

COMMUNICATION

COVER LETTERS, THANK YOU LETTERS, LINKEDIN, EMAIL

FIRST STEPS

- ✓ Research the company or individual you will be contacting.
- ✓ Assess your skills and strengths; then make sure they stand out in your communications.
- ✓ Write rough drafts and have them reviewed!
- ✓ Determine appropriate method(s) of communication.

HOW DO I COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH EMPLOYERS?

Communicating effectively with employers involves a variety of tactics. This handout will provide tips and information about how to communicate most effectively using the following written forms:

- **Cover Letters:** Having a good cover letter should effectively add personality to your application; it is the ideal place to express your skills and elaborate on experiences listed on your résumé.
- **Thank You Letters:** Writing a thank you letter shows your interest in the position and employer. Writing a thank you letter (or emailing one) can truly make you stand out from other applicants.
- **LinkedIn:** Interacting professionally with connections is an excellent way to build your network.
- **Email Communication:** Using proper etiquette and grammar are key when using email!

COVER LETTERS

WHAT IS IT?

A cover letter is intended to complement your résumé by adding a personal touch to your application:

- **Tell** the employer what type of position you are seeking and why.
- **Entice** the employer to learn more about you by examining your résumé.
- **Elaborate** on your experiences and the ways they have made you qualified for the position.
- **Impress** the employer by demonstrating your knowledge about the company and/or its goals.
- **Show** the employer how well you can express yourself in written communication.

GETTING STARTED

Address the letter to a specific individual. Call to request the name/title of the person responsible for hiring. You may direct the letter to an individual, a specific job title, or a group. Some examples include John/Jane Doe or Hiring Committee. You can also begin the letter without a salutation.

Include the position and describe your relevant qualifications. Don't just list the contents of your résumé! Detail specific experiences relevant to the job and expand upon how these will make you a good fit for the position.

MU CAREER CENTER

Lower Level,
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Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and requirements of the position. How will *the employer* benefit by hiring you? Tell the employer why *you* are uniquely suited for the job, and connect your experience and qualifications to the job description. Company websites and job descriptions offer clues about what skills and characteristics to highlight. Use this information to let them know that you are aware of and possess exactly what they are looking for!

COVER LETTER STRUCTURE

SAMPLE STUDENT

123 Mizzou Way • Columbia, Missouri 65201 • (573) 123-4567
samplestudent@mail.missouri.edu • www.linkedin.com/in/samplestudent

Recruiter or Employer's Full Name
Recruiter's Job Title
Department Name
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear _____,

While researching publishing companies online, I discovered an opening on your firm's website for an Editorial Assistant. I would like to be considered for this position at the company headquarters in Kansas City and am very excited about the opportunity to apply. This May, I will graduate from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in English, and I would like to use the knowledge, skills, and experience that I have gained to contribute to Sunshine Publishing.

Through valuable experiences at several newspapers and magazines, I have found a love for all things layout, editing and feature writing. For the past year, I have been the lead copy editor for The Maneater, a bi-weekly campus newspaper with a readership of 30,000. In addition, I interned as a writer and editor for Mizzou Weekly, a faculty and staff publication, and reported on the health and science beat for the Columbia Missourian. By creating copy and editing, I have improved my writing skills, learned to develop engaging stories, and honed my eye for detail and accuracy. If selected, I am confident I will bring creativity, professionalism, and a unique writing style to the job.

Sunshine Publishing's commitment to young readers and reputation for excellence are compelling reasons why I would like to join your team. My communication style would fit well with the youth population your publications reach. A passion for crafting messages and captivating a reader through storytelling are values I share with your current staff. Contributing to a firm, who through content writing and graphic representation bring to life such effective publications, would be extremely motivating and exciting if given the chance to do so.

I would like to discuss my interests and qualifications with you in person and have enclosed a résumé for your review. You may reach me at samplestudent@mail.missouri.edu or (573)123-4567, and can reference writing samples and additional information through www.linkedin.com/in/samplestudent. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sample Student
Sample Student

The **opening paragraph** should state **why you are writing**.

- Explain why you are interested in the organization and position.
- State where you found the position.
- If someone referred you to the employer, this is the best place to mention that person's name.
- Be sure to entice the reader and make them want to know you better through your enthusiasm.

