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# Make your application stand out

Your letter of application is perhaps the most vital tool that you will use in your job hunting process. In many cases, you will not have spoken to someone prior to submission of your "paperwork" - so this introduction must make you shine and stand out from the pack!

There are three simple rules that can be applied to your letter of application. They are: keep it simple, keep it honest and keep it balanced.

## First steps

Read the job advertisement carefully and ensure that you understand it. Highlight key criteria, competencies and required qualifications and ask yourself, "Do you really have the abilities, skills, experience and personal attributes to successfully carry out this role?"

If yes, then continue with your application. If you can't tick all the boxes in that checklist, don't worry! Carefully consider if the role may still be right for you if the employer is able to accommodate some learning and growth on the job. Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

## Keep it simple

Identify and refer to the position you are enquiring about using reference numbers as stated in the job advertisement.

Don't forget to include your own details at the top of the letter of application. Provide contact numbers where you can be reached on during the day and in the evenings.

In a few sentences, provide a snapshot of your past experience and/or achievements, outlining your academic qualifications and the reasons for your commitment to that level of study.

Continue with a summary of your current employment and academic status and complete the brief synopsis by commenting on your future aspirations to apply your qualifications, experience and knowledge to the job role.

The next paragraph should comment on your knowledge of the employer company and the position you are applying for.

Ensure that you conclude with a clear idea of how to contact you and when you can start work.

## Keep it honest

Remember that what you state in your letter is what the employer will ask you to expand on at the interview. As such, do not overstate (or worse, fabricate) tasks, duties or responsibilities.

This letter is one of your only opportunities to present yourself to potential employers, so remember to follow the A.I.D.A principle:

- **Attention:** You must grab the reader's attention with relevant information.
- **Interest:** You must hold the reader's interest for the duration of the letter.
- **Desire:** You must create a desire for the reader to meet you.
- **Action:** You must give the reader enough information to springboard them into action - that is to invite you for an interview!



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## Keep it balanced

Maintain a degree of balance between selling yourself in the best possible light and remaining humble in your achievements and successes. Whilst selling yourself in a letter may not come naturally to many people, "selling yourself short" will not result in an interview. The balance must also extend to what you know about the company - displaying knowledge of background and core business demonstrates that you have actively researched the employer. However, making assumptions that you understand the company culture and intimate business strategies is presumptuous.