

Communication/ s

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Weeks 6-7 – Formal Writing I – Letters of application (layout/ format, suggestions, examples)

1. Layout/ format

Four important paragraphs

Think of the letter as having four distinct parts:

- paragraph 1 – the opening: the reason why you are writing;
- paragraph 2 – stating your case, the reasons why you are the right person for the job;
- paragraph 3 – your reasons for applying for this job with this company;
- paragraph 4 – the closing, ending on a positive note.

Paragraph 1

Use your opening paragraph to say why you're writing. If you're replying to an advertised vacancy, include:

- the title of the job you're applying for and any reference number given in the ad;
- where you saw the advertisement or how you heard about the job.

Examples

- Ref: AA3 Divisional Manager
I would like to apply for the above post as advertised in this month's issue of *Financial Report*. I believe I have the background and experience to make a significant contribution to XYZ Ltd in this position.
- I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Manager as advertised in today's *Anytown Mercury*. I have extensive experience of sales and marketing and believe I have the credentials necessary for the job.
- I read on your company website about your need for a Facilities Manager. I am very interested in the position and believe that I have the skills and experience that would be of use...
- I read with interest on the current *Engineering Today* website about your new contract to manufacture XYZ engineering systems. My recent experience in this field could be of interest to you...

Paragraph 2

This section is the persuasive part of the letter where you say why you are right for the job and what you can contribute to the company. You are aiming to arouse the reader's interest sufficiently for them to take time to study your CV rather than just glance through it.

Highlight your most important skills, experience and achievements. If this is a speculative letter, this is also the place to outline the sort of job you're interested in.

Unless this section is very brief, splitting it into two or three shorter paragraphs will make it easier to read. Use bullet points to summarise information where appropriate – anything that makes the key points stand out and easy to read.

Examples

- I have experience of large-scale software changeover, having restructured the finance department during that time. The problems I've handled effectively include:
 - maintaining turnaround rate during departmental change;
 - designing effective training manuals;
 - taking staff successfully through the change process.

- I have been Office Manager at ABC Ltd for two years. Among the skills that will be of most interest to you are:
 - excellent staff management;
 - a first-rate record in administration;
 - proficiency at prioritising workloads;
 - the ability to implement standard procedures efficiently.

My recent achievements include organising and supervising staff training to introduce Microsoft Office as standard across the board. This has resulted in a significant increase in both departmental and interdepartmental efficiency.

Paragraph 3

Use this section to give the employer a reason why you are applying for the job. Underline the impression that you are applying to them from choice, because of who they are and what the job is, rather than because you need a job and this one will do as well as any other. Make your reasons positive and persuasive, emphasising what you can bring to a new position, rather than what you hope they'll do for you. Concentrate on things that mean you can work at your best, such as responsibility, training opportunities, challenges, or the company's structure or reputation, and focus on the positive things you can contribute under those conditions.

Good reasons for changing your job include:

- **opportunity** – the chance to develop or do something new;
- **challenge** – more demanding responsibilities;
- **promotion** – the job you're applying for is a step up from your current one;
- **reputation** – applying to a more prestigious company.

There are other reasons for changing jobs that are just as valid but somewhat harder to defend in a covering letter. They are:

- **money** – your salary no longer reflects your value;
- **security** – you would like a more secure job with a more stable company;

Examples

- I am presently working at the marketing organisation XYZ. However, I would very much like to return to production, where I feel my skills and experience could be used more effectively, and would welcome the opportunity this position offers to do so.
- I have enjoyed working at XYZ, and have welcomed the chance this has given me to cultivate my administrative skills. I am now, however, looking for a post with more responsibility, and feel that your advertisement offers the opportunity I am looking for.
- I am keen to find an organisation offering continued training and development, and the chance to progress in this area. I am, in consequence, very interested in the vacancy you have to offer.

Paragraph 4

End the letter with a short paragraph that closes on a positive note, confirming your interest in the job.

Examples

- I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you further and look forward to hearing from you.
- I would be very happy to discuss my application with you in more detail and look forward to hearing from you.