The **second paragraph** is devoted to explaining **how you are qualified**.

- Draw attention to your résumé and highlight specific skills, achievements, and qualifications related to the position.
- Describe how your background will prepare you to do this job well.
- Avoid making this section into a list by breaking things up using short examples to expand upon and illustrate certain qualities.

The **third paragraph** states **why you are right for this job**.

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and industry to show the employer that you are informed about the type of work and experience required.
- Restate why you should be considered for the position by identifying ways you fit with their mission, goals, and/or culture.
- Focus on what you can contribute to them, not what they can do for you.

The **closing paragraph** states **what you will do next** or what you would like the recipient of the letter to do next.

- Request an in-person meeting or inform the employer of a specific timeframe when you will contact them.
- Restate your phone number and email address if not included in heading.
- Thank the employer for their time.

THANK YOU LETTERS

PURPOSE

A thank you letter should be sent after you meet a networking contact, an informational interview, a job shadowing experience, a scholarship meeting, internship or job interview. The general purpose of a thank you letter is to show gratitude to the contact for his or her time and information. A thank you letter also provides you with another chance to remind an interviewer of your interest in the position/award and the skills that you have to offer.

TIMELINESS

Thank you letters should be sent promptly after the interaction (within 24 hours if possible), because you will still be on the contact's mind. Timely thank you letters make a good impression on a person considering you for a job or potential member of your long-term network. Timeliness is particularly important in potential employment situations where the employer might make a quick hiring decision.

FORMAT

Depending on the situation and the contact to which you are writing the letter, you can choose between a handwritten note, a typed letter, or an email (or a combination of them). If you have a more casual contact or if the organization for which you are interviewing is a small business or non-profit organization, it might be more appropriate to send a handwritten note or card. In cases of a large corporation or a more formal business contact, you might consider a business letter or an email. Lastly, an email format would be recommended if you are interviewing with a group who may be making their hiring decision in a very short time frame from when you interview. You can always follow up with a handwritten note afterwards.

ADDRESSING

Ideally, you should send a separate thank you letter to each person with whom you had contact. If you were a part of a panel interview, you should send a letter to each interviewer, if possible. If for some reason you were not able to get everyone's full name, consider contacting an administrative associate with the company or organization; you can ask for more details and correct information regarding proper spelling, position titles, addresses, and so forth. Try to get business cards from your interviewers before you leave the interview, or look them up on LinkedIn!

IMPACT

In many cases, a simple thank you letter addressing your genuine interest and gratitude can make the difference between being hired and being overlooked. Amidst a job search, you should look for any opportunity to set yourself apart such as a tailored cover letter, making a follow-up phone call directly to an employer to introduce yourself after you send in an application, or a personal thank you note. Only about 10% of candidates send a thank you letter, so take the time to make yourself stand out!

SUGGESTED THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT AND EXAMPLE

SAMPLE STUDENT

123 Mizzou Way • Columbia, Missouri 65201 • (573) 123-4567
 samplestudent@mail.missouri.edu • www.linkedin.com/in/samplestudent

Interviewer's Full Name
 Interviewer's Job Title
 Department Name
 Company Name
 Street Address
 City, State Zip Code

Heading:

- If you are sending an email, it is recommended that you omit this section.

Dear _____,

Paragraph One:

- Thank the interviewer for his or her time, and make some mention of the interview.

Thank you for the opportunity to interview yesterday for the Editorial Assistant position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about Sunshine Publishing. Your approach to publication distribution is sophisticated and cutting-edge, which is exactly what I am looking for in an organization.

Paragraph Two:

- Reiterate your interest in the position and remind the interviewer of your relevant skills and experience. Stress the "fit" between you and the company.

Sunshine Publishing appears to be growing in a direction that is exciting and innovative. Your organization's emphasis on impeccable stories parallels my interests in utilizing my editorial skills in a meaningful way. The interview with you and your staff confirmed my initial positive impressions of Sunshine Publishing, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you. My prior experience at the Maneater, Mizzou Weekly, and Columbia Missourian will allow me to become a productive member of your team who is able to contribute quickly to the mission of the organization.

