

THANK YOU LETTERS AND OTHER BUSINESS LETTERS

TO WHOM SHOULD YOU WRITE THANK YOU LETTERS?

You should send thank you letters to any and all people who participated in your job search – that means (1) employers and recruiters who interview you; (2) alumni/ae or personal contacts who provide advice to you; (3) or any person who serves as a reference for you.

If you were interviewed by more than one person for a job or internship, you should write individual (and different) notes to each of them. By writing unique letters to each interviewer, you have the opportunity to reference specific discussions or points brought up in each interview. You should have received each person's business card. If you did not receive it, contact the employer's administrative assistant to verify the correct spelling and title.

When in doubt, send a thank you letter – it is always appreciated.

WHY SHOULD YOU WRITE A THANK YOU LETTER?

You should write thank you letters for a wide variety of reasons:

1. After an interview, it provides you with the opportunity to reiterate your interest in the company and position.
2. A thank you letter also allows you to briefly re-emphasize your qualifications and relevant experiences to an employer.
3. If you did not have the opportunity to mention specific points during your interview, your thank you letter allows you to quickly address these.
4. Thank you letters demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position and appreciation of the person's time.
5. Employers want to know that their clients will be treated in a courteous manner and sending a prompt thank you letter illustrates this point. It also highlights the fact that you have polished and professional etiquette skills.
6. Although there is not a solid number, most surveys estimate that less than 40% of job applicants send thank you letters. In an increasingly competitive job market, a thank you note may be what separates you from other candidates.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A THANK YOU LETTER AND WHEN SHOULD YOU SEND IT?

Thank you letters should be mailed or emailed within 24 hours of the meeting. In order for a thank you letter to have an effect, it must be received before a hiring decision is made. So the sooner you send it, the better!

Here is a basic outline of what should be included in a thank you letter following an interview:

First Paragraph: This is where you actually say "thank you" for the interview. Cite the day on which you interviewed. Express your appreciation for the interviewer's time and your interest in the position and organization.

Second Paragraph: Use this paragraph to make one or two final points about your qualifications and interests based on the interview. Do not restate or rehash your cover letter's second paragraph. Instead, do one of two things:

1. Underscore one or two of your most relevant skills or experiences that show your ability and/or potential to do the job. Briefly focus on those areas in which the interviewer was most keenly interested.
2. Highlight skills or experience which you did not (for whatever reason) focus on during the interview, but which you know will be key consideration factors. You may want to write something like, "it might further interest you to know" or "I want to call your attention to this since it demonstrates my _____ that is vital to success in this position."

Although you need to make sure you express these ideas clearly and fully, this paragraph should be **brief and to the point!**

Final Paragraph: This is a good place to restate the timeframe the employer gave you, to express your appreciation again for the chance to meet with her or him, and to affirm your continuing interest in the job and company/organization.

One example might be:

14 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

June 28, 2010

Mr. Robert Smith
44 Summit Street
Hartford, CT 06457

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for extending your time to interview me on Wednesday, June 27. I found our discussion extremely informative, and it further solidified my desire to work for *ASPEN Magazine*. I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm you portrayed as you reflected on your experiences working as an editorial assistant at *ASPEN* and your movement up to the position of Editor-in-Chief.

ASPEN Magazine is clearly a company on the move, a quality that no doubt is a result of its ability to attract talented and motivated employees. I have the work ethic, solid writing skills and strong attention to detail that is necessary to be a successful editorial assistant. I also believe that my experience serving as the Sports Editor for Trinity's student newspaper and my two summers interning at *The New York Times* has provided me with a solid understanding of the diligence and teamwork involved in creating a successful publication.

I look forward to the next step in the interviewing process, and will call your assistant, as we discussed, in one week to follow-up. I look forward to speaking with you again soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Rogers

Sarah Rogers

SHOULD YOU TYPE THE LETTER, HAND-WRITE THE LETTER OR SEND AN EMAIL?

