

YOUR RESUME'S BEST FRIEND . . . THE COVER LETTER

Career Services, Fort Hays State University
Sheridan Hall 214, (785) 628-4260

An effective cover letter is as important in the job search as an effective resume. It serves as an introduction to your resume, and no resume should be sent without one. Studies indicate that your cover letter has the life expectancy of about thirty seconds, so it must be brief, informative, and hold the reader's attention.

Employers often use cover letters as the initial screening tool in deciding whom to interview.

Where the resume is the selling tool, the cover letter or letter of application is designed with the goal of obtaining an interview. The cover letter allows you to expand on the resume and personalize your approach. A good cover letter expresses that you are seeking a more personal conversation about possible employment. It should draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job. Cover letters are intended to summarize, mention particular points, provide additional information, and ask for an interview. Cover letters follow the same general rules of resumes--specific, concise, and error-free. **Always enclose a cover letter when you mail a resume.**

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Your Mailing Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Date of Letter

Employer's Name
Employer's Title
Organization Name
Mailing Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear _____ :

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing, name of the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard about the opening.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate your entire resume. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Refer the reader to your enclosed resume or additional media you are using to illustrate your training, interests, and experience. Tell the employer from where your credentials may be requested. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date. Indicate that you are available for a personal interview at the employer's convenience or show your motivation by telling the employer you will be in contact with them.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure(s)

ELEMENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

USE EFFECTIVE FORMATTING RULES

Your letter should follow the standard personal business letter format.

Do not exceed one page of approximately three to four paragraphs.

Use short words rather than long, complicated words; keep jargon to a bare minimum.

Avoid using script, bold fonts, and heavy typefaces.

Strive to keep your cover letters interesting, concise, and to the point.

Remember to hand-sign your name above your typed name.

PERSONALIZE YOUR LETTER

Write and type each cover letter individually. It should be personalized to each employer and company.

If possible, address your letter to a specific person in the organization. You can often find the employer's name by utilizing Career Services resources, researching company literature, or calling the company and asking the receptionist for the contact person's name and job title.

Always refer to the employer as either Mr. or Ms., never Mrs. (unless specified in the vacancy announcement). If you are unable to identify the gender of the employer, omit the "Mr./Ms." title and address correspondence to "First Name, Last Name."

COMMUNICATE YOUR INTEREST

Identify the desired position or type of position for which you are applying. Focus on your skills, training, or experience that relate to the position and draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job.

Make the addressee want to read your resume. Be personable. Communicate enthusiasm and motivation.

Show that you are knowledgeable of the employer and career field.

Make sure to refer briefly to your resume or additional enclosures, e.g., transcripts, application blanks, or letters of reference.

Do not make reference to salary unless requested by employer.

In closing, request an interview at the employer's convenience or indicate that you will be in contact with the employer.

CREATE A PROFESSIONAL-LOOKING FINISHED PRODUCT

Match the paper color and weight of your cover letter with that of your resume. Use high-quality bond (at least 20-pound weight). Generally, employers are conservative and a resume and cover letter prepared on white, off-white, light tan, or light gray will receive a more positive response. Additionally, matching envelopes provide a professional look.

Proofread the letter carefully for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. It is a sample of your writing and communication skills.

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A SPECIFIC VACANCY

P.O. Box 1156
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 628-0000
Date

Ms. Carol Jackson
Personnel Director
ABC, Inc.
2301 Walnut Grove Lane
Dallas, TX 75215

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am writing in reference to your advertisement for a Personnel Trainee, as listed with Fort Hays State Career Services. I will be graduating in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Economics. My current cumulative GPA is 3.65/4.0 scale.

As you will note from the enclosed resume, I have had a one-semester internship at Consumer Credit Counseling Service and have worked for several summers as a Head Lifeguard, with responsibility for a staff of 15 other lifeguards. Additionally, I have held leadership positions in campus activities. I believe my academic background and my work and campus experiences have prepared me for management training and have helped me to develop many of the skills required of your training position.

