

3. Don't just put "résumé" as the subject of your email when sending your résumé to an employer. List the title, number, or code of the position for which you are applying.
4. Simply submitting your résumé online is sometimes not enough. If requested, also send a scannable hard copy and a letter of application (discussed next) to prospective employers. Do not fold or staple your résumé. Send it, along with your letter, in a large envelope (8½ × 11 inches).
5. Always keep a log of where you have posted your résumé online (see "Keep a Job Search Record," page 294).

LETTERS OF APPLICATION

Along with your résumé, expect to send your prospective employer a letter of application (also known as a cover letter), one of the most important pieces of correspondence you may ever write. Its goal is to get you an interview and ultimately the job. Letters you write in applying for jobs should be *personable*, *professional*, and *persuasive*—the three *P*'s. Knowing how the letter of application and résumé work together and how they differ can give you a better idea of how to compose your letter. Different companies have different policies about how they want letters of application sent to them; some prefer hard copy, some attachments, and some in the body of an email. You should be prepared for any of these methods.

How Application Letters and Résumés Differ

The résumé is a persuasive record of dates, important achievements, skills, names, places, addresses, and jobs. As noted earlier, you may prepare several different résumés, depending on your experience and the job market.

Your letter of application, however, is much more personal. It introduces you to a prospective employer. Because you must write a new, original letter to each prospective employer, you may write (or adapt) many different letters. Each letter of application should be tailored to a specific job. It should respond precisely to the qualifications the employer seeks.

The letter of application is a sales letter that emphasizes and applies the most relevant details (of education, experience, and talents) in your résumé. In short, the résumé contains the raw material that the letter of application transforms into a finished and highly marketable product—you.

Résumé Facts to Exclude from Letters of Application

The letter of application should not simply repeat the details listed in your résumé. In fact, the following details that you would include in your résumé should not be restated in the letter:

- personal data, including license or certificate numbers
- specific course numbers
- names and addresses of all your previous employers

Writing the Letter of Application

The letter of application, such as those in Figures 7.14–7.16, can make the difference between your getting an interview and your being eliminated early from consideration. It should convince a prospective employer that you will use the experience and education listed on your résumé in the job he or she is hoping to fill. You want your letter to be placed in the “definitely interview” category. As you prepare your letter, use the following general guidelines.

1. **Follow the standard conventions of letter writing.** There are a variety of ways to send a letter (see “Different Ways to Send Letters,” pages 154–155). No matter how your letter is sent, proofread meticulously; a spelling error, typo, or grammatical mistake will make you look careless. As with your résumés, don’t rely only on your spell-checker. (See “The Appearance of Your Letter,” pages 162–163).
2. **Supply all contact information as part of your heading.** Include home address, phone numbers, email address, and links to your website or social media and professional networking profiles, if you have one. (See also “Heading,” page 159.)
3. **Make sure your letter looks attractive.** Use wide margins, and don’t crowd your page. Keep your paragraphs short and readable—no more than four or five sentences each.
4. **Send your letter to a specific person.** Never address an application letter “To Whom It May Concern,” “Dear Sir or Madam,” or “Dear Director of Human Resources.” Get an individual’s name from the company’s website or by calling the company’s main office, and be sure to verify the spelling of the person’s name and his or her title.
5. **Don’t send a form letter to every potential employer.** Stay away from generic application letter templates. Customize your letter to make sure you address the employer’s specific needs.
6. **Be concise.** A one-page letter is standard in today’s job market.
7. **Emphasize the “you attitude.”** (See “Achieving the ‘You Attitude’: Four Guidelines,” pages 167–168.) See yourself as an employer sees you. Focus on how your qualifications meet the employer’s needs, not the other way around. Employers are not impressed by vain boasts (“I am the most efficient and effective safety engineer”). Convince prospective employers that you will be a valuable addition to their organization—a team player, a problem solver, an energetic representative, a skilled professional. (See “Making a Good Impression on Your Reader,” pages 164–168.)
8. **Don’t be tempted to send out your first draft.** Write and rewrite your letter of application until you are convinced it presents you in the best possible light. Getting the job may depend on it. A first or even second draft rarely sells your abilities as well as a third, fourth, or even fifth revision does.
9. **Tell the truth.** Don’t exaggerate the importance of any previous job experience or academic work. Never mislead a potential employer by lying about anything

relating to degrees, continuing education units (CEUs), licenses, certificates, permits, or other professional qualifications.

