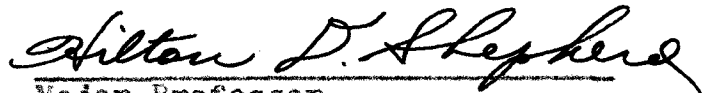
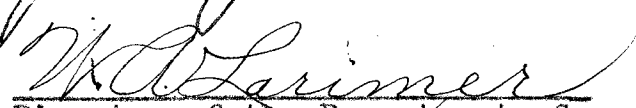



A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE
APPLICATION LETTERS FOR TEACHERS, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO COLLEGE POSITIONS, AS INFLUENCED BY
REPORTS FROM 65 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTS AND AN ANALYSIS OF 65
SAMPLE LETTERS OF APPLICATION
FOR COLLEGE POSITIONS

APPROVED:


Major Professor


Minor Professor


Director of the Department of
Business Education


Chairman of the Graduate
Council

A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE
APPLICATION LETTERS FOR TEACHERS, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO COLLEGE POSITIONS, AS INFLUENCED BY
REPORTS FROM 65 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENTS AND AN ANALYSIS OF 65
SAMPLE LETTERS OF APPLICATION
FOR COLLEGE POSITIONS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
Texas State Teachers College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

Oda Pauline Crittenden, B. A.

McKinney, Texas

June, 1940

86797

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	
Need for a Solution of the Problem	
Sources of Data	
Method of Procedure	
II. ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF ALL BUSINESS LETTERS.	5
The C-Qualities	
The Structure of the Letter	
The Physical Make-Up of the Letter	
Summary	
III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD APPLICATION LETTER	32
The Problem of Getting a Job	
Classes of Application Letters	
Analyzing the Problem	
The Objectives of the Application Letter	
The Application-Letter Formula	
Some General Suggestions	
Unsolicited Letters	
Summary	
IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE APPLICATION FOR A TEACHING POSITION	46
Information from Documentary Sources	
Data Obtained from the Questionnaire	
Summary	

Bound by NTSU BINDERY

(Form 82 - 5/73)

Chapter	Page
V. AN ANALYSIS OF SIXTY-FIVE LETTERS APPLYING FOR COLLEGE TEACHING POSITIONS	65
Introduction	
Errors in the Observance of the Eight "C's"	
Other Errors in Contents and Mechanics	
Summary	
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	76
Conclusions	
Recommendations	
APPENDIXES	
I. ILLUSTRATIONS OF STANDARD LETTER STYLES .	83
II. A COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE FORM USED IN THIS STUDY	86
III. COPY OF THE ANALYSIS SHEET USED TO CHECK THE SIXTY-FIVE APPLICATION LETTERS. . .	91
IV. EXAMPLES OF THE SIXTY-FIVE APPLICATION LETTERS ANALYZED IN THIS STUDY.	93
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Space in Pages Given by Nine Authors to "C" qualities Used in This Study	18
2. Current Trends in Letter Styles as Shown by a Study of 55 Letters from Business Concerns	27
3. Personality Traits Expected of Teachers by 50 College and University Presidents, in the Order of Frequency of Listing.	59
4. Professional Accomplishments Expected of Teachers by 52 College and University Presidents	60
5. Types of Errors Found in Sixty-Five Letters Applying for College Teaching Positions, Listed in the Order of Their Frequency . .	75

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem involved in this study is to try to determine the answers to three questions:

1. By what standards may application letters for teaching positions be judged?
2. How well does the average teacher meet these standards in his own application letters?
3. What changes should teachers make in their application letters to make them stronger?

Need for a Solution of the Problem

Of all the letters a letter writer may write, the few letters of application that he uses will probably be of the greatest importance to him. As a matter of fact, they may constitute turning points in his life and may, if they are well enough written, help him to get into the kind of work for which he is best fitted and in which he can meet the harsh competition that characterizes the generation. Just for the sake of these few letters, probably not above half a dozen at the most, it will pay the reader to study carefully the conditions under which letters of application are written; the conditions they are likely to face when they go out to represent their writers; and the factors that will help them to sell their writer's services.¹

¹Lawrence Campbell Lockley, Principles of Effective Letter Writing, p. 217.

In spite of the fact that the average individual writes so few application letters, "not above half a dozen at the most," this half a dozen multiplied by the thousands who each year seek employment means that each employer faces a formidable number of application letters. Yet, despite the obvious importance of the application letter to its writer, and regardless of this competition of overwhelming numbers, "the average letter of application is of very poor quality and offers little competition to a well-written letter that actually presents its writer's qualifications with a sales appeal."²

While the statements quoted apparently have in mind almost exclusively applications for business employment, teachers likewise write applications of poor quality.³ But while nearly every book on business correspondence has at least one chapter devoted to letters applying for jobs varying from that of office boy to general manager, references dealing specifically with letters applying for teaching positions are so few as to be practically non-existent, pointedly indicating a need for research in this field. This need is further emphasized by the fact that so many of the application

²Ibid., p. 218.

³A. Gloor, "Gems from the Application File," American School Board Journal, LXXVIII (June, 1929), 46.

letters examined in this study revealed major faults in content or mechanical structure.

Sources of Data

Data used in this thesis were obtained from three sources: (1) documentary references: i. e., books and magazine articles; (2) a questionnaire form sent to one hundred college and university presidents (See Appendix II for copy.); and (3) sixty-five application letters, from twenty-three states, obtained from the files in the office of the president of North Texas State Teachers College.

Method of Procedure

Steps in the method of procedure corresponded to the sources of data. First, books dealing with business correspondence in the North Texas State Teachers College library were checked; those published within the last twenty years and which contained references to application letters were selected for further study. Then, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature and the Educational Index for the last ten years were checked for reference leads to the subjects "Applications for Positions," "Business Letters," "Letter Writing," and "Employment."

Next, the questionnaire was sent to the college and university presidents. The mailing list was compiled

from Part III of the Educational Directory for 1939. A copy of the form was sent to the state university and to at least one other college or university in each state. Sixty-five of the forms were returned. The results, discussed in Chapter IV, were tabulated and interpreted.

Finally, the letters applying for college teaching positions were analyzed, using the analysis sheet in Appendix III. This sheet was developed from the characteristics of a good teacher's application, as set up in the first two steps. The results were tabulated to determine the major faults revealed in the letters.

From the data from all sources, conclusions were drawn as to the characteristics of a good application for a teaching position; and recommendations were made as to how teachers can improve their application letters.

The writer realizes that the questionnaire method has its limitations for obtaining reliable data; therefore, in this study, it was used chiefly to obtain further proof of points developed from documentary sources. Neither is the letter-analysis intended as a source of factual material, since it was necessarily strongly subjective in viewpoint; rather, it is used merely to throw additional light on principles previously developed from more reliable sources.

CHAPTER II

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF ALL BUSINESS LETTERS

The C-Qualities

Before one can understand the requirements for a successful application letter, he must have as a background a knowledge of the essential qualities of business letters in general. These essentials are often summarized in what are known as the "C-Qualities." Authorities differ as to just how many "C's" are necessary for an effective letter. A. C. Babenroth and Peter T. Ward list seven: consideration, construction, compactness, correctness, character, concreteness, and cheerfulness.¹ Robert Ray Aurner likewise names seven, but his list consists of completeness, courtesy, consideration, clearness, conciseness, concreteness, and correctness.² George B. Hotchkiss and Edward J. Kilduff are content with five: clearness, conciseness, correctness, courtesy, and character.³ This study will use a composite list of eight: consideration, completeness,

¹Modern Business English, revised, p. 21.

