

Job seeker's toolkit

> Writing a letter of application

Writing to a potential employer directly shows that you are proactive and committed to finding a job and that you want to work.

Writing to an employer about any jobs they have available now, or any jobs that are likely to come up in the future, is a useful step before calling an employer directly. The quality of the letter will give the employer extra information about the sort of person you are. If you have paid attention to the quality of the letter, you are more likely to pay attention to the details in your job.

Employers are generally very busy and want to know reasonably quickly what you are writing about, so it is best to keep your letter to one page, typed and on good quality, clean paper.

When you write to an employer to apply for an advertised job, there are a number of things you can do to make it a letter that stands out in the mind of the reader.

There are two main things to consider when writing to an employer:

- > formatting - the presentation of your letter
- > content - what you actually want to tell, or ask, the employer.

Formatting and setting out

Formatting is important so that the reader can easily find the information on the page.

Every letter should have the following features:

- > Your name and address.
- > The date.
- > Details of the person you are writing to (you may need to call the company to confirm who to write to about available work), including:
 - > their name
 - > their title (such as Manager or Recruitment Manager)
 - > the name of the business and the postal address (with the suburb name in capital letters)
 - > the greeting (such as Dear Ms/Mr ...).
- > The body of the letter where you explain why you are writing - see below for 'Content details'.
- > The closing, which includes the final words to your reader. This part sums up what you would like to happen as a result of your letter and may say something like: "Thank you very much for considering this letter and my interest in working for your organisation. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future".
- > The sign off, which is usually 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours sincerely' for a business letter, followed by your signature.

> Content details

- > Be very clear about what you are saying or asking. Simple language is better than big words and long complicated sentences.
- > If you have had phone contact with the employer before writing your letter of application, it is important that you take note of any particular skills they say are needed for the job or duties that might be part of the job. Provide any information about yourself that tells the employer how you have the ability to fill the job successfully.
- > An indication of which job you are applying for.
- > Why you have chosen to apply for that particular position. This might be followed with information about your own key skills, qualities and/or experience.
- > A description of why you would be the best person for that job including your key skills, abilities, qualities and experience, followed by why they make you a valuable candidate for that particular position.
- > Qualifications you know are going to appeal to the particular company.
- > Include a copy of your resume with your letter.

It is really important that you have someone else proof read your letter. They may have valuable ideas about how it could be improved. No matter how good we are at writing, it is easy for anyone to miss small errors. A letter with no spelling mistakes and clear sentences makes a good impression on an employer.

Follow up with a brief, polite phone call approximately a week later to make sure they have received your application.

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