The sections that follow give you some suggestions on how to prepare the various parts of an application letter successfully.

Your Opening Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter of application is your introduction. It must get your reader's attention by answering four questions:

1. Why are you writing?
2. Where or how did you learn of the vacancy, the company, or the job?
3. What is the specific job title for which you are applying?
4. What is your most important qualification for the job?

Begin your letter by stating directly that you are writing to apply for a job. Don't say that you "want to apply for the job"; such an opening raises the question, "Why don't you, then?"

Avoid an unconventional or arrogant opening: "Are you looking for a dynamic, young, and talented accountant?" Do not begin with a question; be more positive and professional.

If you learned about the job through a newspaper or journal, make sure you italicize its title.

I am applying for the food service manager position you advertised in the May 10 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* online.

Always check a company's website or social media pages first to see if their position is listed online, as Anthony Jones did in Figure 7.14.

If you learned of the job from a professor, a friend, or an employee at the firm, indicate that. Take advantage of a personal (networking) contact who is confident that you are qualified for and interested in the position, as María López (Figure 7.15, page 285) and Dora Cooper Bolger (Figure 7.16, page 286) did. But first confirm that your contact gives you permission to use his or her name.

You have to attract the reader's attention quickly and persuasively. In a sentence or two, tell the reader how your education and experience qualify you for the job. Use keywords from the job announcement.

The Body of Your Letter

The body of your letter, comprising one or two paragraphs, cites evidence from your résumé to prove you are qualified for the job. You might want to spend one paragraph on your education and one on your experience or combine your accomplishments into one paragraph.

Follow these guidelines for the body of your letter:

1. **Keep your paragraphs short and readable—four or five sentences.** Avoid long, complex sentences. Use the active voice to emphasize yourself as a doer. Review the action verbs in Table 7.3 (page 256) and, again, use keywords found in the employer's ad.

FIGURE 7.14 Letter of Application from Anthony Jones, a Recent Graduate with Little Job Experience

**WEBSITE DEVELOPER
DESIGNER
GRAPHIC ARTIST**

Anthony H. Jones

73 Allenwood Boulevard www.plat.com/users/ajones/resume.html
 Santa Rosa, CA 95401-1074 www.facebook.com/anthonyhjones
 707-555-6390 [@AnthonyHJones](https://www.instagram.com/AnthonyHJones)
ajdesigner@plat.com www.linkedin.com/pub/anthony-h-jones

Clear and professional-looking letterhead

May 16, 2016

Ms. Jocelyn Nogasaki
 Human Resources Manager
 Megalith Publishing Company
 1001 Heathcliff Row
 San Francisco, CA 94123-7707

Writes to a specific person

Dear Ms. Nogasaki:

I am applying for the layout editor position advertised on your LinkedIn page, which I accessed on May 14. Early next month, I will receive an A.S. degree in commercial graphics illustration from Santa Rosa Junior College.

Identifies position and source of ad

With a special interest in publishing, I have successfully completed more than 40 credit hours in courses directly related to layout design and gained experience using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop CC, as well as QuarkXPress 2015. You might like to know that many Megalith publications were used as design and layout models in my graphics communications and digital photography courses.