²Effective Business Correspondence, second edition, abridged, p. 25.

³Advanced Business Correspondence, third edition revised, p. 20.

courtesy, clearness, conciseness, concreteness, character, and correctness. A check will show that the only items appearing on the three lists quoted and not on the writer's list are construction, compactness, and cheerfulness. In reality, the composite list covers all of the essentials. Construction is merely a matter of embodying in the letter the principles of good composition, such as unity, coherence, and emphasis; clear, correct diction; and correct grammatical structure. Compactness is covered by conciseness; and cheerfulness and courtesy are almost synonymous, for letter-writing purposes.

Consideration.--The foundation of a successful letter is its adaptation to the purpose for which it is written and to the reader who will receive it. Therefore, before one even begins to write a business letter, he should carefully analyze the prospective reader and then plan the letter in accordance with this analysis. Both the ideas and the language of the message must be adapted to the reader; if results are to be obtained, the letter must contain the ideas best calculated to make the desired impression on the reader, expressed in the words most suited to that particular person. To these two requirements might be added adaptation in structure; for example, while a sales letter to a purchasing agent might be written in a radical, unconven-

tional style to attract attention, a letter to a banker would certainly be more conservative in both style and layout.⁴

One of the most potent factors in reader-consideration is the "you" attitude from the point of view of the writer. Visualizing the reader will help the writer to obtain this attitude.

According to a publication issued by Thomas A. Edison, Inc., Robert Ruxton, the well-known business writer of Philadelphia, says that when he starts out to write letters, his first step is to ascertain as nearly as he can, from the attributes surrounding the subject--price, quality, etc.--the type of man or woman it would appeal to most; he thus gets a composite person. He is no longer talking to thousands of people, but to some one representative of those thousands.⁵

Before one can hope thus to visualize the reader, he must find out as much as possible about him. Find out something about your reader's occupation, his needs, his personality, his hobbies, his dislikes; then apply practical psychology to fit the letter to this individualized reader.⁶

It is hard to write a letter with the "you" attitude if the writer talks only about himself and his interests. It is very difficult to begin nearly every

⁴Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., pp. 8-15.

⁵S. Roland Hall, The Handbook of Business Correspondence, p. 55.

⁶Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

sentence with "I" or "We" and still maintain a reader-attitude. Too often, such construction indicates that the writer is thinking primarily in terms of his own point of view.⁷

It is important to remember, however, that the "you" attitude is more than just a substitution of "you" or "your" for "we" or "I" in the letter. The true spirit behind the letter must be a sincere desire on the part of the writer to serve the reader, to meet his needs and his interests.⁸

Completeness.--After the business-letter writer is sure he is thinking in terms of his reader rather than in terms of his own selfish interests, he must next be sure that his letter will carry a complete message. It has been estimated that of the forty million letters mailed each day in the United States, fully five per cent, or two million letters daily, are letters that the writers should not have been obliged to write. These needless letters result from a letter-writing job done incompletely at the first attempt.⁹

In order to be sure that his letter is complete, the writer should make careful preliminary plans, such

⁷Henry A. Burd and Charles J. Miller, Business Letters, Their Preparation and Use, p. 8.

⁸Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

⁹Hall, op. cit., p. 919.

as making notations of important facts and assembling all necessary data. After the letter is finished, he should check to see that he has included all the information needed and that he has included any enclosures mentioned in the letter.

Courtesy.--Like the "you" attitude, courtesy in a letter results from an attitude of mind rather than from the superficial use of words. Although such simple words as "please" and "thank you," if used sincerely, never become wearisome, to be effective they must be merely the outward expression of a truly generous attitude toward the reader.¹⁰

Discourtesy in business letters is rarely intentional; it usually results from "carelessness, callousness to the feelings of others, inexperience, stupidity, anger, or any one of a number of other reasons."¹¹ For this reason, one should be very careful not to write a letter of any sort while under extreme provocation. Because certain words consciously or unconsciously offend certain people, writers should cultivate a sensitivity to the implications and connotations of words. For the same reason, the writer should be careful to avoid a sarcastic or ironic tone in his letters; sarcasm is

¹⁰Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

¹¹Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., p. 33.

closely associated with contempt and implies that the reader is inferior to the writer. Needless to say, tactlessness and bluntness should be avoided in a letter if the writer would not arouse resentment and opposition in the reader.¹²

Avoidance of the foregoing errors will prevent discourtesy; yet it is possible for a letter to be not discourteous and yet not possess the positive value of courtesy. It may be merely neutral, which is not enough to make the letter effective.

To secure in one's letters the positive, business-building type of courtesy, it is necessary to go beyond the neutral state and to inject into the letters the spirit of civility, cheerfulness, and goodwill that is so gratifying to the reader and that makes such a favorable impression on his emotions. . . . it is an accepted axiom of good business to do graciously and cheerfully the things that have to be done. This is one of the ways by which the valuable asset of business, goodwill, is built up. It takes little if any more effort to write a courteous letter than to write a neutral one, and the results are much better.¹³

Clearness.--In addition to having a complete and courteous message in his letter, the writer must be sure that the message is clear to a reader with even the slowest comprehension. Aurner makes the following statement regarding clearness:

Of writing in general Lord Chesterfield observes, "Every paragraph should be so clear and unambiguous that the dullest fellow in the world

¹²Ibid., pp. 34-36.

¹³Ibid., pp. 33-34.

will not be able to misstate it, nor be obliged to read it twice in order to understand it."¹⁴

This truth applies with double force to business letters.

Clear writing comes only from clear thinking and careful planning. There are five elements involved in obtaining clearness: the use of simple words; the avoidance of long paragraphs; the avoidance of long, involved sentences; correct sentence structure; and correct punctuation.¹⁵

"Simple words" does not necessarily mean that the writer should limit his vocabulary to words of one or two syllables. Rather, it means that he should use in his letters the kind of words he would use if he were actually talking to the reader. In the not-so-distant past, it was thought necessary to employ only formal, stilted phraseology in business letters, a practice that often led to results as ridiculous as the following illustration:

One correspondent . . . was asked to say grace at a small family dinner. For a moment he was floored. Then he thought to himself, "Why can't I just imagine I am dictating a letter; after all, it amounts to about the same thing." So he said:

Dear Lord: We thank thee for all thy favors of recent date. Permit us to express our heartfelt gratitude. We trust we may continue to merit your confidence. Assuring you of our prompt

¹⁴Aurner, op. cit., p. 228.

¹⁵Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., pp. 24-28.

attention to any requests you may care to make, and trusting that our above-mentioned amicable relations may continue, we beg to advise that we thank you in advance for your anticipated favors. Amen.¹⁶

The use of such hackneyed, stereotyped expressions is one of the high crimes of letter-writing. Aside from the fact that they obscure the message of the letter, there are three other good reasons why they should be avoided:

1. It is little short of an insult to your reader's intelligence to include such phrases in today's letters.

2. The use of such expressions deadens one's thinking equipment, encourages intellectual indolence, and strangles individual expansion. Anyone can use these "has-been's," but the progressive man, the creative man, will employ 20th Century diction, and say the old things in a new way.

