

APPLICATION LETTER

The application (or covering) letter makes specific claims about your background, abilities, education, etc. that your resume will substantiate. Designed to get you an interview, it also draws attention to circumstances which will enhance the data presented in the resume. For example, a covering letter would note that you worked 20 hours per week to put yourself through school and all the while maintained a B+ grade point average, in order to impress your prospective employer with your initiative, ambition and sense of responsibility—all of which would not be apparent from reading your resume.

Opening Section—attention-getter (1-2 lines with core SMR detail as always)

1. Begin focused, concise and businesslike. Usually choose one or two of the following:
 - Summary: perhaps two or three outstanding qualifications.
 - Name: an individual or office the reader is familiar with or the publication in which the reader's ad appeared.
 - Question: for reader benefit.
 - News item: related to employer.
 - Other relevant, reader-oriented statement.
2. Name the specific job or field of interest.

Middle Section—supporting detail (2 or 3 paragraphs)

1. Discuss your qualifications from a reader benefit or reader interest viewpoint as they relate to the job being applied for. Clearly link each of the following to the job requirements and the needs/wants of the prospective employer:
 - Education and training
 - Work experience
 - Significant personal attitudes, interests and/or qualities
2. Make no more than one reference to your resume (usually late in the second last paragraph, just before the action closing).

Action Closing Section (1-2 lines with core RDC detail)

1. Request an interview, at the reader's convenience, with specific detail regarding when you will be available.
2. Provide appropriate **RDC** detail:
 - Telephone or fax number.
 - Hours you can be reached.
 - Reply envelope or card enclosed only rarely. Consider your reader!
 - Be courteous but don't "suck-up-to" the prospective employer.

In effect, you are selling yourself to the company or organization—showing (not just telling) how that employer will benefit from hiring you. Take time to investigate the employer to determine precisely what he/she/it needs and wants in an employee. In other words, do a thorough MAP analysis of the company and the position requirements, and then present the evidence to back your claims that clearly show you are ideally qualified for the position.

Job Interview Basics

Before

1. Find out as much as you can about the organization: basis for intelligent questions about products, services, problems, competition, etc.
2. Dress appropriately.
3. Handle nervousness as an asset— stimulates vitality/enthusiasm.
4. Take extra copies of your resume/letters of recommendation.
5. Find out in advance whether you will need to fill out forms and/or take tests: be prepared with information.
6. Anticipate questions: relate to those aspects of your background you wish to stress and they will want to explore given the job description.
7. Be positive: you are looking for a satisfying position and the organization wants to find a valuable employee. Assume it will be you, and set about convincing the interviewers that you are their choice.

DURING

1. Arrive alone.
2. Be prompt but not too early: don't give an impression of over eagerness, and/or put pressure on the interview team.
3. Create a good first impression: smile, firm handshake, good eye contact, self-introduction.
4. Listen intelligently and alertly: let the interviewer lead the conversation; don't interrupt.
5. Be alert—bearing, posture, voice.
6. Express confidence in yourself.
7. Do not mention salary first or even early in process.
8. Ask specific questions: demonstrate your interest, background knowledge, enthusiasm; get valuable information you need to make your decision whether to accept if a position is offered.

AFTER

1. Write a follow-up letter: thank you for interview & reminder of special qualifications.
2. Evaluate yourself: in light of the interview, what did you discover about yourself--positive & negative; what specifically can you do to enhance positive/correct negative for next time.

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

When you wish to emphasize employment stability, clear progression towards a goal, a pattern of increasing responsibility, etc., use the standard Chronological Resume format. Use white space and clean-cut columns for visual impact: you have only 10-15 seconds initially to earn a closer look! Whether you place your work experience or your education first depends entirely upon which is the stronger at the time of the application.

*The key element here is specific proof of those abilities/skills and that's best done with short, descriptive phrases identifying what you have done (and where.) Don't simply make claims: support them with evidence. Remember to tailor each resume for each prospective employer, emphasizing those elements in each section most likely to attract each's attention: **no mass mailings if you want maximum impact!***

Your name, address, telephone number
(flexible positioning--just be professional about its appearance)

Objective

Immediate and long term career goals, stated in terms emphasizing employer benefit

Summary of basic qualifications (optional)

Education

(dates) Advanced schooling and training: school names, locations, dates attended, degrees and certificates (include high school if significant)

start with most recent Major, significant pertinent courses (required or elective), academic honors, averages; special skills; speeches, research, reports

Work Experience

(dates) Employer names, locations; dates (month year to month year): titles and positions held; duties; supervisors (or number supervised); accomplishments

start with most recent Emphasize accomplishments & *demonstrated* skills & abilities

Activities, Achievements, Awards

School and community memberships, offices held, honors, publications; travel, languages, self support, other.

Show balance of individual and teamwork activities.

Establish link to position applied for.

Other Specific Categories

Specific skills, interests, relevant hobbies, etc.

Directly related to position applied for.

References

Mentioned here but usually held until interview with promise to provide if requested. Briefed on what you are claiming about yourself and abilities.

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

When you have worked at a variety of jobs which have contributed to a body of marketable skills, the Functional Resume format emphasizes those skills while downplaying the fact that you have jumped around a number of jobs. The key element here is specific proof of those abilities/skills and that's best done with short, descriptive phrases identifying what you have done (and where.) Don't simply make claims: support them with evidence.

Your name, address, telephone number
(flexible positioning--just be professional about its appearance)

Objective

Immediate and long term career goals, stated in terms emphasizing employer benefit.

Summary of demonstrated skills/abilities (optional)

Skill 1 (provide a descriptive heading for it here)

Very specific, short descriptions of *proven* skills and achievements

Begin with action verbs (developed/created/produced), be specific and state in terms that highlight what the employer is looking for.

Skill 2 (etc.)

- Repeat this process for each skill in which you have proven ability
- State each in terms of how it will benefit your prospective employer.

Education (downplay dates by embedding in body of information)

- Otherwise same as *chronological* (see text 167)

Work History (again, downplay dates by embedding in body of information)

- Employer names, locations; dates (month year to month year): titles and positions held; duties; supervisors (or number supervised); accomplishments
- Volunteer work, research, tutoring, publications

Activities, Achievements, Awards (direct bearing on position)

- School and community memberships, offices held, honors, publications; travel, languages, self support, other.

Other Specific Categories (direct bearing on position)

References (briefed on what you are claiming about yourself and abilities)

- Mentioned here but usually held until interview with promise to provide if requested.