



Constructing Letters of Application



Writing a letter of application is an essential step in applying for a job; after all, a prospective employer gets a first impression of you from your letter of application. This letter should do more than simply repeat information that can be found in your résumé. Your letter of application provides you with an opportunity to appear articulate, interesting, and professional. Make the most of it.

Address your letter to a specific person. If you are responding to an advertisement that mentions a department without giving a name, call the company and find out who will be doing the screening and how that person spells his or her name. If you cannot obtain a specific name, use an appropriate title such as *Human Resource Director* or *To Whom It May Concern*. You can assume that the recipient will be screening many applications, so try to keep your letter to one page.

In your opening paragraph, identify the position you are applying for, explain how you learned about it, and - in a single sentence - state why you believe you are qualified to fill it. In the paragraphs that follow, describe the experience and abilities that qualify you for the job. If your experience is extensive, establish that fact and then focus on how you excelled in one or two specific situations. Mention that you are enclosing a résumé, but do not summarize it. Your goal is to get a busy person, who will not want to read the same information twice, to look at your résumé.

In addition to stating your qualifications, your letter of application can also indicate why you are interested in working for the company or organization to which you are applying. Demonstrating that you already know something about it will help you appear to be a serious candidate. Extensive information on most companies is available in their annual reports. You can also find information by searching the Web.

In your closing paragraph, make a direct request for an interview. Be sure to specify how and where you can be reached.