3. These expressions are costly because they consume the dictator's time; the stenographer's or transcriber's time; the reader's time. And they have been known to call for the use of extra stationery.¹⁷

Conciseness.--Obviously, avoiding such stilted language will aid in obtaining the fifth "C" of letter-writing, conciseness, or compactness. The effective business letter covers its subject completely in the fewest possible words. However, care should be taken not to confuse conciseness with brevity. Completeness

¹⁶Lockley, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁷Charles Edgar Buck, The Business Letter-Writer's Manual, revised, p. 15.

should never be sacrificed merely to save a few words.¹⁸

Do not . . . allow the letter to become curt. Avoid the telegraphic omission of pronouns, articles, or other qualifying words necessary for grammatical correctness.¹⁹

Remember that a brief letter often leaves out necessary words, while a concise letter leaves out unnecessary words, but includes everything essential for clearness and courtesy.²⁰

Such conciseness is best obtained by carefully thinking out the entire letter, planning the paragraphs, and then approaching the central thought directly.²¹

Concreteness.--In addition to using only the necessary words, a business letter should possess the virtue of the exact words. Be specific. Instead of saying that you have a high-school education, give the name of the high school, the date you graduated, and the nature of your high-school courses. Contrast the following expressions for effectiveness:

<u>Abstract and General</u>	<u>Concrete and Vivid</u>
A quick shave.	A 78-second shave.
This soap gives generous lather.	Multiplies itself in lather 250 times.
This airplane is the fastest in the world.	The Eagle seaplane holds the world's speed record of 440 miles an hour. ²²

¹⁸Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁹John C. McCloskey, Handbook of Business Correspondence, p. 138.

²⁰Buck, op. cit., p. 68.

²¹Ibid.

²²Aurner, op. cit., p. 245.

As aids in obtaining skill in vivid, concrete word usage, observe the following requirements:

1. See details. See them clearly. See them vividly.
2. Explain the abstract in concrete terms.
3. Clarify your thought by use of simple figures of speech.
4. Make the commonplace unusual by saying the old thing in a new way.
5. Appeal to the senses. Bread, for example, is sold not by price and weight, but through nose and eyes.²³

Character.--A letter may be written with the "you" attitude, be complete, courteous, clear, concise, and concrete, and still be completely dull and uninteresting so far as its general reader-appeal is concerned. It lacks that elusive quality called character, or personality. How obtain it? By seeing the letter as your personal representative, and writing it so that it is a reflection of your innermost self. If your own personality is colorless and unimpressive, your task is difficult; but even though your personality is vivid and scintillating, it may be completely obscured by a dull, artificial letter. You will best succeed when you

Write simply, sincerely, clearly, and correctly.

.
Show confidence, enthusiasm, and cordiality.
Make the letter optimistic, but courteous and dignified. Forget yourself and concentrate upon benefiting the reader. . . .

.
Instead of copying or imitating another writer, see the problem in your own personal, original way

²³Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., p. 135.

.....
 Stereotyped language, pose, and affectation
 stifle character. Character excludes egotism
 and exaggeration. It never allows bad humor
 to creep into the letter, never uses mere smart-
 ness or mere cleverness, and is never guilty of
 misplaced humor. Character does not imply an
 eccentric or artificial style.²⁴

Correctness.--Faulty or extremely radical make-up,
 elementary errors in grammar or punctuation, or mis-
 spelled words in a letter may create a negative impres-
 sion that can be fatal, despite the observance of all of
 the other essentials of letter-writing. As a matter of
 fact, it is questionable if a letter noticeably incor-
 rect in these details can observe the other essential
 "C's."²⁵

By mechanical make-up is meant all those details
 that enter into the physical appearance of the letter:
 the type of paper used, the letterhead, the placement
 of the letter on the page, etc.²⁶ A detailed discus-
 sion of correct make-up is given in a succeeding section.

Faulty grammar or punctuation not only creates a
 negative attitude on the part of the reader, but, as
 stated in the discussion of clearness, may cause the
 reader to misunderstand the message. Misspelled words,
 always irritating to an educated person, may also lead

²⁴McCloskey, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

²⁵Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., pp. 67-69.

²⁶Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., p. 32.

to costly inaccuracies.²⁷

Even more important than correctness in make-up, grammar, punctuation, and spelling is correctness in the information given in a business letter. A misquoted price, an incorrect size, or a wrong date can be extremely costly in time and in money.

The C-Qualities summarized.--In outline form, the essentials of all business letters may be stated thus:

1. CONSIDERATION (Does the letter fit the reader?)
2. COMPLETENESS (Does the letter tell all of the facts?)
3. COURTESY (Is the spirit of the letter courteous?)
4. CLEARNESS (Is there no possibility of misunderstanding?)
5. CONCISENESS (Does the letter use only necessary words?)
6. CONCRETENESS (Are all words exact and vivid?)
7. CHARACTER (Does the letter reflect personality?)
8. CORRECTNESS (Is the letter free from errors in mechanics and in content?)

The consideration given these essential qualities by nine outstanding authors of books dealing with business correspondence, based on the number of pages devoted to each quality, is shown in Table 1, on the

²⁷Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., p. 68.

following page. In some instances, an author did not discuss all of the exact headings used in the table but covered the same material under other topics. For instance, Hall, in his Handbook, does not have a discussion of the specific heading of "Correctness"; but he does devote an entire section to "Form, Style and Standardization." These pages were included in the ninety-eight listed under correctness, since the section definitely deals with correctness in the mechanical make-up of business letters. Or, if an author devoted space to "Personality," this was listed on the table under "Character."

It is interesting to note that, except for the slight variation in the last two, the qualities fall in the same order whether one considers the total number of pages, the median number, or the mean number, and that judged by these findings, correctness is of overwhelming importance.

The letter-writer's creed.--Aurner says that to apply these essential qualities is to follow the letter-writer's creed:

1. Say enough but no more.
2. Be pleasant, tactful, courteous.
3. Be considerate.
4. Think your way through.
5. Save the reader's time.
6. Be informative; give facts.
7. Be correct.²⁸

²⁸Op. cit., p. 248.

TABLE 1

SPACE IN PAGES GIVEN BY NINE AUTHORS TO "C" QUALITIES USED IN THIS STUDY

"C" Quality	Authors									Total Number of Pages	Median Number of Pages	Mean Number of Pages
	Aurner	Babenroth & Ward	Buck	Burd & Miller	Hall	Hotchkiss & Kilduff	Lockley	McCliskey	Weszen			
Correctness	2.5	42	32	34	98	22	13	126	49	418.5	34	46.5
Consideration	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	25	3	6	4	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	64*	4	7.1
Clearness	5	6	3	0	3	7	1	4	17	46	4	5.1
Conciseness	9	6	4	0	13.5	3	1	7	1-	43.5	4	4.8
Courtesy	4	6.5	7	3	2.5	5	2	8	1-	38	4	4.2
Character	0	2	7	4	5	3	4	3	2	30	3	3.2
Completeness	6	10	0	0	3	1	2	0	1-	22	1	2.4
Concreteness	1.5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	3	6	0	0	3	1-	19	1.5	2.5

*A plus sign after a number indicates that less than one half of an additional page was devoted to the quality. A 1- indicates that the author gave less than one page to the quality. In arriving at the totals, a plus number and a 1- were considered one additional page.

The Structure of the Letter

The beginning.--The C-qualities of a letter might be likened to a recipe; the next consideration is the actual mixing of the ingredients, or construction. Both steps are necessary for a satisfactory finished product.

Textbooks on composition teach that the two positions of greatest emphasis are at the beginning and the end of a composition.^{29, 30, 31} It follows, then, that the first sentence of a business letter is of the utmost importance.³² In fact, this beginning sentence, or "contact," is to the letter as the headline is to a news story. It has four main functions:

1. The first sentence shows courtesy and, if appropriate, expresses action in favor of the reader.
2. It indicates the subject of the present letter.
3. If such reference is necessary for clearness, it refers briefly to the subject of the preceding letter.
4. It refers, in a subordinated position, to the date of the preceding letter. . . .³³

If the first sentence is to perform these functions, the writer should be wary of the following pitfalls:

²⁹William M. Tanner, Composition and Rhetoric, p. 78.

