

A. Attention (Opening Paragraph)

1. Open the letter by capturing the reader's attention in a businesslike way.
 - a. *Summary opening*. Present your strongest, most relevant qualifications with an explanation of how they can benefit the organization.
 - b. *Name opening*. Mention the name of a person who is well-known to the reader and who has suggested that you apply for the job.
 - c. *Source opening*. When responding to a job ad, identify the publication in which the ad appeared, and briefly describe how you meet each requirement stated in the ad.
 - d. *Question opening*. Pose an attention-getting question that shows you understand the organization's problem, need, or goal and have a genuine desire to help solve, satisfy, or meet it.
 - e. *News opening*. Cite a publicized achievement, contemplated change, or new procedure or product of the organization; then, link it to your desire to work for the organization.
 - f. *Personalized opening*. Present one of your relevant interests, mention a previous experience with the organization, or cite your current position or status as a means of leading into a discussion of why you want to work for the organization.
 - g. *Creative opening*. Demonstrate your flair and imagination with colorful phrasing, especially if the job requires these qualities.
2. State that you are applying for a job, and identify the position or the type of work you seek.

B. Interest and Desire, or Evidence of Qualifications (Next Several Paragraphs)

1. Present your key qualifications for the job, highlighting what is on your résumé: job-related education and training; relevant work experience; and related activities, interests, and qualities.
2. Adopt a mature, businesslike tone.
 - a. Eliminate boasting and exaggeration.

- b. Back up your claims of ability by citing specific achievements in educational and work settings or in outside activities.
 - c. Demonstrate knowledge of the organization and a desire to join it by citing its operations or trends in the industry.
 - 3. Link your education, experience, and personal qualities to the job requirement.
 - a. Relate aspects of your training or work experience to those of the target position.
 - b. Outline your educational preparation for the job.
 - c. Provide proof that you learn quickly, are a hard worker, can handle responsibility, and get along well with others.
 - d. Present ample evidence of the personal qualities and the work attitudes that are desirable for job performance.
 - e. If asked to state salary requirements, provide current salary or a desired salary range, and link it to the benefits of hiring you.
 - 4. Refer the reader to the enclosed résumé.
- C. Action (Closing paragraph)
- 1. Request an interview at the reader's convenience.
 - 2. Request a screening interview with the nearest regional representative, if the company headquarters is some distance away.
 - 3. State your phone number (with area code) and the best time to reach you, to make the interview request easy to comply with, or mention a time when you will be calling to set up an interview.
 - 4. Express appreciation for an opportunity to have an interview.
 - 5. Repeat your strongest qualification, to help reinforce the claim that you have something to offer the organization.

Adapted from *Business Communication Today*, 6th edition. Courtland L. Bovée & John V. Thill. Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 2000, p.620.