
Job Search Letters for Educators

Attention (Opening Paragraph)

- * Open the letter by capturing the reader's attention in a businesslike way.
- * Summary opening. Present your strongest, most relevant qualifications, with an explanation of how they can benefit the organization.
- * Name opening. Mention the name of a person who is well known to the reader and who has suggested that you apply for the job.
- * Source opening. When responding to a job ad, identify the publication in which the ad appeared and briefly describe how you meet each requirement stated in the ad.
- * Identify the specific position or type of work for which you are making application or requesting information.

Promotion (1 or 2 Paragraphs)

- * Present your key qualifications for the job, highlighting what is on your resume; job-related education and training; relevant work experience; and related activities, interests, and qualities.
- * Adopt a mature and businesslike tone.
 - Eliminate boasting and exaggeration.
 - Back up your claims of ability by citing specific achievements in educational and work settings (or in other relevant activities).
 - Demonstrate a knowledge of the organization and its community and a desire to join it by citing one of its outstanding features.
- * Link your education, experience, and personal qualities to the job requirements.
 - Relate aspects of your training or work experience to those of the target position.
 - Outline your educational preparation for the job.
 - Provide proof that you learn quickly, are a hard worker, can handle responsibility, love teaching and children, and/or get along well with others.
 - Present evidence of personal qualities and work attitudes that are desirable for job performance.
- * Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.

Action (Closing Paragraph)

- * Request an interview or application information at the reader's convenience.
- * State your phone number (with area code) and the best time to reach you.
- * Express appreciation for her or his time and consideration.
- * Repeat your strongest qualification to help reinforce the claim that you have something to offer the organization.

Things to Remember

- * Each letter should be an original.
- * Address letter to a specific person by name.
- * Be specific about your qualifications.
- * Show what separates you from other applicants.
- * Show a knowledge of the organization and the position.
- * Refer to your resume and remember to enclose it.
- * Ask for an interview.
- * Remember to sign your letter.
- * Be sure your letter is in an acceptable, professional business letter format.

How do the Resume and Letter differ?

RESUME

- * Adapted to a type of position
- * Summarizes qualifications
- * Uses short, action phrases

LETTER

- * Adapted to specific employer needs
- * Tells how qualifications meet employer needs, how you differ from others, and that you know something about the employer
- * Uses complete sentences in well-written, grammatically correct paragraphs

Writing Style and Tone

WORD CHOICE AND CONNOTATIONS

- * Use vivid word choices and details.
- * Avoid words that can be misinterpreted.
- * Use words that are accurate, appropriate, and familiar.
- * Use active verbs most of the time.
- * Tighten your writing.
- * Vary sentence length and sentence structure.
- * Use parallel structure.

POSITIVE EMPHASIS

- * Be positive.
- * Don't plead or apologize.
- * Avoid word choices with negative connotation.

YOU-ATTITUDE

- * Show how you could benefit the employer.
- * Use more second-person pronouns than first-person.
- * Avoid beginning paragraphs with I.

PARAGRAPH LENGTH AND UNITY

- * Keep your first and last paragraphs short.
 - * Vary paragraph length within letter.
 - * Use topic sentences and strong transition words and phrases to connect your thoughts.
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Sample Letter

Your Mailing Address
City, State ZIP
Current Date

(3-4 blank lines)

Employer's Name
Title
Organization
Mailing Address
City, State ZIP

(double space)

Salutation:

(double space)

Come to the point and reveal your purpose and interest. Identify the position or type of position you are seeking and your source of information (school placement office, newspaper ad, faculty referral, etc.).

(double space)

Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. Make reference to your enclosed resume. Also show that you know something about the employer and how your qualifications meet the employer's needs (how the employer will benefit from selecting you).

(double space)

Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well in the position. Highlight skill areas unique to you. Market yourself and show how you stand out from all the rest.

(double space)

Suggest an action plan. Request an interview, indicate where and when you may be reached. Show appreciation to the reader for his or her time and consideration. Possibly emphasize your strongest qualification again.

(double space)

Complimentary Close,

(4 blank lines allowed for signature)

Your typed name

(double space)

enclosure(s)

Adapted from Strother, J.A. & Marshall, D.R. (1990). The Right Fit: An Educator's Career Handbook and Employment Guide, Gorsuch Scarisbrick, Publishers.

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