³⁰Raymond Woodbury Pence, College Composition, p. 395.

³¹William G. Hoffman and Ray Davis, Write and Speak Better, p. 23.

³²Virginia Young, You'll Like to Write Letters, p. 39.

³³Aurner, op. cit., p. 266.

1. Avoid beginning with "We."
 2. Avoid beating about the bush. . . .
- Begin to tell your story promptly.
3. Avoid negative openings.
 4. Never begin with participial expressions.³⁴

Five ways that may be effectively employed to begin a letter are these:

1. The **subject** of the letter
2. The **you attitude**
3. A **pertinent question**
4. A **definite, to-the-point statement**
5. A **courteous request or command**.³⁵

The following are examples of letter-openings that carry out these principles:

The Ballad of Judge Roy Bean, about which you inquire, is published by G. Thurman and Company, 514 Milk Street, Boston.

.....
 Because I really want to learn the insurance business from the ground up, I'd like to start in as your office assistant, mix my thorough high-school training with careful work and ingenuity, and try hard, frankly, to make myself indispensable to you.

.....
 How are you and the stenographers liking those Regal Noiseless typewriters you were trying out when I was up there last October?

.....
 Sylvester Henderson, who hands you this letter, is a regular crony of mine whom I want you to shake hands with.³⁶

Of almost equal importance with the first sentence of a letter is the opening paragraph. As a rule, it should be short and to the point, so that the reader

³⁴Buck, op. cit., pp. 3-6.

³⁵Ibid., p. 6.

³⁶William Paxton Boyd, Some Fundamentals of Good Letter Writing, pp. 33, 109, 30, 40.

will not have to wade through a mass of words before discovering what the letter is about. It must attract the reader's eye and, by stating the gist of the letter, invite him to read further into the main body of the letter.³⁷

Generally speaking, this practice of short paragraphs, made up of short, to-the-point sentences, should be followed throughout the letter in developing the core-thought stated in the first paragraph. Not only do short sentences and short paragraphs make the thought easier to follow; the extra white space resulting from the shorter paragraphs makes the letter more pleasing to the eye.³⁸

In a business letter, as in any other composition, the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis should be followed.

The principle of unity may be defined as the law that prescribes that a piece of writing shall present only one main idea, proposition, or purpose. It is a principle of selection in that in agreement with it the writer consciously and deliberately selects both the main idea, proposition, or purpose he plans to develop and the particulars . . . that will make up and complete that leading idea.

The principle of coherence is the law that prescribes that the particulars selected by the writer to compose the main idea shall be presented in some logical order; that the idea shall be developed in a smooth and connected

³⁷Lockley, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

³⁸Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., pp. 38-43.

fashion. It is a principle of arrangement in that in compliance with it the writer arranges and presents these selected thoughts in an order best suited to achieving his purpose.

The principle of emphasis is the law that prescribes that important ideas should be made to stand out. It is a principle both of position and of proportion for the reason that the chief methods of causing an idea to stand out are by placing it in a prominent position and by giving it a proportionally large amount of space.³⁹

Do not divide your reader's attention among many things, or you may lose his attention altogether. If you have more than one thing to discuss with him, write another letter.⁴⁰ The corethought of the letter, or of any one paragraph, may be developed in the following ways:

1. With facts, details, or particulars
2. With reasons
3. With specific instances or with concrete examples
4. By narrative (telling the events of a happening in the order of occurrence)
5. By comparison
6. By contrast.

In letters the first three of these methods are most used.⁴¹

Closing the letter.--Since the beginning and the end of the letter are the two points of greatest emphasis, it follows that a successful letter must have a strong, effective closing sentence--a "clincher" that will obtain from the reader the action desired by the

³⁹Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., p. 70.

⁴⁰Young, op. cit., p. 36.

⁴¹Aurner, op. cit., p. 259.

writer. Letter closes may be grouped in two general classes: those that seek to obtain immediate action on the part of the reader, and those that aim only to win conviction, or agreement with a certain point of view.⁴² Whatever its purpose, the closing sentence has three duties:

1. To round out the letter plan
2. To bring a final focus on the action desired
3. To leave an echo of courtesy in the mind of the reader.⁴³

Effective methods of closing a letter include a definite statement, a courteous request or command, or a pertinent question.⁴⁴ Ineffective closes to be avoided include the following:

1. Stereotyped closes.
Kindly advise us as to your needs.
.....
2. Participial closes.
Thanking you for past favors and trusting I may have the pleasure of serving you again.
.....
3. Discourteous commands.
Come into our store tomorrow. It doesn't cost you anything just to look around.
.....
4. We closes.
We urge you to take advantage of this good offer.
.....
5. Vague or general closes.
Parisian bath powders have a smooth

⁴²James H. Picken, Business Correspondence Handbook, p. 173.

⁴³Aurner, op. cit., p. 270.

⁴⁴Buck, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

quality of finesse and are sold at drug stores.

6. Irrelevant closes.

Yours for a world of pleasure with the new car.

7. "Clever" or humorous closes.

Of course we know when you get this information you will be so "hot and bothered" that you will rush right over to the Western Union and tell us all about it.

8. Closes asking a favor.

Your reply would be a favor to us.

9. Negative clinchers.

Why give us no as an answer?⁴⁵

The Physical Make-Up of the Letter

General appearance.--The importance of the first impressions made by the general appearance of the letter cannot be overemphasized.

The well-planned, vividly phrased letter deserves an attractive dress. The dress of the letter is no less important than that of the salesman. Like the well-dressed salesman, the well-dressed letter has a better chance of winning receptive attention than one that is shabby or outlandish in appearance. The letter which appears in disordered array; the letter that looks stiff and angular; the letter that is freakish or flashy, like a salesman with flaring tie and gaudy clothes--all these receive attention, to be sure, but not the desirable attention conducive to receptive reading. Faults in the physical make-up of the letter jeopardize its success. Correct appearance makes for success.⁴⁶

Several factors enter into the impression created

⁴⁵McCloskey, op. cit., pp. 227-231.

⁴⁶Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., p. 161.

by the reader's first glance at a letter: the color and quality of stationery used, the color of ink, whether the letter is typed or handwritten, the style of letterhead, the placement of the letter on the page, the style of letter-layout.

There is a consensus of opinion among authorities that the one safe rule to follow in regard to stationery and ink for business letters is to use good quality white bond paper, size 8½ by 11 inches, printed with black ink. Exceptions can sometimes be made, especially in sales letters, when "inobtrusive pale shades are often used . . . with good effect."⁴⁷ If a second sheet is necessary, it should be of the same size and quality as the first but without the printed letterhead.⁴⁸ The letterhead itself should be simple, attractive, and distinctive, but not blatant, in keeping with the character of the business and containing only necessary information.⁴⁹ There is no longer any debate but that to be most effective a business letter should be typed.

