

9. APPLYING FOR A JOB II

WRITING A COVER LETTER

1. Write your ideas into the table:

What would your future employer like to know about you?	What would you like to tell your future employer about yourself?

Are both lists the same?

Now compare your lists with a colleague's. Discuss the similarities and differences.

2. Answer these questions:

Where would you look for a job?

Why do you write a cover letter? What is its purpose?

Where would you send it?

3. What information should be included in a cover letter? Make a list.

4. Look a letter of application and try to identify the six parts in it.

- a. I am an English teacher with an additional RSA qualification in TESL.
- b. I am teaching in Livingstone at the moment and also work for the Adult Literacy Scheme as a tutor in ESL.
- c. I am writing to enquire about the possibility of teaching English as a foreign language
- d. either on summer courses or in the longer term.
- e. I enclose a CV and would be glad to enlarge on this if required.
- f. I look forward to hearing from you.

5. Fill in the gaps in the letter with the words from the list¹

experience / enclosed / techniques / utilise / degree / databases / valuable / positions / part-time / skills

8 Russell Street
Cranford, Lancashire
MN22 8YY
rf333@hotmail.com

Mrs Matty Jenkyns
Personnel Manager
Manchester General Hospital
Hollbrook Avenue
Manchester
MN1 5BJ
7th February 2011

Dear Mrs Jenkyns,

I am writing to you regarding the advertisement your company placed in 'Scottish Recruitment' (1st February 2011) concerning in clinical diagnostics.

I have recently completed a five year course in biochemistry at the University of Strathclyde. I have a strong interest in laboratory and clinical diagnostics which I understand are predominantly carried out at this hospital. I am able to start the job immediately.

Through my course, I have been able to develop my interest in biochemistry, whilst improving my laboratory along with my numeracy skills. I have gained some in HPLC and have good computing skills, having used several scientific While at University, I have also been able to my skills in working with people through a variety of jobs. My work at a busy insurance office was in teaching me the importance of ascertaining customers' needs and providing clear and accurate information.

I hope that I might be considered for this position and look forward to hearing from you soon. Please find my CV where you will find further information.

Yours Sincerely

Rosalind Franklin



6. Read the following letter and identify what is wrong with it. Work in pairs. Try to spot as many mistakes as you can.

51 London Rd.
Liverpool L14 5PO
27 March 2004

Personnel Manager
French Food Import Company
Liverpool L11 4PO

Dear Sir/Madam,

I heard from a friend who reads the Western Mail that you were lookin for a personal Assistent to the director. I thought I would drop a line.

I've done a lot of typing for a large travel agency. I did it 3 years ago. Since then I've been working as a travel guide as I' excellent at speaking french and have a diploma from the French Chamber of Commerce. I enjoy the job, however, it is quite tiring so I felt I needed a change.

I have a contract until October 31 so I can start in november. I have completed a course in Office Management.

I'm really looking forward to hearing from you. Please, write soon.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Parker

PS Here's a copy of my CV.

PPS I also did an IT course in 2002.

How to write a good letter of application?

USEFUL TIPS

- as CV: positive, active, get attention; correct grammar, no abbreviations, no repetition, nice layout, simple and clear English, keep it short
- list your skills competencies + examples of having used them – use the most relevant material from your general CV (what is interesting for the company)
- write relevant information, mention something that is special about YOU (against other applicants) – something from the advertisement;
- + **mind the layout of a cover letter:** keep 1 page long, write to a named person, or Dear Sir/Madam, quote any reference numbers; end it with Yours sincerely/faithfully; under your signature, print or quote your full name

JOB INTERVIEW

7. LISTENING.² Listen to the interview and answer the following questions:

- a) Why is the applicant interested in the job?
 - 1.
 - 2.
- b) What was the previous job of each applicant?
 - 1.
 - 2.
- c) What is the reason for changing job?
 - 1.
 - 2.
- d) What is their personality?
 - 1.
 - 2.

8. Interviewee: Complete the following sentences so that they are true for you.

I think I'm quite.....

I'm not at all.....

I'm sometimes.....

I tend to be rather.....