Applies education directly to employer's business

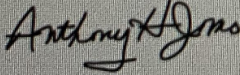
My studies have also given me practical experience at McAdam Publishers as part of my Santa Rosa internship program. While working at McAdam, I was responsible for assisting the design department in page composition and archiving photos. Other related experiences I have include creating a website and developing and maintaining a Facebook page for the Santa Rosa Humane Society, and designing and executing custom window displays at Buchman's Department Store. As the enclosed résumé indicates, a webfolio containing designs, photographs, illustrations, graphics, and graphic designs is available at www.plat.com/users/ajones/resume.html.

Convincingly cites related job experience

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications in graphic design with you. My contact information is listed above. After June 8, I will be available for an interview at any time convenient for you.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely yours,



Anthony H. Jones
 Encl.: Résumé

Refers to résumé/webfolio

Asks for an interview and thanks employer

© 2017 Cengage Learning

2. **Don't begin each sentence with "I."** Vary your sentence structure. Write reader-centered sentences, even those beginning with "I."

3. **Concentrate on seeing yourself as a potential employer sees you.** Prove that you can help an employer's sales and service, promote an organization's mission and goals, and be a reliable team player.

4. **Highlight your qualifications by citing specific accomplishments.** Tell your reader exactly how your education and job experience qualify you to perform and advance in the job advertised. Show how you can make a positive contribution to the employer's company. Don't simply say you are a great salesperson. Demonstrate your accomplishments by stressing that you increased the sales volume in your department by 18 percent within six months, you won an award or received a promotion for customer service, or you reduced costs by 10 percent. Employers are not impressed by boasting or arrogance. They want hard facts to prove you are the right person for the job.

5. **Mention you are enclosing your résumé.** Put an "Encl." notation at the bottom of your letter.

Education Recent graduates with little work experience, such as Anthony Jones in Figure 7.14, will, of course, spend more time discussing their education. Emphasize why and how your most significant educational accomplishments—course work, degrees, certificates, licenses, training—are relevant for the particular job. Mention significant extracurricular activities if they relate to the job description. Employers want to know which specific skills from your education translate into benefits for their company.

Only saying you will graduate with a degree in criminal justice does not explain how you, unlike all the other graduates of such programs, are best suited for a particular job. Ask yourself which classes you took are most relevant for the employer. Consider grouping classes to show how and why you are the best qualified applicant for the job. For example, when you indicate that you have completed 36 credit hours in software security and have another 12 credit hours in global business, you prove you have an expertise other job candidates may not have. Note how Anthony Jones in Figure 7.14 and María López in Figure 7.15 establish their educational qualifications with specific details about their training. Be sure to also mention internships or clinical training, as Jones and López do.

Experience After you discuss your educational qualifications, turn to your job experience. But if your experience is your most valuable and extensive qualification for the job, put it before education and stress any previous experience similar to what a new position calls for. Be sure to stress any promotions or other leadership roles you have had. If you are switching careers or returning to a career after years away from the workplace (because of military service, for example), start the body of your letter with your experience or your community and civic service, as Dora Cooper Bolger does in Figure 7.16 (page 286). Her volunteer work convincingly demonstrates she has the organizational and communication skills her prospective employer seeks. Never minimize such contributions.

FIGURE 7.15 Letter of Application from María López, a Recent Graduate with Some Job Experience