Proper spacing and correct placement of the letter on the page can do much toward creating a desirable impression. No hard-and-fast rules can be laid down as to whether single- or double-spacing should be used,

⁴⁷Buck, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁸McCloskey, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 48.

this being governed by the length of the letter. However, unless the letter is extremely short, business practice prefers single-spacing, both for the saving in stationery and for improved appearance.⁵⁰

A safe guide for placement is the "picture-frame" rule. This means that the letter should be made to assume the same general shape and proportions as those of the sheet upon which it is placed.⁵¹ Generally speaking, the bottom frame of white space should be wider than the top one in the ratio of 3 to 2. When a letter is so short that the black space ceases to dominate the page, this rule should be modified so that the black space will be at least a third of the white background and the side frames each narrower than the black panel in the center.⁵²

The style of layout used will determine to some extent the placement of the letter on the page. Authors disagree somewhat as to the precise definition of the various styles commonly used; but the terms "block," "modified block," and "indented" are used in this paper to denote the forms illustrated in Appendix I. Under "extreme forms" are classed what some writers call "pure block," in which all lines except the dateline

⁵⁰Buck, op. cit., p. 41.

⁵¹Boyd, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵²Ibid., p. 19.

begin at the left margin; "hanging indentation," in which the first line of each paragraph begins at the left margin, with each succeeding line indented five spaces; and other similar radical departures from commonly-used forms.

Utility, attractiveness, and convention should be the bases for determining the layout used in any particular letter. However, there seems to be a current trend toward the block and the modified block styles, using the definitions given above.⁵³ In a study made in the School of Business Administration of The University of Minnesota, the percentages given in the following table were found, indicating this same trend.⁵⁴

TABLE 2
CURRENT TRENDS IN LETTER STYLES AS SHOWN
BY A STUDY OF 55 LETTERS
FROM BUSINESS CONCERNS

Letter Style	Percentage of Letters Using This Style
Semi-block	67
Modified block	18
Indented	15
Full block	0
Hanging indentation	0

In this study, "modified block" was defined as the

⁵³Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁴Ernestine Donaldson, "Current Business Correspondence Standards," The Journal of Business Education, XII (April, 1937), 21.

layout in which all lines except the dateline, the complimentary close, and the signature begin at the left margin; "semi-block," the same as the modified block except that the first line of each paragraph is indented five spaces; and "full block," the form in which all lines except the dateline begin at the left margin.

In order for a letter to be fully effective, certain standards must be observed in regard to the customary "parts": the heading, the inside address, the salutation, the complimentary close, and the signature. Modern usage approves either end-of-line (closed) punctuation, using commas or periods at the end of each line in the heading and the inside address, or open punctuation, which uses no punctuation at the ends of these lines, unless a line ends in an abbreviation, in which case, of course, a period must always be used. Because it is convenient and because it saves time for the typist, the open style is growing in favor.⁵⁵

Since the majority of business firms use printed letterheads, only the date usually need be typed in the position of the heading. Although some writers, by centering the date, cling to the practice of making it a part of the letterhead, the current tendency is to preserve letter-balance by placing the date in the upper

⁵⁵Aurner, op. cit., p. 46.

right corner of the body block.⁵⁶ It should always be typed on one straight line, without abbreviations.⁵⁷ It should be placed "from two to four . . . spaces above the first line of the inside address--two for long letters, three or four for shorter ones."⁵⁸ Although the length of the letter will determine how low on the page the dateline should be, it should never be less than two spaces below the last line of the printed letterhead.⁵⁹

The inside address should be the same as the address on the envelope and should correspond exactly to the official title of the company or individual to whom the letter is addressed. The word "City" should never be used instead of the full name of the town or city.⁶⁰

The nature of the letter, and the person to whom it is sent, will determine the formality or informality of the salutation. For very formal letters, the following are correct: My dear Sir, Sir, My dear Madam, or Madam. Dear Sir, Dear Madam (for either a married or an unmarried woman), Gentlemen, and Mesdames are less formal than the foregoing salutations, but more formal than the following, which imply personal acquaintance

⁵⁶Boyd, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵⁷Buck, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵⁸Boyd, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵⁹McCloskey, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 11-21.

or previous correspondence: Dear Mr. White, My dear Mr. White, Dear Mrs. White. The tendency is to use these more personal forms except in extremely formal or conservative letters.⁶¹ The salutation is always followed by a colon.

The complimentary close should agree with the salutation in its degree of formality or familiarity. For formal closes, to show deep or special respect, Respectfully yours or Yours respectfully is appropriate. Yours sincerely, Most sincerely, or Cordially yours are examples of personal and friendly closes. Always correct is Yours truly; the most popular closes are Yours very truly and Very truly yours. The complimentary close should begin slightly to the right of the center of the page and should never extend beyond the right-hand margin of the letter. The first word only is capitalized.⁶²

When there is any doubt as to the proper salutation or complimentary close for any particular letter, as, for instance, a letter to a high government official, any good handbook on business correspondence will have a list of the proper forms.

The most important point to remember about the signature is that it should always be legible, sensible, and business-like. Courtesy demands that one should never sign his letter with a pencil or a rubber stamp.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 37-39.

Because so many persons do not write legibly, the signature should be typed four spaces below the complimentary close and the penwritten signature inserted.⁶³

Summary

The effective business letter observes eight "C's": consideration, completeness, courtesy, clearness, conciseness, concreteness, character, and correctness. As to actual structure, the letter has a strong, interest-arousing beginning, a logically-developed body, and an action-compelling close. The letter is attractive as to general appearance and correct and appropriate as to layout.

⁶³Buck, op. cit., p. 43.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD APPLICATION LETTER

The Problem of Getting a Job

At some time or another in life, practically every individual is faced with the problem of getting a job. Often he fails to do so, not because employment is not to be had nor because he is not qualified, but because he does not know how to seek employment.¹ For there is a definite technique for obtaining employment.

Steps in seeking employment.--First, the person hunting a job should know how to market his services--how to apply the principles of salesmanship to selling himself. Then, he must decide what he wants to get and what he has to sell to an employer. Next, he should survey the market for his services. In a small town, he may simply choose the company that offers him the best prospects; in a large city, by inquiring among his friends and acquaintances or by any other effective method, he should make a list of all the concerns to which he will try to sell his services. Finally, he must decide upon the method he will use to sell his

¹Charles J. Jansen, "Fundamental Principles of Seeking Employment," The Business Education World, XVIII (April, 1938), 621.

services. Usually he will choose one of the following:

1. By letter.
2. By personal solicitation.
3. By advertising.²

This study, of course, is primarily concerned with the first method.

Classes of Application Letters

Two broad classes of application letters are generally recognized. Solicited letters are written in answer to advertisements, usually "want ads." Unsolicited letters are written by the applicant who hopes that there may be a vacancy or who writes at the suggestion of a third party, such as a friend or an employment bureau.³

Analyzing the Problem

The general rules for writing effective business letters, as discussed in Chapter II, apply to application letters. The first step in writing an application is a careful analysis of the problem. This means (1) an analysis of the position, (2) an analysis of the prospective employer, and (3) an analysis of your own qualifications. Such an analysis might be made by the

²Edward Jones Kilduff, How to Choose and Get a Better Job, pp. 58-74

³Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., pp. 471-472.

following procedure:

Get all possible information about the employer. Analyze his character, personality, and temperament so that you can adapt your letter to him. Become familiar with the firm's policies, organization, and methods.

Analyze thoroughly the requirements of the position. Read the advertisement with care; seek information from your friends and acquaintances and from employees.

Analyze your selling points. From your general qualifications--age, education, training, experience, character, personality--and special qualifications, select those particular points which focus directly upon the position for which you are applying.

Present these qualifications in the light of their service to an employer and of their ability to satisfy the requirements of the position. Make these selling points persuade the employer that you are the man he wants.

