

Cover Letters: Useful Language

Stating the purpose of your letter:

I am writing in response to the job listing/posting I saw on your website for a research assistant.

I am writing in response to the advertisement for a research scientist I saw on your website.

I am responding to your ad for an architect in the January 11, 2007 issue of the *Boston Globe*.

George Bush suggested that I contact you about the opening you have for an urban planner.

Expressing your interest in a particular position:

With a background in editing that includes two years as an urban planner for the City of New York, I am well qualified for the position.

As an architect with over five years' experience, I offer a range of skills that would be useful to your company.

My training as a CAD engineer makes me well suited to the job description.

Highlight relevant work (don't just rehash your resume), emphasizing results:

While at JP Jones Publishers, I designed and developed the *Five Minute Thriller* series, for which I also produced the read-along tapes. This title is still in print, and is one of JP Jones' biggest sellers.

After receiving my B.A. in architecture, I worked for two years on various independent architectural and urban design projects, including a 120-person occupancy women's dormitory and the University of Rorkee in Haridwar, India.

Concluding sentences:

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you personally about my qualifications and experience. I look forward to hearing from you.

I look forward to speaking with you about the possibility of putting my skills to work at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Thank you for your consideration.

I am planning to be in the New York area next week and will call your office to see if we might meet. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you personally about my qualifications.

Verb tenses:

Simple past tense for anything done in the past (for example, for a company you no longer work for). "While at JP Jones, I **oversaw** the construction of several major housing projects."

Simple past OR present perfect for that work which you are still involved in: "For the past two years I **have taught** an editing workshop at the Somerville Community College."

Other useful constructions/collocations

I have been involved in _____ (gerund or noun)
I participated in _____
I have experience _____

ex: I participated in planning a pocket park in Manhattan's Lower East Side.

My research interests include _____ (gerund or noun)
I am particularly interested in _____
My research focuses on _____

ex: My research interests include the development of nanostructures.
My research focuses on designing new systems for the production of circuits.

I contributed to _____. (noun)

ex: I contributed to the development of a new accounting system.

I worked as a _____. (noun - name of position)

I am interested in pursuing a position as a_____.

ex: I worked as a landscape architect at the firm of Matthews-Jones.

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