1939

Application Letters - Precursors to Your Job

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Recommended Citation
Sather, Mary Elva (1939) "Application Letters - Precursors to Your Job," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 19 : No. 8 , Article 3.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol19/iss8/3

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LETTER writing may be sheer fun to you, but it is of serious concern to the senior who is submitting letters of application.

Sympathetically, mother overlooks errors in those scribbled notes home, but to an employer with a hundred other letters before him, any indications of carelessness are sufficient cause to eliminate you.

One of the first lessons that every graduate should learn is the ability to express himself effectively on paper. Employers weed out applications through their letters. They take the four or five best and ask for interviews. Too many letters do not give sufficient information about the candidate.

The most common form of application letter includes the application embodied in the letter. Another consists of a short letter attached to a complete application form.

It is necessary to attract favorable attention by the layout of the letter. This is not as much a matter of individual taste as is often believed. There are essential forms which every business letter and especially every letter of application follows.

As your letter is a personal representative, it should be written on a good quality white bond paper, 8½ by 11 inches. It must convey the impression that the writer is well dressed, not over-dressed and showy. Perfumed stationery is unthinkable! Fraternity paper, colored, checked or gold-initial stamped note-paper is definitely poor taste.

In arranging the letter on the page, consider the law of balance. Do not crowd the top of the page and leave white space at the bottom. Think of the letter as a picture and the paper on which it is written, a frame.

Each letter consists of the salutation, the body of the letter and the complimentary closing. In the most common forms of application, the body of the letter is divided into four or five parts — introduction, education, experience, an optional paragraph and the closing paragraph.

The first paragraph is the most difficult to write. It can be compared to the headline of a newspaper. Its chief purpose is to attract attention so that the entire letter will be read. Introduce yourself; tell how you happen to be writing.

The purpose of the second paragraph is to arouse interest or curiosity about the applicant. Describe your training in detail and in such a manner that the prospective employer is convinced that you are the person he wants.

April, 1940
FABRICS for Spring

Rayon Poplin and Gabardine
for suits and dresses, 69c yd.
39 in. wide, washable.

Cotton Seersuckers
39c, 59c, 69c yd. Do not require ironing.

“Lovely Lady” Voile

All Wool Crepes and Flannels
Light spring colors. $1.98 yd.
54 in. wide.

May McCall and Hollywood Patterns in stock at

STEPHENVSON’S
Opposite Campus
Famous For Fabrics

Biography of a Home Economist

Dorothev Cooley Thompson, ‘25, now “Mary Martensen” of the Chicago Herald American, came under the benign influence of the journalism department after her graduation.

In relating her post-graduate experience, she says, “I feel very proud of the fact that I was the first Iowa State graduate to be assistant bulletin editor under Mr. F. W. Beckman, head of the Journalism Department at that time.”

Mrs. Thompson’s professional debut in foods was made in 1928 in field work for General Foods Corporation, where she managed food shows and cooking schools.

In commenting on her Chicago newspaper work, Mrs. Thompson said when she started to write food copy for the Chicago Daily News in 1935, she had learned that chocolate éclairs and cucumber hollandaise weren’t especially important to most women, but that good pie crust and planning three meals out of a 4 pound roast were.

Mrs. Thompson recently joined the staff of the Chicago Herald American, where seven women under her supervision write copy for seven issues of the paper each week. She answers from 300 to 400 letters a day, takes care of countless telephone calls, gives a daily foods demonstration for women’s club groups, tests recipes, prepares special recipe leaflets and in other ways makes her department a service to readers. “It’s all part of my job,” she says.

In private life, her home hobby is cooking for her husband, Louis Thompson, ‘27.

—Gaynold Carroll

Application Letters—

(Continued from page 3.)

suading the employer to suggest an interview. Tell where your credentials may be secured or give the names of references. Do not list references unless you have first secured permission. This is common courtesy, and the replies that are sent will be more helpful. Never ask an employer to answer by return mail.

The second method, the short letter attached to the application form, is more difficult to write, but it is preferred by many employers. It permits originality and conveys the personality of the writer more convincingly. Before attempting to write this kind of a letter, get all the information you can about the company, study the requirements of the job, and then match yourself to fit them.

After you have listed all of the qualifications you possess which you think are important for the particular job, try different ways of expressing yourself to show both your preparation for and your interest in the work.

The application form which accompanies the letter presents in tabulation your training, experience and the names and addresses of references. Here again, if you have not had actual experience, describe specific courses which may be considered the equivalent of experience. State in detail the part you have taken in campus activities and list any instances which prove your ability to work with others.