Make a list of good references.⁴

The Objectives of the Application Letter

The application letter has the following points as its main objectives:

1. An application for the position.
2. A list of the requirements of the position.
3. A statement of the qualifications of the applicant.
4. A statement of experience and training exactly and in detail.
5. A list of references.
6. A request for either an interview or the position.⁵

The Application-Letter Formula

When he is ready actually to write his letter, the

⁴McCloskey, op. cit., p. 427.

⁵Paul V. Sheehan, Better Business Letters, p. 273.

applicant should keep in mind that the application letter is really nothing but a personal sales letter, in which he attempts to sell his services rather than a tangible physical product. The rules for writing good sales letters will therefore apply to application letters, although with varying force.⁶ The following is often given as the formula for an effective sales letter:

1. Attract favorable attention.
2. Arouse desire.
3. Instill conviction.
4. Secure action.⁷

Attracting favorable attention.--A letter that lacks a neat, attractive, correct physical make-up stands very little chance of attracting favorable attention and arousing interest; it is much more likely to end up in the wastebasket without even being read. The first item in an attractive appearance is the stationery. While the reader may not consciously notice appropriate stationery, he is almost certain to react unfavorably to that which is unsuitable. The paper should always be a standard-sized sheet, 8½ by 11 inches, of good quality white bond. It is bad taste to use the stationery of some firm or of a fraternity or a hotel for an application letter.⁸

⁶Burd and Miller, op. cit., p. 466.

⁷Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., p. 252.

⁸McCloskey, op. cit., p. 248.

The letter should be neatly typed, in any acceptable standard form, and spaced attractively on the page. For the sake of legibility, it is wise to use both a handwritten and a typed signature. Care should be taken to see that the spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct in every detail. Marginal headings, such as Edu-
cation, Experience, References, may be used; or a separate data sheet may be used to give factual details of the applicant's education, experience, and personal history.⁹

Another potent factor in arousing interest is the opening paragraph of the letter. As in other business letters, a short opening paragraph is usually more effective than a long one. Come to the point at once. **APPLY FOR THE POSITION**, in a direct and specific statement, at or near the beginning of the letter. Usually the opening paragraph will also contain some specific reference to the source of information or to the reason leading to the application.¹⁰ Such trite and overworked openings as the following should be avoided:

In answer to your advertisement . . .
I saw your ad in today's Tribune and wish
to apply . . .
Having heard that you are in need of a . . .¹¹

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Maurice H. Weseen, Write Better Business Letters, p. 216.

¹¹Buck, op. cit., p. 146.

Applicants sometimes feel that, in order to attract attention to their letter, they should use an extreme style of make-up or a radical departure from the conventional presentations of facts. Once again, the person to whom the letter is sent, and the type of position for which the application is written, should guide the writer. But while it is true that one should avoid the trite or the stereotyped, it is generally safer to lean toward conservatism more than toward the more radical forms of applications. Make your letter clever, but not bizarre.¹²

Creating desire.--The second step in the application-letter formula is to create in the employer a desire to use the services of the applicant. This is done by "a specific description of the applicant's qualifications--age, education, experience, and personal characteristics."¹³ After outlining the qualifications required to fill the position, the applicant should check his own qualifications against this list. He should then determine the central selling point in his qualifications and group all other data so as to emphasize this outstanding qualification.¹⁴

¹²Sidney W. Edlund, "To Get Attention, Be Different," The Business Education World, XX (April, 1940), 652.

¹³McCloskey, op. cit., p. 429.

¹⁴Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., p. 480.

When specific points are mentioned upon which the employer desires information, these should be followed in the order in which they occur. Additional information may be used or not, according to the judgment of the applicant.¹⁵

This presentation of qualifications is the applicant's opportunity to give personality to his letter. He should take stock of all of his characteristics: social skills, special abilities in certain academic subjects, unusual manual dexterity, etc. Then he can capitalize his good points.¹⁶ In many positions, the fact that an applicant is popular with the younger set, or belongs to leading social clubs, or has unusual talent for mathematics is just as important, or more so, than ten years of experience in his work.

Convincing the reader.--The third function of a letter of application, that of convincing the reader that the applicant is the man he needs, is closely related to creating desire. In the preceding step, the applicant has made certain statements as to his qualifications for the job; now, by logical reasoning and evidence, he must prove that these statements are true.

Instead of saying, "I am a fast and accurate worker" you can say, "Even at a dictation speed of 115 words a minute and a copying speed of 45, I seldom have an erasure." Or, "I was

¹⁵Ibid., p. 481.

¹⁶Harry Walker Hepner, Finding Yourself in Your Work, pp. 87-89.

usually one of the first in the class to get my trial balance."

Instead of claiming that you have a good personality and get on well with people, you can tell of honors and offices to which your fellow students elected you.¹⁷

References are usually a part of convincing the reader, but there is some debate as to when they should be given. Buck has the following to say on this topic:

Arguments have been put forth both for and against sending copies of recommendations or giving names of those to whom the reader may refer for credentials--with the first letter. It has been found that mentioning references at the interview is much more effective. If you cannot make your letter sufficiently convincing to effect an interview, very likely your references will not be needed, although this is not always the case. Unusually good recommendations sent with the initial letter of application have resulted in an . . . interview.¹⁸

P. W. Boynton, employment assistant of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, also believes that references are better left until the interview or for a follow-up letter.¹⁹ Certainly if names are listed for references, only a few strong ones, probably one each for training, experience, and character, should be given. Names should be complete and correct and should be presented in tabulated form. The applicant should have the per-

¹⁷Sidney W. Edlund, "Offer a Service Instead of Asking for a Job," The Business Education World, XX (March, 1940), 566.

¹⁸Op. cit., p. 148.

¹⁹Joan Coyne, "If You're Looking for a Job by Mail," The Scholastic, XXXII (May 14, 1938), 7-8, 12.

mission of every individual whose name he lists as a reference and should state this fact in the letter.²⁰

Inciting action.--The final goal of any application letter is to cause the employer to act. Few letters result in an offer of a position; effective applications do lead to a personal interview. Therefore, the closing paragraph of the application letter should be a "clincher," designed to "prepare the way by removing obstacles and making it easy for the employer to arrange ther interview."²¹

Ask for an appointment, at the employer's convenience if your schedule will permit this. Otherwise indicate exactly what hours and days it would be possible for you to call. Give your complete mail address. For local purposes give your telephone number and indicate when you can be reached.²²

Some General Suggestions

The tone of the letter.--The application letter is one in which the general tone is of the utmost importance. The writer should use a natural, easy mode of expression, avoiding all unnatural reserve and soberness.²³ He should be careful not to appear boastful or egotistical; but at the same time, he should bear in mind that he is presenting information about himself,

²⁰Weseen, op. cit., pp. 223-224.

²¹Burd and Miller, op. cit., p. 478.

²²Weseen, op. cit., p. 225.

²³Shaaber, op. cit., p. 290.

and that an attempt to avoid the use of "I" will usually result in awkwardness. . . . It is not offensive to speak frankly and honestly about oneself when one has been asked to do so. It is offensive, however, to overpraise one's abilities and to neglect to consider the reader's feelings, as in, "I know I am the best man for the place," and, "If you want me you will have to speak up. . . .

.
The stronger and more confident the tone of the letter without its becoming offensive, the better the impression it will make; and the meeker and humbler the tone of the letter, the poorer the impression it will make.²⁴

The tone of the letter should of course be adapted to the particular type of employer to whom it is written. A letter to a college president or to the head of an old, conservative banking house would be quite different in tone from a letter applying for a position as a publicity agent or advertising copy writer.²⁵

Forestalling objections.--An applicant can sometimes foresee and forestall certain objections that statements in his letter may raise in the mind of the employer. A common illustration is the statement by the applicant that he is at present unemployed. The employer is likely to think that he was discharged from his last position for some discreditable reason; unless such doubt is dispelled, the employer will probably disregard the application. The applicant should therefore truthfully but tactfully tell why he is unemployed.