I look forward to visiting with you during a personal interview at your convenience. You can reach me at (913) 628-0000 to set up a time to further discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A TEACHING POSITION

1515 Dogwood Patch
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-0000
Date

Mr. David Mickey
Assistant Superintendent
Unified School District 383
2031 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502

Dear Mr. Mickey:

Career Services at Fort Hays State University has notified me of several openings for elementary teachers in Unified School District 383. I will be graduating in May 200_ from Fort Hays State University with a B.S. in Elementary Education and would like to be considered as a candidate.

My field experience and directed teaching have been an invaluable exposure to teaching. In addition, I have volunteered as a second grade tutor and Bible School instructor. These experiences have made me appreciate children and realize the positive impact I may have on their future.

I have been involved in several campus organizations in various capacities which has allowed me to strengthen my communication skills and organizational abilities. I feel this, along with my student teaching experience, makes me a strong candidate for an elementary teaching position in the Manhattan School System.

My enclosed resume further highlights my qualifications. Would you please send me the necessary district application forms. I am interested in joining your faculty and will provide any additional information you need to consider my qualifications. I look forward to visiting with you during a personal interview.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A TEACHING POSITION

115 West Third
Phillipsburg, KS 67661
(785) 543-0000
Date

Dr. Frank Ybarra
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel
Topeka Public Schools USD 501
624 West 24th
Topeka, KS 66611-1294

Dear Dr. Ybarra:

In response to the advertisement in the June 26 edition of the Topeka Capitol Journal, I am making application for the Social Studies teaching position at Topeka High School. In May of this year, I received a B.S. degree in History from Fort Hays State University, and I am eager to apply my leadership and creativity in the classroom.

My directed teaching experience at Phillipsburg High School heightened my interest in teaching at the high school level. This rewarding experience gave me an opportunity to utilize a variety of teaching methods to stimulate and interest students in history, social studies, and government classes. My enclosed resume further highlights my related teaching accomplishments.

I am also interested in supervising after-school activities or clubs and coaching both volleyball and track. During my directed teaching, I had the opportunity to assist with the high school volleyball team. Additionally, I have directed after-school sports and activities sponsored by the local recreation commission for the past three years.

If any additional information is needed, please contact me. I am excited about the opportunity to teach at Topeka High School and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

LETTER OF INQUIRY

247 South Haven
Pomona, VA 24635
(703) 241-0004
Date

Mr. Michael Kennedy
Personnel Manager
Xerox Corporation
P.O. Box 7777
Rochester, NY 14606

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

In May of this year I will receive my B.A. degree in Fine Arts with a major in Graphic Design. Since I am interested in the Xerox Corporation, I am inquiring about career opportunities which may exist in your design or advertising departments.

I am very interested and involved in the activity of designing various kinds of items, including industrial products and packing material. My enclosed resume provides a more detailed description of my education, interests, and work experience.

I am particularly interested in the Xerox Corporation because of its reputation, the products Xerox produces, and the designs used in your products and advertisements. I feel my qualifications are competitive and my skills would prove to be an asset. I see this company as being progressive, and I look forward to the opportunity of being able to contribute to the company's continued success.

I would appreciate your consideration of my credentials. I am available for a personal interview at your convenience, and I will be in contact with you to arrange for a time to meet with you.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

MUTUAL FRIEND REFERRAL

389 East 32nd Street
Salina, KS 67401
(785) 826-0000
Date

Mr. Patrick DiLaura
Professional Staffing Representative
Hallmark Cards, Inc.
2501 McGee Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64141-6580

Dear Mr. DiLaura:

Our mutual friend, Mr. Kenneth Rutgers, has suggested that I get in touch with you to learn about business marketing opportunities with Hallmark Cards, Inc. Because my career interests are in strategic product development and product management, Mr. Rutgers believes that I could make a contribution to your organization.