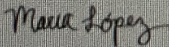
<p>MARÍA LÓPEZ</p> <p>1725 Brooke Street Miami, FL 32701-2121 (305) 555-3429 mlopez@gmail.com  www.linkedin.com/pub/maria-lopez</p>	<p><i>Uses professional-looking letterhead with contact information</i></p>
<p>May 15, 2016</p> <p>Dr. Marvin Henrady Medical/Dental Plaza, Suite 34 839 Causeway Drive Miami, FL 32706-2468</p> <p>Dear Dr. Henrady:</p> <p>Mr. Mitchell Pelbourne, my clinical instructor at Miami-Dade Community College, informs me you are looking for a dental hygienist to work in your northside office. My education and experience qualify me for that position. This month I will graduate with an A.S. degree in the dental hygienist program, and I will take the Dental Assisting National Board exams in early June.</p> <p>I have successfully completed all course work and clinical programs in oral hygiene, anatomy, and prophylaxis techniques. During my clinical training, I received intensive practical instruction from several local dentists, including Dr. Tia Gutiérrez. Since your northside office specializes in pediatric dental care, you might find the subject of my major project—proper nutrition and dental care for preschoolers—especially relevant.</p> <p>My related job experience working with children in a health care setting would be both relevant for and helpful to your office. For over two years, I was a unit assistant on the pediatric unit at St. Francis Hospital, and have experience in greeting patients, transcribing medical orders and surgical notes, and assisting the nursing staff. An additional job strength I would bring to your office is my bilingual (Spanish/English) communication skills. You will find more detailed information about my accomplishments in the enclosed résumé.</p> <p>I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about the position and my interest in pediatric dental care. I am available for an interview any time after 2:00 pm until June 9th, but after that I could visit your office at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely yours,  María López Encl. Résumé</p>	<p><i>Begins with personal contact</i></p> <p><i>Verifies she will have necessary licensure</i></p> <p><i>Links training to job responsibilities; demonstrates knowledge of employer's office</i></p> <p><i>Relates previous experience to employer's needs; refers to résumé</i></p> <p><i>Ends with a polite request for an interview and thanks reader</i></p>

FIGURE 7.16 Letter of Application from Dora Cooper Bolger, a Job Candidate with Years of Community and Civic Experience

Email address emphasizing professional achievement

DORA COOPER BOLGER

www.facebook.com/doracooperbolger
www.linkedin.com/pub/dora-c-bolger

1215 Lakeview Avenue
 Westhampton, MI 46532
 Cell: 616-555-4773
 dcbplanner@aol.com

Begins with contact made at professional meeting, highlighting her qualifications

February 10, 2016

Dr. Lindsay Bafaloukos, Director
 Tanselle Mental Health Agency
 4400 West Gallagher Drive
 Tanselle, MI 46932-3106

Dear Dr. Bafaloukos:

At a recent meeting of the County Services Council, a member of your staff, Homer Steen, told me that you will soon be hiring a public affairs coordinator. Because of my extensive experience in and commitment to community affairs, I would appreciate your considering me for this opening. I expect to receive my B.S. in Public Administration from Mid-Michigan College later this year.

Relates proven past successes to employer's needs; gives concrete examples of her skills

For the past ten years, I have organized community groups with outreach programs similar to Tanselle's. I have held administrative positions in the PTA and the Foster Parents' Association and served as president of Teens in Trouble, a volunteer group providing assistance to dysfunctional teens. My responsibilities with Teens have included coordinating counseling activities with various school programs, scheduling tutorials, maintaining the group's Facebook page, and representing the organization before local and state governmental agencies. I have been commended for my organizational and communication skills. My twenty-four presentations on foster home care and Teens in Trouble also demonstrate that I am an effective speaker, a skill I could put to work for Tanselle immediately.

Encourages reader to see her as best-prepared candidate; includes résumé

Because of my work at Mid-Michigan as well as for Teens and Foster Parents, I have the practical experience in communication and psychology to promote Tanselle's goals successfully. The enclosed résumé provides details about my experience, education, and honors I have received.

Requests interview and thanks reader

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss my work with Teens and other organizations I represented and how I might help Tanselle promote its programs. I am available for an interview at your convenience. Thank you for considering me for your public affairs coordinator position.

Sincerely yours,

Dora Cooper Bolger

Dora Cooper Bolger

Encl. Résumé

Relate Your Education and Experience to the Job Link your education and experience as benefits to the particular job you apply for. Persuasively show a prospective employer how your previous accomplishments, especially teamwork and responsibility, have prepared you for future success on the job. Relate your course work in computer science to being an efficient programmer. Indicate how your summer work for a local park district reinforced your exemplary skills in customer service. Connect your background to the prospective employer's company. Any homework you can do about the company's history, goals, or structure will pay off.