People say I'm

I can't stand people who are.....

9. Interview myths.

Here are some tips for job interviews, some correct, some not. Your colleague has got a different list of such statements, each contradicting yours (1A versus 1B). Read the tips in pairs and decide which of them are real tips for success in each situation. A or B?

Student A

1. While waiting in the office, I could ask the secretary some friendly questions about the organisation, in case they ask her opinion about me.
2. If the interviewer asks me if I have any negative points and weaknesses, I should turn a possible negative situation into a positive one.
3. The most important time of the interview is the first five minutes. I should mind how I look and take good care what I am saying.
4. The interviewer is the only one who can ask questions.
5. If asked why I am leaving my job, I should say that I am looking for a job which can offer me greater challenge and more opportunities for using my skills.

Student B

1. While waiting in the office, I should just sit and wait to be called.
2. If the interviewer asks me if I have any negative points and weaknesses I should say that I have none.
3. The most important time of the interview is the last five minutes, when I will be discussing salary and closing the interview.
4. I can also ask questions about the organisation of the company.
5. If asked why I am leaving my job, I should criticize my colleagues or say I find my present work boring and low-paid.

INTERVIEW TIPS

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

Be Prepared!

Clothing: look beforehand what they company's people are wearing.

Come on time. Check the address well.

Do research. Look at job description, website, advertisement again.

Prepare answers for possible questions.

Have all your materials with you.

Take a deep breath before you enter the room; use a relaxation technique if necessary.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

Beware of body language!

Look the interviewer in the eyes. Try to relax and be yourself.

Wait to see if the interviewer offers a hand first.

Use 'open' body language. Sit comfortably with arms unfolded. Don't lean on, fold hands, don't sit with your hands behind your head – you'll look arrogant. No wriggling on the chair, playing with collar, etc.

Don't sit with a bag or briefcase on your knee.

Smile, but don't laugh inappropriately.

Be positive and alert.

Mind what you are saying!

Listen carefully what is asked, ask if you don't understand (many people hear what they want to hear).

Don't criticize people from your last or existing job / school / college.

Don't blame others for your misfortunes. Show that you can get on with other people.

Answer questions positively. Use positive words such as 'enjoy', 'pleased', 'liked', 'satisfaction', etc.

Keep your answers relevant to the question.

At the end, thank the interviewer for seeing you. Don't blame others for your misfortunes.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

After an interview you can write down questions, answers etc. and use later (feedback)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

➤ Typical interview questions:

Education:

- What was your favourite subject? Why?
- What subject did you like least? Why?
- What grades did you get?
- Why did you stop your education at this point?
- How do you think your qualifications will help you with this job?

Skills and experience:

- Tell me about a time when you had to use (...) skill.
- What experience do you have at...?
- How would you use your skills to deal with this situation?
- Tell me about a situation you handled well.
- Tell me about a difficulty you have faced in relation to...

Personal:

- Tell me about yourself (this is a very common opening question).
- What are your strengths / weaknesses?
- What would a friend say is good / irritating about you?
- What would you say is your biggest achievement to date?
- What was the biggest difficulty you faced in your last / present job?
- Where do you see yourself in your career in five / ten years?
- Why should we give you this job?
- Why are you applying for this particular job?
- What personal interests do you have?
- What are your salary expectations for this job?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- I wonder whether you have any questions you would like to ask me?

'Oh no!' questions

- You had five jobs in a year?
- You didn't actually pass the course you attended?
- Your last job paid considerably less than the one before?
- You were sacked?
- You have been unemployed for a year?
- Your reference leaves a lot to be desired?
- This job seems like a backward step?

10. HOMEWORK.

Write a cover letter applying for one of the advertisements from the last lesson. You can say the truth or invent something.

Prepare answers for typical interview questions. In the next lesson, you are going to enact a job interview.

Useful websites:

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk>

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/>

Sources: ¹ Adapted from: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/goodbadcovlet.htm> Accessed: Sept.30, 2011.

² O'Neill, R, Success at First Certificate, OUP, 1987. Unit 3, Focus 2.

Lesson adapted from Hana Němcová and Milada Pavlovová.