²⁴Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., p. 206.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 205-208.

The same principle holds true for an applicant who has a job but is applying for a new one. "Failure to give a good reason for desiring to leave his present position sometimes injures the applicant's chances." The applicant should be careful, however, not to use reasons that will arouse a negative reaction, such as "I do not receive enough salary" or "I am unhappy in my present position."²⁶

The data sheet.--"The letter of application should not ordinarily be longer than one typed page."²⁷ While the employer may read a two-page letter (even this is doubtful), he is much more likely to consider favorably a concise, one-page application. If the employer desires full details concerning the applicant, it is physically impossible to include all these on one page; therefore the logical thing for the writer to do is to emphasize his strongest selling points in his letter and use a separate data sheet for fuller details. He must be careful, however, that the letter refers to the data sheet in such a way that the reader will be sure to read it.²⁸

The name of the applicant should be placed at the head of the data sheet. The data should be itemized

²⁶Ibid., pp. 203-209.

²⁷Babenroth and Ward, op. cit., p. 485.

²⁸Burd and Miller, op. cit., p. 476.

under appropriate headings, so organized that the main divisions can be caught at a glance.²⁹ While the classifications used will vary with individuals and even with each application, the following are suggestive:

Personal Details.--Age, height, weight, health, sex, nationality, religion, married or single, children, hobbies.

Education.--Schools and colleges attended, with dates, and degrees, if any. Noted instructors under whom you studied. Field of specialization. Individual courses and special work of particular importance for the position you seek.

Experience.--List every position ever held, with dates, reasons for leaving, name and address of employer, specific duties, salary, degree of responsibility, advantages gained from previous work for the position for which you are applying.

Qualities of Mind.--A frank estimate of the degree to which you have developed such qualities as honesty, industry, loyalty, cooperation, and initiative.³⁰

Useful Data Sheet Guide

1. General details--personal

Name	Permanent address
Age	Height and weight
Birthplace	Physical condition
Nationality of parents	Single or married
Present address	Religion

2. Education

	Special Field of Study
High school	Courses taken in special field
Business college	field
Junior college	Courses allied to special field
Institute	field
University	Books read on special field and allied subjects; magazines preferred
Theoretical training, laboratory training, field training	

3. Experience and practical training

Positions held, with dates of tenure and names of employers
Any special training gained from practice

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 472.

4. Affiliations, lodges, clubs
5. References(by permission): names, exact addresses³¹

Unsolicited Letters

The unsolicited application letter differs from the solicited one in the opening paragraph, the statement of qualifications, and the adaptation to the reader, the chief difference being in the first two respects. For obvious reasons, the applicant cannot refer to the fact that he is applying for an advertised position. An original beginning, however, is nonetheless important. Regarding his statement of qualifications, the applicant must decide what to say about himself and how he will say it, since he does not have the definite requirements of the position to guide him. He should include a general description of his training and experience, emphasizing any points that particularly fit him for the position for which he is applying.³²

Summary

In review, the application letter is a personal sales letter. To be effective, it should perform the following functions:

1. Attract favorable attention and arouse interest;

³¹Aurner, op. cit., p. 440.

³²Hotchkiss and Kilduff, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

2. Create desire for the applicant's services;
3. Convince the reader that the applicant can fill the position;
4. Induce the reader to act; namely, to grant the applicant an interview.

P. W. Boynton, in the interview previously mentioned, sums up the effective application letter as follows:

The individual must sell his services to the company.

He must not be egotistical and over-sell himself.

The letter must make the office want an interview with the writer.

The letter must be neat and free from errors in spelling, typing, etc.

Never try to get by with a sob story.

References may be left until the interview or for a follow-up letter.³³

³³Coyne, op. cit., p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE APPLICATION FOR A TEACHING POSITION

Just as the rules for writing sales letters apply, with varying force, to application letters, so the points discussed in the preceding chapter hold true, in a general manner, for letters applying for teaching positions.

Information from Documentary Sources

Publications that specifically discuss application letters for teaching positions are apparently few. Using the methods discussed in the first chapter, this writer found only one book that dealt with the problem at any length. Not more than half a dozen magazine articles on the topic were found listed in the Educational Index and the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature for the last ten years.

Two kinds of application letters.--In addition to solicited and unsolicited letters, applications may be divided into two other classes: the letter in which all of the data is given in the body of the letter, and the one which serves as an introduction for the writer, with all the necessary data tabulated on a separate sheet.

This latter type of letter, which is becoming increasingly popular, should contain the following items:

1. A pleasant, forceful, and courteous introduction.
2. A statement of all separate enclosures.
3. A willingness to send or have sent additional material.
4. An expression of a willingness to make a personal application if desired.
5. Any necessary information concerning the data sheets that follow.
6. A brief statement of outstanding attainment, training, or recognition if the applicant is in a position to substantiate such claims.¹

This type of letter has several advantages.

The introduction is left free from distracting details. This form of letter affords the writer opportunity for a clean cut, concise, and personal introduction.

2. The construction is simple as to form and English; thus the possibility of making errors is greatly reduced.
3. It looks neat and businesslike and can be contained on one page.
4. It is easily read.
5. It is the best form for inexperienced application writers because of its simplicity.²

The attitude of the applicant.--The mental attitude of the teacher who writes an application letter is of the utmost importance. For one thing, he should never feel that writing many applications is unprofessional. Above all, he should avoid any hint of failure or a "hard luck story."³

While it is necessary that the teacher's applica-

¹William A. MacDougall, Techniques of Teacher Self-Placement, p. 71.

²Ibid., pp. 71-72.

³Ibid., p. 65.

tion radiate self-confidence, it must also carefully avoid any appearance of egotism. The following letter is quoted as an actual example of a "strange mixture of modesty and conceit."⁴

Dear Sir:

As yet I have heard nothing from you regarding my application for the position of science teacher and athletic coach.

I am an A-1 man, have taught science for a number of years. During my stay here of two years I have given the school two championship teams; one in football and one in basketball.

While I ask more salary than the average coach, you will easily make this up in attendance at the games.

If you have good material and I don't give you a winning team, I don't want a cent salary.

I am in hopes of being placed before May 1, 1924 and will appreciate an early reply from you if you mean business.

