, connect yourself to the employer. Explain why you want to work for this particular company and what you can do for it.

In the final paragraph, politely state that you would appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed. Include a phone number or numbers where the interviewer can reach you or leave a message for you. Also thank the reader for his or her time and consideration.

In general, use phrases such as *Sincerely* or *Sincerely yours* for the **closing**. Space down four lines and type your full name. If you are enclosing material with you application letter, space down two more lines. Type *Enc.:* and briefly state what you are enclosing (i.e., resume).

GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

Make sure your letter is formal and professional, yet warm, positive, and sincere. Follow the standard writing rules of being concise, varying sentence structure, using active verbs, and avoiding jargon and slang. Remember to include only information which will be useful to the employer. Do not discuss hobbies, reasons for leaving past employers, or training and experience not related to the position your are seeking. Above all, focus your letter on the needs of the employer and emphasize the ways in which **you** can help **him**.

FORMAT

Limit your letter to one page in length. Single space your information, using double spacing between sections and paragraphs. For the format, you may use a block style, in which all sections and paragraphs begin at the left margin, or a modified block style, in which the inside address, salutation, and body start at the left margin, the heading and closing begin at the center of the page, and paragraphs may be indented.

PRINTING

Type your letter on white or off-white, quality stationery (usually 8 ½" x 11" bond). **DO NOT USE STATIONERY WHICH BELONGS TO YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER. Make sure your final copy is neat, clean, and error-free.** (Note: Use the same color and type of stationery for your letter, resume, and envelope.)