

# WRITING AN APPLICATION LETTER

The letter of application is essentially a sales letter. In it, you are trying to sell your services and, in most cases, you will be competing with other applicants. Your immediate objective is to have your letter read by someone in the organization who has authority to screen job applicants; your ultimate goal is to obtain an interview. Therefore, your letter must do three things: catch your reader's attention favorably, convince your reader that you are qualified for the position, and request an interview. Try to accomplish the three objectives in a one-page letter.

Send the letter of application to the organization to which you are applying. Include in the letter any information that is pertinent to the particular job for which you are applying. Your reader should be able to learn immediately what the purpose of your letter is—you should not waste his or her time with inappropriate formalities or unnecessary details. You should state clearly that you are looking for a job with the organization. It may be a specific job that was advertised or that you learned about from another source. Or, you may have heard that the company has the kind of position you seek and are writing to inquire whether it has any openings for a candidate with your background. Be sure to tell your reader why you feel you are qualified for the job and that you will be available for an interview.

The following is a list of the information you should provide in your letter of application:

1. If you are applying for a specific job, identify the job by title and state how you heard about it. If you are not applying for a specific job, explain that you are seeking a particular kind of job and are writing to inquire whether the organization has any openings for such a job.
2. List your qualifications for the job in summary form. If you are still a student or are a recent graduate and have had little work experience, stress your education; if you have been employed in a related field, and emphasize your work background. Then refer the reader to the résumé for other important details.
3. State where you can be reached and when you will be available for an interview.

The start of a letter of application is crucial in catching your reader's attention. One way to begin your letter is to state your employment objective and your interest in fulfilling your goal within the organization to which you are writing.

I am looking for a responsible position in an engineering department in which I may use my training in computer sciences to solve engineering-related problems. I would be interested in exploring the possibility of obtaining such a position within your firm.

Or, you could begin the letter of application by naming someone you have met from the organization who has told you about a job (you may have met such a person at a conference or convention, through a friend, and so on) and then briefly mentioning your qualifications. This kind of approach has the advantage of establishing the fact that an employee evidently feels that you may be qualified for the job.

During the recent NOMAD convention in Washington, a member of your sales staff, Mr. Dale Jarrett, informed me of a possible opening for a manager in your Dealer Sales Division. My extensive background in the office machine industry, I believe, makes me highly qualified for the position.

Once you have grabbed your reader's attention with an effective opener, your aim is to convince your reader that you are a highly qualified candidate for the position. Expand upon the qualifications you mentioned in the opening and present any additional qualifications that might be particularly appropriate for the specific job. Think carefully about the requirements of the job and then stress those aspects of your background that would interest a prospective employer most. Highlight any related experience listed in your résumé that is especially pertinent to the job for which you are applying. If you are applying for a sales job, for example, indicate that other positions you have held have taught you how to present a product line effectively. If you are applying for a job as an office manager, indicate any supervisory experience you have had.

Close your letter with a direct request for an interview. If the prospective employer is located near you, you can request that the recipient of your letter either send you a note or call you to set up an appointment. If considerable expense would be required for an interview, let the prospective employer bring up the subject of an interview.

Be sure to type the letter, and make it error free and attractive.

Following are three sample letters of application. One is by a recent college graduate; the second is by a university student who is about to graduate; and the third is by someone who has had many years of work experience.

The opening paragraph of the first letter states that the applicant read in a local newspaper about the company's plan to build a new plant. Since the writer is not applying for a specific job opening, he explains what sort of position he is looking for. The second paragraph contains a brief description of the writer's qualifications for the job. In the last paragraph, he indicates where he can be reached to arrange for an interview.

In the second sample letter of application, the writer does not specify where she learned of the opening because she does not know whether a position is actually available. Instead, because she is about to graduate, she uses the first paragraph to summarize her educational qualifications. She includes a description, in paragraph 2, of related work experience. In the last paragraph she indicates where she can be reached to set up an interview.

The third sample letter opens with an indication of where the writer learned of the job vacancy. The second paragraph summarizes the candidate's qualifications for the job. The final paragraph asks for an interview and specifies where the writer can be reached.

4 Washington Boulevard  
Detroit, MI 48214  
June 14, 1999

Personnel Manager  
Loudons, Inc.  
4619 Drove Lane  
Gary, IN 46409

Dear Sir or Madam :

The Detroit Free Press recently reported that Loudons is constructing a new assembly plant near Gary. I would like to apply for a position as a foreman in the new plant.

I am a recent graduate of Midlands Community College in Detroit, with an Associates Degree in Industrial Engineering. In addition, I have worked for the past three years on a part-time basis while attending Midlands and now on a full-time schedule at Michigan Industries, Inc., as a special-assignment worker. My duties required me to work closely with the plant foreman, general foreman, and plant supervisors and gave me extensive exposure to quality-control techniques and manufacturing processes. Details of my education and work experience are contained in the enclosed résumé.

I will be happy to meet with you at your convenience and provide any additional information you may need. You can reach me either at my home address or at (313) 233-6312 during regular business hours.

Sincerely,

James L. Nardinski

2701 Wyoming Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30307  
May 29, 1999

Ms. Laura Goldman  
Chief Engineer  
Action, INC.  
80 Roseville Road  
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Ms. Goldman:

I am looking for a responsible position in an engineering department in which I may use my training in computer sciences to solve engineering problems. I would be interested in exploring the possibility of obtaining such a position within your firm.

I expect to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology in June, when I will have completed the Computer Systems Engineering program of the Engineering Department. Since September 1998, I have been participating, through the university, in the Professional Training Program at Computer Systems International in Atlanta. In the program I was assigned on a rotating basis to several staff sections in apprentice positions. Most recently I have been assigned as Programmer Trainee in the Engineering Department and have gained a great deal of experience in computer applications. Details of the academic courses I have taken are contained in the enclosed résumé.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. I can be contacted at my office phone (415) 866-7000, ext. 312, or at my home number (415) 256-6320.

Sincerely yours,

Victoria T. Fromme

522 Beethoven Drive  
Roanoke, Virginia 24017  
November 15, 1999

Miss Cecilia Smathers  
Vice-President, Dealer Sales  
Hamilton Office Machines, Inc.  
6194 Main Street  
Hampton, Virginia 23661

Dear Miss Smathers:

During the recent NOMAD convention in Washington, a member of your sales staff, Mr. Dale Jarrett, informed me of a possible opening for a Manager in your Dealer Sales Division. My extensive background in the office machine industry, I believe, makes me highly qualified for the position.

I was with Technology, Inc., Dealer Division from its formation in 1969 to its phase-out last year. During this period, I was involved in all areas of dealer sales, both within Technology Inc., and through personal contact with a number of independent dealers. Between 1967 and 1969, I served as Assistant to the Dealer Sales Manager as a Special Representative. My education and work experience are contained in the enclosed résumé.

May I have an appointment for an interview with you to discuss my qualifications in detail? Please write to me at my home or telephone me at (703) 449-6743 any weekday.

Sincerely,

Gregory Mingukakis

Enclosure: Résumé