Paragraph Three:

- Extend final thanks and indicate where you can be reached (if sending an email, state your email adress).

Again, thank you for your consideration. If you need any additional information, please feel free to email me at samplestudent@mail.missouri.edu or call me at (573) 123-4567.

Sincerely,
Sample Student
 Sample Student

For both cover letters and thank you letters, providing specific examples of your skills/qualifications and how they would benefit the organization will make the communication more impactful.

EXAMPLE STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR COVER & THANK YOU LETTERS

STANDARD	DECENT	IDEAL
I am good at participating in teams.	I typically like to make sure all voices are heard when participating in teams so everyone feels included and valuable.	I make sure all voices are heard when participating in teams to ensure everyone feels included and valued. I look forward to using these skills while learning the dynamics of the team at ().

LINKEDIN COMMUNICATION

GETTING STARTED

LinkedIn is an excellent tool that allows users to connect one-on-one with nearly anyone in the world. Knowing how to properly communicate through LinkedIn can result in the development of important connections and opportunities. There are two typical types of messages sent on LinkedIn: making a new connection, or an informational interview request.

NEW CONNECTION FORMAT AND EXAMPLE

Definition: Making connections on LinkedIn is a great way to invite someone to join your professional network. Focus on building connections that matter that are with people you know, have mutual connections with, or are in our area of interest.

Hello Employer,

I am a Communications major at the University of Missouri who is exploring careers in social media management. I am greatly interested in your background and would appreciate your advice on working in the industry. I hope we can connect and have a follow up conversation at your convenience.

Thank you!

Introduce yourself: reference how you know them, or a commonality you share.

Add a compliment or context such as “I’ve enjoyed reading your blog” or “we both started out at the same publishing company”.

Extend the connection by requesting to meet with them or have a follow up conversation.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW FORMAT AND EXAMPLE

Definition: Informational interviewing involves directly contacting a professional in our field or company of interest and requesting time to ask questions regarding the position and industry.

Subject: Request for Informational Interview

Dear Contact,

Hello, my name is Sample Student and I wanted to thank you so much for connecting with me. I am hoping there would be an opportunity to take 10 minutes of your time via phone or Skype to ask some questions about working in social media management. I am entering the field as a recent graduate and would appreciate learning from your perspective regarding the industry, what you like best about your job, and any advice you might have for me. Your feedback would be greatly valued; do you have availability next week for a quick conversation?

Thank you in advance for your time!

Start with a specific subject: you should be explicit about the request you are making.

Introduce yourself.

Be concise: quickly express why you are writing.

Wrap it up by inquiring about their availability.

Express your thanks.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION – INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP

GETTING STARTED

- Email inquiry can be used to reiterate your interest in a position
- You should allow the appropriate amount of time to pass before sending an email inquiry
- Sending a follow-up email can make you stand out from other candidates

EMAIL INQUIRY FORMAT AND EXAMPLE

Date: Today's Date
From: Sample Student
Subject: Editorial Assistant Position
To: sample.employer@sunshinepublishing.com

Dear Employer,

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of interviewing with you and your staff regarding the Editorial Assistant position with Sunshine Publishing. Per your suggestion, I am contacting you to check on the status of the hiring process.

I am still very interested in the position, and would be eager to join your team of incredibly passionate and talented professionals who are dedicating their time to make a better community for our youth here in the Columbia area.

Please feel free to contact me at (573) 123-4567 or samplestudent@mail.missouri.edu if you require any further information from me or if you have any updates on the process.

Thank you very much again for your time and consideration.

Cordially,
Sample Student

Include the position you interviewed for in the subject line.

Reference the time of your interview and reiterate your interest in the position. You may also restate what makes you qualified.

Your contact information should be included in your conclusion.

Remember!

- When writing, avoid listing your skills and starting all sentences with “I”.
- Avoid using abbreviations, text lingo, and slang
- These are all examples of professional communication; be sure to use proper spelling/grammar.
- Sound positive and confident in all of your communications.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about your job search and to schedule a mock interview.
- ✓ Visit <https://career.missouri.edu> and click on the “Resources” Tab to visit [Mizzou Career Tools](#), where you can search our site for more handouts on this and other topics relevant to you!