

Why Write a Thank-You Letter

In a competitive job market, you need an edge over the other candidates! A thank-you letter can increase your chances of being hired. The bottom line is that less than 10% of candidates ever follow-up interviews with thank-you letters. If you take care of this detail, you can easily rise more quickly to the top of the candidate pool.

How to Write a Thank-You Letter

You should plan to send a thank-you letter as soon after the interview as possible (within 24 hours is ideal). To be most effective, it should arrive prior to the final hiring decision. A thank-you letter should say much more than "thank you." Here are some important points you may want to include:

*** Express Enthusiasm**

Convey your interest in and enthusiasm for the school district and the position for which you interviewed. Try to be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the school.

*** Address Unresolved Points**

Address any issues or questions that came up during the interview that you feel you did not fully answer. This letter is your last chance to make a positive impression on the interviewer. (Don't apologize; just offer "additional information," if pertinent.)

*** Be Sincere**

The letter must be genuine, unique, and sincere - assure them you recognize the importance of the meeting and appreciate their time.

*** Personalize It**

You will undoubtedly be one of many interviewees the employer has interacted with in a short time period -you need to set yourself apart from the other candidates so they will remember you. In your letter, highlight a key point from your interview that you believe the interviewer will remember (and, therefore, recall you!). Additionally, if you met with more than one person, consider sending them all thank-you letters, each one a bit different; you may not know exactly who in the group will be making the decisions. This will also force you to remember with whom you interviewed.

*** Make One Last First Impression**

Interviewers, especially if they are interviewing several people in a short time period, will typically only remember approximately 3 things about you. Just as you chose 3-4 points about your candidacy - the best you have to offer - and highlighted it in your resume, your cover letter and the interview, finally, highlight these points in the thank-you letter.

*** Should I Send It Typewritten, Handwritten or via Email?**

There are many opinions about the best presentation style of thank-you letters. Generally, the best recommendation is to type the letter in a standard business-style format (much like your cover letters), triple-checking for typos and grammatical errors. You are being evaluated as a professional and typing it confirms that this meeting was important enough to take the time to present yourself in a professional manner.

There are times, however, when it may be appropriate to send a handwritten thank-you letter. If someone you know "pulled some strings" to get you the interview or there was a mutual acquaintance of some kind; if you personally know the interviewer; or if the interviewer was an alum of your institution. Many students choose institution-specific stationery from the college bookstore. Be sure your handwriting is legible and neat. If you need to expand on some of the issues presented in the interview, then a typewritten letter may be better. Generally speaking, it is recommended that you type your thank-you letters.

Sending thank-you letters via email is fine as long as it fits the "culture" of the organization and is used appropriately. Be sure there is no doubt that you have an accurate email address (you may or may not be informed that the message was undeliverable). Format your letter with the same formalities as a regular thank-you letter. Email tends to make us a bit less formal and you do not want the note to be overly friendly. Keep the message to one screen length; employers appreciate brevity. Hard copy will generally be placed in a file, whereas email has a tendency to be read quickly and deleted. You may consider following up the email letter with hard copy letter, particularly if there are some additional materials you may want to send via hard copy.

Sample Thank-You Letter

Street Address
Other Address Information (if pertinent)
City, State ZIP

Date

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Contact
Title of Interviewer
Name of School
Address of School
Anytown, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. (Last Name):

Start off by thanking the representative for meeting with you at (the PERC Teacher Job Fair). Reiterate your interest and enthusiasm in working in their district. Perhaps focus in on one aspect of the conversation you had with them that would "jog" their memory about who you are (i.e. - you may have discussed team teaching or technology-based educational techniques; perhaps you highlighted a relevant special project, international experience, summer job, or choral group you started in the inner city, etc.).

Discuss a bit more about their district and how impressed you are by what they are doing. You can even bring up information you gathered through follow-up research from their literature or website. The goal is to show motivation, genuine interest, and conscientious follow-through!

Let them know you look forward to the next step in the recruiting process. Strongly consider setting up a "next step" with them. For example, you could inform them that you completed their online application or that you will be in their area over Easter Break and will call to see if you could meet with them (or another representative) for a follow-up interview. Thank them one last time for their consideration of your credentials and let them know you are looking forward to speaking with them soon.

Sincerely,

Teacher Candidate