

Applying for a Job:

The Cover Letter

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- Approximate Time: 30 to 40 minutes -

OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Identify their unique skills, abilities and experiences.
- Describe what is included in a cover letter.
- Compose a cover letter in response to a specific job announcement.
- Respond to a job announcement via email.

MATERIALS:

- Pens and notepaper for participants
- Copies of announcements for a variety of jobs
- Copies of [UT Extension Publication W 936-E](#)
- Copies of the Skill Up Tennessee marketing brochure

EVALUATION: Participants learned to practice effective job search skills

METHOD:

This lesson is designed to be taught in a group setting. You can teach this lesson either face-to-face or using technology such as Zoom.

PREP:

- Print copies of the UT Extension Publication W 936-E (see above link under "Materials")
- Assemble materials for participants.
- Review the lesson plan. Review the publication. Familiarize yourself with the content thinking about how you will present the content to your participants.
- If possible, have students come to class with a job announcement for a job they want to apply for. This will allow them to tailor their cover letter for a specific job. If this is not possible, have a variety of job announcements printed from which the students can choose to write a cover letter.

INTRODUCTION:

As participants enter the room, distribute pens and notepaper. Welcome the group.

SET:

Once the group has been gathered, begin with introductions.

Instruct the group to think about specific skills, abilities and experiences they have that could transfer to a job/jobs they would like to have.

Instruct participants to write these skills and abilities, as well as possible jobs, on the notepaper.

Ask the participants to introduce themselves, sharing a skill, ability or experience and the jobs they identified. (The instructor should go first to model this activity for participants, for example, "I have great writing and editing skills. I would like to apply for a copy editor job.")

Explain to the group that today's lesson will focus on tailoring their cover letter to showcase their skills, qualifications and experience to match the job announcement.

Explain to the group that most of the lesson will be spent reviewing pages 2-4 of the [UT Extension Publication Applying for a Job W 936-E](#). Provide one copy of this publication to each participant.

INSTRUCTION:

In this lesson, participants will learn how to write a tailored cover letter showcasing their skills, matching them to what the employer is seeking and tell why they are a good fit for the company.

Explain to the group that the cover letter is the place to showcase their skills and tell why they are interested in the position. Ideally, it should make them stand out from other job seekers. It is a potential employer's first impression of them and can be the deciding factor in whether or not they get invited for an interview.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A COVER LETTER

Guide participants through the cover letter information on page 2 of the publication. Review the contents of the cover letter template on page 3. Have the participants either use the job announcement they have brought to class or select one from those you have provided and compose a draft cover letter using the template. Provide individual assistance to participants as needed.

Have participants pair up and share their letters with each other. Instruct students to use the template instructions to critique each other's letters.

APPLICATION VIA EMAIL

Review this section on page 4 of the publication with the participants. If time allows, have students practice writing an email application letter using the tips listed. Provide individual assistance as needed.

DEBRIEF:

Explain to participants that today they learned how to compose a quality cover letter tailored to fit the employer's needs that showcases their strengths. Explain to participants that this is their only chance to give the first impression to a prospective employer. Encourage students to refine their cover letters at home and to remember they will need to compose a new letter for each job they apply for.

Provide each participant with a copy of UT Extension's Skill Up Tennessee marketing brochure. Review the brochure and program with participants.

CONCLUSION:

Ask students to complete the following sentence:

The one thing I am going to use from today's lesson is....

EVALUATION:

Ask participants to respond to the following statement by show of hands:

How many of you learned effective job search skills?

Record the answers for entry into SUPER. (Report under "Increase Capacity to Produce Income" - "Short-term Indicators".)

Note: Cover letters for those with no or limited job experiences should highlight soft skills and that they are willing to learn new skills to perform the job. Including any volunteer experience, extracurricular activities and education courses relevant to the job with an explanation of how these skills can benefit the company is also a consideration. For more information about soft skills, see [UT Extension Publication W 936-G](#).



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