In December of this year, I will receive a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing from Fort Hays State University. Throughout my academic career, I have had a special interest in the personal communication industry. My studies of marketing plan development and design, as well as merchandising and retailing concepts, have been especially rewarding, and now I would like to expand my abilities as a professional in the field.

As noted on my enclosed resume, I have gained insight into the operations of the Hallmark Corporation through my three years of employment at the Hays, Kansas, Hallmark store. This experience has further heightened my interest in the company.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how my skills can contribute to the success of Hallmark Cards, Inc. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule a personal interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A SPECIFIC VACANCY

7012 Southway
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-0000
Date

Mr. John Smith, District Manager
Marketing Personnel Affairs
The Upjohn Company
3500 Sprinkle Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Dear Mr. Smith:

In a recent issue of the Denver Post, I noticed your vacancy for a Pharmaceutical Representative in the Denver area. I am confident that with my experience and education I qualify as a competitive candidate and would like to be considered for the position.

With my position as a Surgical Nurse and my past retail sales experience, I feel I have the necessary qualifications needed to work in pharmaceutical sales. I have the ability to perform accurately and quickly when under pressure. This is demonstrated through my working with doctors and anesthesiologists under stressful conditions. I have developed a sensitivity to the importance of good communication skills, and this understanding will benefit me in relating to various medical professionals.

My friendly and outgoing personality has always been a plus in dealing with the public and medical personnel. I also have the ability to adapt quickly to change. My familiarity with clinical and hospital settings and my technical skills will prove useful to a career in Pharmaceutical Sales with the Upjohn Company.

I have enclosed my resume for your further consideration. I am eager to further discuss my qualifications with you during a personal interview. I will be in contact with you in the next ten days to arrange for an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR AN INTERNSHIP POSITION

4239 Clinton Street
Wichita, KS 67201
(316) 833-0408
Date

Ms. Elaine Johnson
Vice President and Intern Coordinator
American Creative Advertising
527 Parkway Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66100

Dear Ms. Johnson:

As my senior year at Fort Hays State University rapidly approaches, I am eager to apply and supplement my business administration and advertising studies through an internship. After researching advertising and public relations firms, I found that you offer an Advertising/Public Relations internship opportunity--and that many of my qualifications reflect my suitability for this position.

As my enclosed resume indicates, I have focused my studies and work experiences in business areas--particularly marketing and advertising. On a practical level, as Advertising Manager of The Leader (the university newspaper) I achieved record sales last year, helping the newspaper reach a yet unequalled financial security by implementing a unique sales/advertising incentive program. I gained basic accounting experience as a cashier at Whitham's Department Store, and based upon my work record and related interests, was asked to design seasonal merchandise displays.

I would like to speak with you to learn more about the specifics of the Advertising/Public Relations internship at American Creative Advertising. I will call you on Monday, January 18, should you not contact me before, so that we might arrange a date to discuss the details of this position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

SIMPLIFIED LETTER STYLE
(Used when there is no contact name listed)

230 Walnut Road
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 623-0000
Date

Personnel Department
Minneapolis Public Schools
807 N. Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413

SUBJECT LINE IN ALL CAPS

I am writing to inquire whether there will be fall teaching openings in the Minneapolis Public Schools for which I might be considered. My B.S. degree will be conferred from Fort Hays State University in May with a double major in elementary education and special education.

As you will note from the enclosed resume, I am currently student teaching in the special education department at Felten Middle School. Following completion of this eight week, full-day experience, I will be teaching in a third grade classroom at Harwood Elementary Magnet School in Kansas City, Missouri. My certification will be in both elementary and special education, and I am interested in securing a position in either subject area.

My credentials, including references, are on file at Career Services, Fort Hays State University. I would appreciate receiving application materials and any additional information regarding application procedures. Thank you for your consideration.

(Handwritten Signature)

YOUR NAME TYPED IN ALL CAPS

Enclosure