

THE COVER LETTER



Always include a cover letter with your vita. Your cover letter should bring your vita alive and highlight experience in more detail that is relevant to the institution or the position. Never send form letters for this reason.

Be sure to address your letter to a specific person. For US Schools, Heiberger and Vick (1992) suggest referring to the *Yearbook of Higher Education* or other higher education directories to locate names of department chairpersons. Research both the institution and department so that you can show some knowledge about their needs within your letter.

Ensure that your letter is well written as it will be scrutinized for both content and style. Use simple, direct language. If English is not your first language, have a native speaker read and edit your drafts. Proofread both your CV and letter several times and watch for typographical and grammatical errors. When you're ready, print your document on high-quality paper with a laser printer or letter-quality printer.

As a general guideline, letters in the sciences and social sciences tend to be 1 page in length whereas letters for positions in the humanities can be up to 2 pages.

Cover Letter Format

There are 3 key sections in the cover letter:

First paragraph: Explain why you are writing and indicate how you heard about the position.

Middle paragraphs(s): Highlight your education, experience and skills as they relate to the position. Describe what you have to offer without repeating your vita word for word. Explain your research interests and why you would like to work for this particular department and institution. If the position involves teaching, do express enthusiasm and past experience.

Final paragraph: Addresses how you can be reached as well as an offer to provide additional materials or information.

Heiberger, Mary (1992). *The Academic Job Search Handbook*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Telephone Skills Tips!

- ☒ smile as you speak into the phone
- ☒ success at reaching your party increases when you call first thing in the morning, immediately before or after lunch, or late in the afternoon
- ☒ the shorter the call the better. People are busy. If no interview is possible as a result of your call, suggest dropping off your resume and introducing yourself in person at the same time.
- ☒ if you reach the voice mail, call three times before leaving a message. If someone referred you to this person, use this information as part of your message.
- ☒ use the secretary as a valuable ally in helping you reach your contact. If you are unable to reach the person initially, ask when would be a good time to call again. If the secretary asks what company you are from, suggest your call is a business matter that you prefer to discuss directly with Mrs X. Learn and use the secretary's name. Be polite at all times.
- ☒ have the name and title of the person you are calling available in front of you.
- ☒ be prepared for some rejection and don't take it personally. It's all part of the process!

Conducting the Information Interview.....

Remember that you are not asking for a job! Your purpose is to get information from someone who has real-world experience in the field. In this situation *you* ask the questions, and in an employment interview it would be the other way around.

During the interview, practice good listening skills and don't do all of the talking. Before the interview make sure that you research the organization! Learn about the company and be prepared to ask intelligent questions. Prepare a list of questions and bring them with you. It will help you keep the conversation on track and ensure that you leave with the information you need.

During this interview you will have two main goals:

Goal 1: Obtain specific information on what it is like to work in the field. Does it use your skills and satisfy your interests? You need this information to help decide if this is indeed the career for you.

Goal 2: Determine the needs and problems you might face if you were to choose this line of work. This will help you decide how well you can meet those needs, and it can also help when you become an active job seeker because you will be able to tell a prospective employer how you can meet those needs.

(volunteer)
in brackets

Database Designer (student project), MLIS program, UBC Sep-Dec 01
Worked with a team of students to design a database for UBC's
International Student Exchange office.

- Instantiated a relational data model within Access to store and retrieve over 5000 records with 50 fields of information
- Received grade of "A" for effectively applying the principles of cataloguing, classification and subject analysis into the database design

Reference Librarian Science & Engineering Library, UBC Jan-Apr 02
Assisted patrons in use of university's online catalogue, subject-related indexes and databases

- Improved client's ability to perform successful on-line searches by creating a series of instructional pamphlets
- Enabled Library to respond proactively to client's needs by developing an on-line customer feedback survey

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Rep Sears, Vancouver B.C. Sep 99 - Present

- Served customers in the linen and house wares department
- Maintained customer satisfaction by offering personable, efficient service with a smile

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

B.C. Library Association, Member

Feb 2002 to Present

UBC Special Library Association, Member

Sep 2002 to present

Western Canada Wilderness Committee

2000 - Present

HOBBIES

Reading, Swimming, Hiking, Traveling

E-MAIL SARAJAN@HOTMAIL.COM

123 UNIVERSITY AVENUE • VANCOUVER, BC V7Y 1Y1 • PHONE (604) 555-1111

2 pages

No references (at interview bring them)

VERSION A

123 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
VANCOUVER B.C., V7Y 1T1

604 555 1111

SARAJAN@HOTMAIL.COM

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position where excellent database design and knowledge management skills are needed. My long-term goal is to obtain a position as a Librarian/ Database Manager.

HIGHLIGHT OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Six months experience classifying and cataloguing information for a non-profit center's web-site (www.healthnow.org)
- Masters of Library and Information Studies, UBC: *expected completion, December 2003*
- A keen understanding of user's expectations from knowledge-focused websites
- A natural leader who readily takes initiative
- Excellent library / information technology skills: Windows, Access, Ariel, Web CT, MS Office, Internet Research, and HTML

EDUCATION

Masters Library and Information Studies. Graduation – Dec 2003

- School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, UBC.
- Courses include: Knowledge Management; Libraries and the Internet; and Database Design.