There is no simple answer to this question. A great deal of whether you decide to send a letter or email will depend on the employer.

One major advantage to sending an email is that you know it will arrive quickly. If your previous communication with the employer took place via email and the employer has an email address listed on his or her business card, then a formally-written and well thought-out email may be appropriate. Just be careful! Oftentimes, people write emails too informally or use sloppy language, so if you do decide to send an email, make sure you maintain a formal tone.

For more conservative employers, you may want to type a thank you letter and mail it to them. By doing so, you show the employer that you are taking the time to compose a formal business letter.

Hand-written letters are generally most appropriate to send to alumni/ae or personal contacts that you met for informational interviews or that you used as references. If you do decide to send a hand-written letter, make sure your writing is neat and legible.

WHAT OTHER KINDS OF LETTERS DO YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO WRITE?

Job Offer Acceptance Letter:

Congratulations! You got the job you wanted. This letter should be fun to write. Follow the business letter format outlined in the Career Development Center Guide to Cover Letters. Use business stationery and type the letter. If you have lingering questions about any employment details such as benefits, resolve those via the telephone, not through this letter. Your goal for this type of letter is to express your enthusiasm for the job and the company, while also restating the particulars of the job offer, such as your starting date and salary.

Job Offer Rejection Letter:

Since you never know when you may knock on their door in the future, you should treat all employing organizations with courtesy. The world within career fields is small, so you should never burn bridges! Always make a personal call to the hiring person at the organization to turn down an offer and use the letter only as a written confirmation. Never turn down an offer simply via mail since that is considered very bad form. Structure the letter as follows:

First Paragraph: Be courteous and appreciative of the offer and provide a credible reason for rejecting the offer. For example, the job does not match your career goals or you think the fit at another organization will be better for you.

Second Paragraph: In one line, express your appreciation for their interest, time and consideration.

Keep this letter courteous but brief. There is no need to provide elaborate explanations or excuses, but you should be genuine and sincere.

Withdrawal from Job Search Letter:

Once you have accepted an offer in writing, you have an ethical obligation to withdraw your application from other organizations at which you are being considered. *Do not terminate other job offer negotiations until you receive the offer in writing and accept the offer in writing.* It is in your best interest to be professional and prompt in writing these letters since you never know when in the future you may want to pursue a job at one of those organizations. This letter should be short, courteous, and appreciative of the consideration you have been given to date. Structure the letter as follows:

First Paragraph: Provide a short statement of your withdrawal and a brief reason why. For example, "I have accepted an offer with another organization" or "my plans have changed and I am redirecting my job search."

Second Paragraph: Close with one line stating your appreciation of their consideration and courtesy in the job search to date.

Similar to the Job Offer Rejection Letter, be brief but courteous. Even if you are withdrawing from the job search, you want to maintain a positive and professional image.

OPTIMAL LETTER BUILDER

All Trinity students now have access to Optimal Letter Builder – a web-based system that will help you create high-quality professional letters.

The Letter Builder offers paragraph-by-paragraph instructions and examples to help you create effective employment letters for a variety of purposes. The Letter Builder may be used to create: Thank you letters, Rejection letters, Withdrawal letters, Broadcast letters, Acceptance letters, Follow-up letters, Cover letters, Application letters, and Networking letters.

You can build a new letter from scratch, cut and paste an existing letter into the Letter Builder, or browse and upload an existing letter. For each type of letter, view examples of effective introductory paragraphs, content paragraphs, and closing paragraphs.

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To access Optimal Letter Builder, go to: <https://trincoll.optimalresume.com/> and click on “Get Started” to set-up an account. When registering, you must use your Trinity College email account. If you have any questions about Optimal Letter Builder, please contact the Career Development Center.

As with all types of writing, it is of the utmost importance that there are no misspellings or grammatical errors in your letters. If you have questions about how to write a letter or would like a Career Specialist to review a draft, stop by the Career Development Center.