2. Register and appropriate style

Follow a standard business letter format when writing to companies and organisations. The following suggestions will enable you to achieve a businesslike appearance:

- Write names and addresses without full stops or commas. This is in keeping with the style of layout used for the examples in this book, known as a ‘block’ style.
- Include the postcode on the same line as the county if you need the extra space to keep the letter to one page.
- Rather than give a string of phone numbers – home, work, mobile – put the one where you can most easily and conveniently be contacted or a message can be left. Include your e-mail address if there is a likelihood that the company will contact you via e-mail.
- Write the date in full – 12 September 2008, *not* 12/9/08 or 12th Sept. 08.

- If you know the name of your potential recipient, you should adhere to the following rules:
 - Beginning: **Dear + the title of your recipient + the surname** → e.g. Dear Mr Cope
 - Ending: **Yours sincerely,**
- If you don't know the name of your potential recipient, you should adhere to the following rules:
 - Beginning: **Dear Sir or Madam**
 - Ending: **Yours faithfully,**

- Use only their title and surname in the salutation – ‘Dear Mrs Cope’ *not* ‘Dear Margaret’ or ‘Dear Margaret Cope’.
- When using this block-style format, don’t follow with a comma, just a one-line space before starting the main body of the letter.
- If a reference number or title appears in the job advertisement, include this in your letter at the position shown. You will notice that it is usually underlined to make it stand out more.
- With this style of layout, show paragraph breaks by using a one-line space.
- Start the first line of a new paragraph against the left-hand margin; don’t indent it.
- ‘Yours sincerely’, your signature, and your typed name all start against the left-hand margin also.
- Because the letter is addressed to a named individual – Dear Mrs Cope – close it with the salutation ‘Yours sincerely’. If you begin ‘Dear Sir (or Madam)’, use ‘Yours faithfully’ instead.
- Allow six line spaces for your signature, but reduce this if you need extra space to keep the letter to one page only.
- Type your full name under your signature. Include your title if you wish – Ann Price (Mrs).

Tel: 00000 000000
Mobile: 00000 000000
e-mail: name@anyisp.co.uk

1 January 2009

Jane Smith
Personnel Manager
Timothy & James Ltd
141 Wellwood Road
Bassingford
Lincs
LN1 1AP

Re: Marketing Manager Ref 34 WT

Dear Ms Smith

I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Manager as advertised in this month's *Retail Direct*. I was most interested to read your ad and believe I have the skills and experience you require.

As you will see from my CV, I have extensive marketing experience, including three years with ABC Ltd. I have a particular interest in product planning, and have successfully researched the market possibilities for several profitable new product lines.

I am at present working for DEF & Co, the product research organisation, where I have worked with the outreach team to produce excellent results. I would, however, prefer to return to consumer marketing as I believe this is where my skills and experience can be used most effectively. I am, consequently, very interested in the opportunity your vacancy offers.

I would be very happy to discuss my application with you in more detail and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

John Brown

3. Examples

Tel: 00000 000000
Mobile: 00000 000000
e-mail: name@anyisp.co.uk

1 January 2009

Jane Smith
Senior Staff Coordinator
XYZ Training Ltd
The Newlin Centre
Leystone
Cornwall
CN1 2TF

Dear Ms Smith

I was very interested to read about the new education initiatives for the area outlined in today's *Evening Post*, and wonder if you would have an opening for an adult literacy and numeracy teacher with counselling qualifications.

As you will see from my CV, I have considerable experience of working with people from a variety of backgrounds. I have been involved with the adult literacy scheme at the ABC Centre since its opening in 2007 as a tutor and student adviser, and I also work as a volunteer counsellor with the DEF Trust.

3. Examples

I have City & Guilds qualifications in both Basic Education Teaching and Practical Counselling. In addition, I have also attended GHI College's Planned Adult Literacy Course and undergone counselling training with the DEF Trust.

As the current project at the ABC Centre is drawing to a close, I am eager to continue to develop my career and make full use of my skills and experience where they would be of value. I believe your organisation could offer the opportunity to do so.

I would really appreciate the chance to discuss any suitable positions with you in more detail and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

John Brown