Bachelor Arts, Honours History (Dean's List) UBC, 1999

RELATED EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Information Manager (Volunteer), Health Now, Vancouver B.C.

Apr – Sep/ 02

Classified and catalogued information for a non-profit health information center. The revised system was used to develop the center's new knowledge-based website.

- Streamlined the center's information base from 150 to 30 categories
- Received positive feedback from web-developers regarding my excellent classification and organizational skills

add research (if needed)

Your Name

Your street address • City, Province, and Postal Code • (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Objective: A position as XXXXXX.

RELEVANT SKILLS

- Overview of experience in work* at all relevant to the objective above.
 - Credentials or education or training, relevant to this objective.
 - A key accomplishment** that shows you're a "hot candidate" for this job.
 - A strength/characteristic** of yours, that's important to you and relevant to this job.
 - Something else the employer should know ... a skill, trait, accomplishment**.
- *including unpaid work ** reflected in the details below, of course

EXPERIENCE

19xx-present **ORGANIZATION NAME, City (and Province if needed)**
Title
A two-line overview of your essential role in this company, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- An accomplishment from THIS job, illustrating a skill needed in the NEW job.
- Another accomplishment from this job, illustrating a skill needed in the new job.
- Another activity from this job, illustrating a skill needed in the new job.

19xx-xx **ORGANIZATION NAME, City**
Title
A two-line overview of your essential role in this company, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- An accomplishment from THIS job, illustrating a skill needed in the NEW job.
 - A substatement that elaborates on one aspect of the accomplishment above.
 - Another substatement on another aspect of that accomplishment.
 - Another substatement on another aspect of that accomplishment.

19xx-xx **ORGANIZATION NAME, City**
Title
A two-line overview of your essential role in this company, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- An accomplishment from THIS job, illustrating a skill needed in the NEW job.
- Another accomplishment from this job, illustrating a skill needed in the new job.
- Another activity from this job, illustrating a skill needed in the new job.

19xx-xx **ORGANIZATION NAME, City**
Job Title
A two-line overview of your essential role in this company, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- An accomplishment from THIS job, illustrating a skill needed in the NEW job.
 - A substatement that elaborates on one aspect of the accomplishment above.
 - A substatement that elaborates on another aspect of that accomplishment.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

19xx-xx College or University Name, Somewhere, Some Province
Name of Your Diploma, Degree or Credential

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

COVER LETTER

Your Street
City, Province
Postal Code

Date

Name of Employer/Contact
Title or position
Company Name
Street Address
City, Province
Postal Code

Dear (Name of Contact):

Opening Paragraph: WHY YOU ARE WRITING

- ☐ Open with a strong sentence that will capture the employer's interest
- ☐ For advertised positions, make reference to the file number and position title, how you heard of the opening or what type of work you are applying for. If no position has been advertised, indicate that you are investigating career possibilities in the field.

Second Paragraph: WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

- ☐ Brief statements about your skills, experience and accomplishments that will arouse the employer's curiosity.
- ☐ Relate your talents to what the employer might be looking for.

Third Paragraph: WHY THIS COMPANY

- ☐ Explain briefly why you are interested in working for this employer.
- ☐ Demonstrate that you know something about the organization.

Closing Paragraph: FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Request an interview and indicate that you will call to arrange a suitable time.

Yours Sincerely,

Name Signed Here

Name Typed Here

Your Address
Date

Professor Senior
Department of English
Faculty of Arts
University
Address

Dear Professor Senior:

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor in Hebrew Literature beginning in fall 2003. I am a doctoral candidate in modern Hebrew and Arabic literature at the University of British Columbia and expect to graduate in May 2003. Two chapters of my dissertation have been completed to date and presented to my department.

My dissertation examines the issues of biculturalism, identity and the mediation of past and present, particularly as they are expressed through language choice. Analysing the writings of Iraqi-born Israelis within the context of exile literature, I will explore the factors involved in the choice of language and its effects on thematic and form aspects of the literature. Through textual analysis and the interviews I conducted with the authors themselves, I demonstrate that this choice is more a product of sociopolitical orientation than of linguistic competency. The project not only contributes to the study of Israeli literature but also adds a nonwestern perspective to the study of exile literature and multiculturalism in general.

I have considerable teaching experience. As a graduate student, I was chosen to teach in the "modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation" course. This course included works translated from Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Hebrew. I lectured on the genre of poetry and the history of Hebrew Literature in addition to leading discussions on Israeli works. I am looking for a position that will allow me to teach Modern Hebrew language while I continue my interests in Hebrew literature.

In addition to my teaching experience, I have also organized a new weekly lecture series inviting speakers who presented a wide range of perspectives and topics on the Middle East such as the political shifts in Israel and popular Egyptian music.

I will be presenting a paper at the Association of Jewish Studies conference in April. I would be pleased to meet you then or at any other time that is convenient for you. Please find my curriculum vitae enclosed and letters of recommendation will follow under separate cover. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Candidate

Enclosure