



CLC & Capstone

Before we delve into the issues to connect between career and life, it's important to ensure that you have some of the basic tools needed to serve as a foundation for your upcoming year.

But don't worry, you have already done most of the hard work!

In this lesson and assignment, you will perfect your complete *application package* so it is ready to go whenever needed. An application package consists of a complete application form, a cover letter, a resume (with complete references), sample interview question responses and a follow up or thank you note. Chances are you have already done each of these things in your past career education courses; in CLC it's important just ensure they are complete and polished up, ready to present!

Here are some hints for successful application packages:

Application Forms:

- 1. Be choosy** - Before filling out an application form do your research. Check the job description to see if it sounds like something you would like to do, and the company sounds like a place you want to work. Often success comes down to being a good fit for the job and the company.
- 2. Don't dive straight in** - Have a good read of the form before you start writing. What is each question really asking? Make notes on the key points you need to cover, or ask for two application forms so you can write a rough draft and a final draft.
- 3. Match your skills with the job description** - forms often have a big blank section asking why you are suited to the role. This can be tricky to get right. Show how you match each of the requirements outlined in the job description and give examples where you can. It's also a good place to show your enthusiasm and perhaps include a sentence about why you want to work for the company.
- 4. Stick to the word count** - When faced with a blank white box, the temptation can be to throw in as much detail and information about yourself as possible. So if the application gives a specific word count, don't exceed it! Instead, write clear, concise answers and keep to the point.
- 5. Make sure you include all the information needed** - Make sure you've filled in every section of the application form. Double check at the end before submitting it. Leaving out any key information could cost you the job.
- 6. Check and check again** - Before you submit any job application, read and re-read what you've written. Any spelling or grammar mistakes can really damage your chances of being invited in for an interview. After all, recruiters want to know you put time and effort into your application.

7. Make a copy - Before you submit, make a copy of your application form. Once you've handed it in, it's not always possible to see it again. If you are called for an interview, it's useful to remind yourself what you said. It can also be a helpful starting point for future job applications.

*Adapted from: <https://icould.com/stories/7-tips-for-successful-application-forms/>

Cover Letters:

1. Select the right type of cover letter - There are several types of cover letters that can be sent to employers and contacts. For example, there are traditional cover letters, which are written to apply for specific job openings. There are also letters of interest (also known as prospecting letters), in which you ask about possible job openings at a company.

2. Go beyond the resume - Your cover letter should not be just another version of your resume. Instead, this letter should provide specific evidence of what you will bring to the company. Pick two to three skills or abilities you want to highlight. Then offer examples of times you demonstrated those traits. Whenever possible, include evidence or examples to show how you have made a difference to places you have worked or volunteered for. If you don't have any work experience, make sure to highlight your transferable skills in your resume. Provide evidence from projects, classes, or volunteer work that demonstrates these skills.

3. Write a custom cover letter - A hiring manager can quickly tell if you have written a generic cover letter for every job. That is a quick way to get your application thrown out. Instead, target each letter to fit the specific job. Include keywords from the job listing in your cover letter as well. Take the time to showcase your personality and explain how you'd be a terrific fit for the position and the company.

4. Don't point out what you're missing - Generally, don't apologize for anything in your cover letter. If you are lacking a required skill or degree, don't mention it. That will only highlight what you don't have. Instead, focus on highlighting the skills and experiences you do have, and explain how they make you a great fit for the job.

5. Try to find a contact person - Taking the time to get personal is really important. Find out as much as you can about the company and the hiring manager. Be sure to address your cover letter to the specific hiring manager who will be reading your letter. If you don't know who that person is, check out the company website, or even call the company and ask.

6. Format your cover letter properly - You want your cover letter not only to include the proper information, but also to look polished. Therefore, be sure to format your cover letter properly. If you are sending a physical letter, be sure to use business letter format. Include your contact information, the date, and the contact information of the employer at the top of the letter. If you are sending your cover letter as an email, your format will be a bit different. You will also need to include a subject line that mentions your name and the job title.

A cover letter should not be longer than a page (three to four paragraphs at most). If your cover letter is a bit too long, you can adjust the margins to give yourself more space. However, you want to have plenty of white space in your cover letter, so don't make the margins too small.

Also include a space between your greeting, between each paragraph, and after your closing. This will add white space as well. No matter how you send your cover letter, be sure to pick a simple, readable font.