- By citing Megalith publications as a model in his courses, Anthony Jones stresses he is ready to start successfully from the first day on the job (Figure 7.14).
- Note how María López links her major school project and her work on a hospital pediatric unit to Dr. Henrady's specialty (Figure 7.15).
- Dora Cooper Bolger likewise proves that she is familiar with and can contribute to Tanselle's programs in community mental health through her extensive volunteer work and public speaking experience (Figure 7.16).

Closing

The purpose of your last paragraph is clear-cut—to convince the reader to call or email you for an interview. Keep your closing paragraph short—about two or three sentences—but be sure it fulfills the following four important functions:

1. briefly emphasizes once again your major qualifications
2. asks for an interview or a phone call
3. indicates when you are available for an interview
4. thanks the reader

End gracefully and professionally. Be straightforward. Don't leave the reader with a single weak, vague sentence: "I would like to have an interview at your convenience." That does nothing to sell you. Say that you would appreciate talking with the employer further to discuss your qualifications, as María López does in Figure 7.15. Then mention your chief talent. If you are applying for an international job or one far from home, you might request a phone interview instead of an in-person interview (see "Being Ready for a Phone Interview," page 288). You might also express your willingness to relocate if the job requires it.

After indicating your interest in the job, give the times you are available for an interview and specifically tell the reader where you can be reached. If you are going to a professional meeting that the employer might also attend, or if you are visiting the employer's city soon, say so.

The following samples show how *not* to close your letter and explain why.

Pushy: I would like to set up an interview with you. Please phone me to arrange a convenient time. [That's the employer's prerogative, not yours.]

Too Informal: I do not live far from your office. Let's meet for coffee sometime next week. [Say instead that because you live nearby, you will be available for an interview.]

Introduces New Subject: I would like to discuss other qualifications you have in mind for the job. [How do you know what the interviewer might have in mind?]

Note that the closing paragraphs in Figures 7.14, 7.15, and 7.16 avoid these errors.

GOING TO AN INTERVIEW

There are various ways for a prospective employer to conduct an interview. It might be a one-on-one meeting—you and the interviewer—or you may visit with a group of individuals or even with several groups from different divisions in the company to decide if you would fit in. You could have an interview over the telephone, or through a videoconference, or via Skype (see the Tech Note on page 289).

Being Ready for a Phone Interview

Often an employer has ten to fifteen viable candidates for a position and conducts a phone interview to narrow them down to the three or four they want to invite for a face-to-face interview. Be prepared for a phone interview by keeping the following in mind:

1. **Indicate to the potential employer when you are available for a call, and specify your time zone—Central, Eastern, etc.** If the call comes unexpectedly and you know you have a limited amount of time, ask the interviewer if it is possible to talk at another time, but offer alternative times within (at most) the next couple of hours or the next day, to stress your interest in the job.
2. **Be prepared.** Keep your résumé and information about the company at hand so that you can refer to them, if necessary, during the interview.
3. **Find a quiet place for the call.** Make sure your phone is charged and that there are no disturbing background noises. Music, a running appliance, or someone else talking in the same room are all distractions and can make you appear unprofessional.
4. **Speak with confidence and poise.** “Delivering Your Presentation” on pages 639–642 in Chapter 16 will give you tips on how to sound calm and professional.
5. **Ask a couple of key questions about the job.** Review “Questions You May Ask the Interviewer(s)” on pages 292–293). Impress the interviewer with your interest in his/her company and your enthusiasm about the job.
6. **Always thank the interviewer.** Be sure you get the interviewer’s correct spelling of his/her name and the address where you can send a thank-you letter.

Preparing for an Interview

You should always be prepared to discuss *anything* listed on your résumé at an interview. If you can’t recall the details about a job or activity listed on your résumé, refresh your memory so you won’t be caught off-guard. Before you go to an interview, prepare by doing the following: