

## **Application Letters/Cover Letters**

An application letter, sometimes called a “cover letter,” accompanies a job applicant’s résumé; it is the first document a prospective employer reads, and it should accomplish at least the following three objectives.

**1. Get the reader’s (the employer’s) attention.**

Remember, the person reading your letter and résumé may have hundreds of application packages, all from people applying for the same job. Your letter must make a quick, positive first impression.

**2. Summarize the contents of your résumé.**

Keep the reader’s interest by mentioning the parts of your résumé which make you a qualified applicant for the job. If you are not applying for a specific job, then your summary should focus on the aspects of your education and experience which will make you valuable to the company you have contacted. The important words here are, “summarize” and “keep the attention.” Give the employer reasons to read your résumé; create the desire to know about you in greater detail.

**3. Explain when you are available for an interview and how you can be reached.**

Make it as easy as possible for the employer to contact you and arrange for a meeting; be available often and be easily reached. (If you are letting a parent or relative take messages, make sure they realize you might be getting a job related phone calls)

### **Format of the letter.**

The letter should be formal and professional. Use the standard block format letter and appropriate formal language. Your sentences should be short and easy to understand. You are not writing an English essay. Do not try to use big fancy words, or try to make the sentences too long. Business language is concise. State your purpose and defend your statements.

## An Example:

### Responding to an Advertisement for Employment

Information about employment opportunities often circulates by word-of-mouth; people you know will mention opening where they work or jobs they have heard about that might interest you, or you might see a sign posted in a store window. Also, written job listings appear in a variety of sources, including newspapers, school job boards, employment center, magazines and or internet. The following is a typical advertisement taken from the classified section of a small daily newspaper.

Secretary for branch office of nat'l food processing company.  
Should have 2 yrs secretarial exp. Some word processing exp  
pref. Candidate must have exc communication & typing skills.  
Competitive sal and benefits pkg. Submit résumé to: Johnson  
Foods, 535 Holland Way, Suite #455, Burnaby, BC, V5M 1R2.

A secretary in search of a job can use this ad as the basis for a pre-writing exercise and prepare to write a cover letter. A quick comparison of what the ad request and what the applicant can offer provides a starting point for a "Requested/Can Offer" organization chart.

REQUESTED	CAN OFFER
2 years secretarial experience word processing experience	1 Year experience and summer jobs Trained in Microsoft Word 6.0 and Claris Works
Communication skills	Strong: Speech classes Writing skills Public speaking Telephone skills
Typing skills	touch type- 50 words per minute

The one apparent weakness in the applicant's record is the number of years of professional employment, one year instead of two. This drawback should not prevent the applicant's application. On the following page is a sample of the letter produced by the applicant.

← ( Press enter 5 times before you type in your name.address + date

Ms. Liz Gigante  
3299 Marine Drive  
Burnaby, BC V7V1R8  
October 29, 199-

← 2 spaces in between "BC" and your postal code (same  
in next address)

← (4 blank lines)

Insert → Johnson Foods  
person's → #455-535 Holland Way  
name if you → Burnaby, BC V5M 1R2  
know it.

← (1 blank line)

→ Dear Sir or Madam

← (1 blank line)

I am responding to your classified advertisement which appeared in the Burnaby Now on October 27, 199-. My educational background and work experience at a small company in Burnaby have prepared me to meet the challenges of the secretarial position you describe, and I would like to apply.

I graduated from Douglas College with a major in Business. After graduation I accepted the position of Secretary to the Vice President at Sloane and Co. My present position requires strong communication skills, especially writing, and I attribute my success in this area to the many business classes and writing workshops I took in college. As outlined on my attached résumé, I also benefit from my typing skill, 50 words-per-minute. I am trained in using Microsoft Word 6.0 and Claris Works but can quickly learn any other word processing program.

I look forward to discussing the position that is open at Johnson Foods. I may be reached during work hours at (604) 555-5555 or leave a message at (604) 666-6666. If you prefer, I may be contacted in writing at the above address.

Yours truly

*Liz Gigante*

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