7. Be yourself - You want your cover letter to be professional. However, this does not mean you have to use awkwardly formal language. Avoid phrases that don't feel natural, like "Dear Sir or Madam," or "I wish to convey my sincere interest in a position at your exquisite institution." Instead, use clear, straightforward language.

8. Review cover letter examples - Take the time to review cover letter examples before you start writing your own. Examples can give you an idea of how to structure your own letter, and what information to include. While it is useful to look at examples, be sure to change any letter sample to fit your own skills and abilities, and the job you are applying for.

9. Edit your letter - Because hiring managers look at hundreds of applicants, a small typo can make or break your chances of getting an interview. Therefore, be sure to thoroughly proofread your cover letter (and all of your application materials, for that matter). Read through your letter, looking for any spelling or grammar errors. Consider reading your letter out loud – it is a useful way to check for mistakes. Make sure you have the correct company name, hiring manager's name and date in your heading. Ask others to read your letter for feedback.

10. Send a cover letter that will get read - The most important part of sending a cover letter is to follow the employer's instructions. If the job posting says to include your cover letter and resume as an email attachment, attach Microsoft Word or PDF files to your email message. If the hiring manager says he or she wants you to submit your materials using an online application system, don't mail a physical application.

* Adapted from: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-cover-letter-writing-tips-2060304>

Resumes:

Even though you are still a student, you have a lot of experience and skills that need to be on your resume! Here are some hints for students writing resumes.

1. Focus on education - Emphasize your academic history. Along with the name of your school grade, include any achievements, such as a high GPA or any academic awards. If you have taken courses related to the job you're applying for, list those as well, for example, if you are applying to a restaurant, make sure you mention that you've taken food studies in Grades 11 and 12!

2. Include relevant jobs and experience - Think about the skills and experiences required of the job you want. Include any jobs or past experience where you developed

these qualities. Even if your work experiences aren't directly related, think of ways to highlight experiences you had that are relevant to the job you want.

3. Include extracurricular activities - Because you likely have limited work experience, emphasize any non-work activities. These might include clubs, sports, babysitting, volunteer work, or community service. All of these activities can show your skills and abilities.

4. Include leadership experience - Have you held a position in a club, or been a captain on a sports team? Have you had any leadership responsibilities at your previous jobs? Be sure to list these experiences, as they show your ability to lead a team.

5. Use action verbs - Action verbs help show your responsibility. When describing your achievements, use action words. Words like *led*, *researched* and *created* to portray your experiences in an energetic way.

6. Quantify when possible - Whenever possible, include numbers to show your achievements. For example, you might say that you worked the cash register at a store that managed \$10,000 daily, or that you helped 50 - 100 customers daily at your retail job.

7. Edit, edit, edit. - Proofread your resume carefully before submitting it. A clean, error-free resume will make you look professional. Ask a friend or family member to read the resume for you as well.

8. Use a resume example - Use a resume example to guide your own writing. A resume example can help you decide what kind of content to include, as well as how to format your resume. However, be sure to tailor a resume example to fit your own experiences, and the job you are applying for.

*Adapted from: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/college-student-resume-example-2063202>

Thank You Notes or Emails:

A lot of students wonder why it's important to send a thank you note after the interview but saying thank you is a small task that can yield big results! Sending a thank-you note within 24 hours of your interview could mean the difference getting the job or not. When you think about it, the interview doesn't end when you walk out the door. What happens after the job interview can make a big impact on whether or not you get the job, as if an employer has two equally qualified candidates, the offer will likely go to the person who took the time to send a thank you note. It shows that you are thoughtful and truly interested in the position.

Here are some points to make your thank you note stand out:

- Thank the person for their time in meeting you for an interview
- Reiterate your interest in the position, referencing specific aspects of the role and/or company that genuinely resonate with you
- Mention something you liked about the interview

- Highlight your main qualifications for the position – without reciting your entire resume – and your confidence in your ability to do the job well. Focus on the qualifications that most interested the interviewer
- Address any concerns the person expressed about your candidacy
- Incorporate little details you learned about the interviewer during small talk to personalize your message and remind the person of the rapport you built with one another

*Adapted from: <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5578-sample-thank-you-letters.html>

Take some time to research some thank you notes online before you write your own, and remember, a \$1.00 pack of thank you cards from the dollar store can be your best investment in your job search!