Respectfully,

In addition to the items previously mentioned in regard to obtaining the "you" attitude in a letter, the writer of an application for a teaching position should bear in mind that his letter, in all likelihood, will be read by members of the school board as well as by the superintendent. This is especially true of smaller schools and communities. For this reason, the candidate should be careful not to emphasize church or lodge affiliations unless he knows that they are favorable ones. Likewise, he should mention sources of information about the vacancy only casually, unless he definitely

⁴A. Gloor, "Gems from the Application File," The American School Board Journal, LXXVIII (June, 1929), 161.

knows that these sources are friendly to the board.⁵

What questions to ask?--In the original application, it is best not to inquire about rules of the school board, board and room, salary, and the like. Also, it is best not to request the return of photographs, papers, or copies of recommendations until the applicant is sure that he will not be elected.⁶ However, in a follow-up letter, after the superintendent or school board has indicated an interest in the application, certain questions are advisable. What provisions, if any, does the system make for hospitalization? What is the bonded indebtedness of the district, and how many and how long warrants has it registered? Is there a Credit Union in the district? Does the system have permanent tenure and provisions for teacher retirement? Will the board release a teacher if an opportunity arises during the year for a better position? Is the system dominated by a taxpayers' organization, a newspaper, a political machine, etc.? How strong is the teacher-morale? How liberal or conservative is the board? Are the buildings kept in good condition, and are supplies and equipment sufficient?⁷

Mechanical details.--The same rules of good taste

⁵MacDougall, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

⁶Ibid., p. 69

⁷H. D. Eldridge, "Questions About the Job," The Clearing House, XIII (May, 1939), 527-528.

and good sense governing such mechanical details as paper, typing, layout, etc., that apply to application letters in general also are applicable to applications for teaching positions. While a good job of mimeographing or printing is permissible, even desirable, for such materials as data sheets or transcripts, the letter itself should never be duplicated. A new letter, "written expressly for, and directly to, the one who will read it," should be prepared for each application sent.⁸

As to the letter style used, schoolmen are generally conservative in their tastes. In a study made by Frank G. Davis, head of the department of education of Bucknell University, six members of a class in student teaching wrote application letters, varying from those as far as possible from the ordinary type to those closer to what one ordinarily expects to find in an application letter. The six letters, with photographs of the senders, were printed and bound in a folder and sent to one hundred eighty-nine Pennsylvania superintendents and principals, who were asked to rank the letters after the first reading. Of the one hundred six replies received, thirty-nine ranked as first a conservative letter, written in the first person, that

⁸MacDougall, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

went directly to the point and presented facts simply but effectively. This letter used a separate data sheet. The second-ranking letter, while written in the third person and not of the stereotyped form, was also short and to the point. The conclusions from the study were as follows:

If this brief study has any value, it should warn the prospective teacher that his best plan is to stick to the well-known principles of brevity, clearness, and conciseness; furthermore, that he should not try to educate his prospective superintendent to a new type of correspondence while he is trying to sell his services. Since, however, there is such a range of opinion, the different individual need not discard his individuality. There is a sufficiently large group of superintendents who like the unusual letter to justify the individual in revealing his distinctive personality when applying for a position.⁹

Data Obtained from the Questionnaire

Percentage of returns.--Of the one hundred questionnaires sent to college and university presidents, sixty-five were returned. Sixteen other recipients replied, either giving their reasons for not returning the questionnaire or promising to send it later but failing to do so, making a total of 81 per cent definite replies.

Mechanical structure and layout.--Returns from the questionnaire bore out the theory that the application

⁹Frank G. Davis, "Which Letter Gets the Job?" The School Executive, LVII (May, 1938), 408, 443.

letter should always be typed. The first question was as follows:

Which statement best describes your reaction to a handwritten application letter as compared with a typewritten one?

- a. You do not read it.
- b. You read it reluctantly.
- c. You are impressed to find someone who writes his letter rather than use the impersonal typewriter.

Four persons did not answer this question. Of the ones who did check it, none failed to read a handwritten letter; but 54 per cent read it reluctantly. Only 20 per cent are impressed by a handwritten letter, and 25 per cent of these qualified their statement by saying that they preferred a handwritten letter only when the handwriting is legible or superior. To 20 per cent it makes no difference whether the letter is typed or handwritten. (However, 25 per cent of these individuals also qualified this answer with "if legible.") Three persons, or 5 per cent, answered that they preferred a typed letter. One answer, or 2 percent, was that the purpose of the letter determines whether it should be handwritten or typed.

Three questions had to do with letter style and layout. In one, the reader was asked to check the letter style he thought most effective for an application, considering current trends: block, modified block, or extreme forms, using the definitions given in the first

chapter of this study. Of the sixty-one answers received to this question, 25 per cent preferred the block style; 71 per cent, the modified block; and only 3 per cent, the extreme forms. To 7 per cent the style made no difference.

Another question in this group was inspired by an application letter which this writer has, for a vacancy in a commercial department, in which the applicant presented his qualifications in the form of a balance sheet instead of using the conventional data sheet. Of the sixty-four answers to this question, 8 per cent indicated that such "freak" make-ups create a favorable impression; 45 per cent thought that they detract from the effectiveness of the application; while to 42 per cent, they add nothing to the application.

In the third question in this group, the administrators were asked to check whether they preferred a letter giving all the data in the body of the letter, regardless of whether it required more than one page, or a concise, one-page letter with a separate data sheet. Of those answering, 88 per cent preferred the data sheet; 9 per cent preferred that the letter itself contain all data; 2 per cent considered the problem superficial; and 2 per cent wrote that circumstances determine the type of letter that should be used.

Recipients of the questionnaire were also asked to

to check their opinion on appropriate salutations, dateline forms, and complimentary closes for application letters.

Question Number 3 was as follows:

From your point of view, which salutation is most suitable for a letter to a college president?

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| a. Dear Dr. ____: (If holder of a doctorate) | |
| b. Dear President ____: | d. Dear Mr. ____: |
| c. Dear Sir: | e. My dear Dr. ____: |

Of the sixty-five answers received, 5 per cent considered that the salutation used makes no difference.

"Dear Dr. ____" was checked by 17 per cent; "Dear President ____," by 34 per cent; "Dear Sir," by 28 per cent; "Dear Mr. ____," by 11 per cent; and "My dear Dr. ____," by 11 per cent. Of these, one considered either b or c appropriate; two preferred a or b.

In the question on complimentary closes, the reader was asked to check which of the following would leave him feeling most kindly toward the writer:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Very truly yours | c. Respectfully yours |
| b. Sincerely yours | d. Cordially yours |

Sixty-four persons answered the question. Thirty-four per cent preferred "Very truly yours"; 38 per cent chose "Sincerely yours"; 28 per cent checked "Respectfully yours"; and 6 per cent preferred "Cordially yours." There were optional choices in the answers to this question also; six checked a and b; one checked a and c; one, b and c; two, a, b, and c. Six per cent

of those answering the question considered any of the complimentary closes satisfactory; one, or 2 per cent, considered the question unimportant. One person wrote that he thought the age and station of the writer of the letter in relation to the recipient should govern the complimentary close used, while one said that he did not see this part of the letter.

The administrators were asked to express their opinion of fancy datelines, such as the following:

February
Twenty-Eighth
1940

Sixty-one answered the question. Only 5 per cent admired such novel forms of expressing personality; 84 per cent did not. To 10 per cent the dateline was unimportant; one person, or 1 per cent, did not particularly admire such forms; neither did he object to them.

Three other questions had to do with the impression made by the appearance of the letter. In one, the reader was asked to check his preference as to type size: Gothic, Elite, or Pica. Fifty-seven persons answered the question. Of these, 2 per cent preferred Gothic; 75 per cent, Elite; 18 per cent, Pica. One person checked either Gothic or Elite. To 7 per cent, the size of the type made no difference.

The college heads were asked to check their opinion

of the person whose letter has the following typographical errors:

- a. Finger smudges or smudgy erasures.
- b. Strike-overs or uncorrected errors.
- c. Type faint to the point of invisibility.
- d. Neatly-made, typed corrections.
- e. Errors corrected with ink or pencil.
- f. Uneven pressure in typing.
- g. Type out of line.

These items were checked under the following headings:

Indicates Carelessness; Sensible and Practical; Shows Lack of Neatness.

Three persons ignored the question entirely, and others omitted various parts of it. Several checked some parts under both Indicates Carelessness and Shows Lack of Neatness. Of those who answered the various parts, 55 per cent thought that finger smudges or smudgy erasures showed carelessness; 60 per cent considered them evidence of lack of neatness. Strike-overs or uncorrected errors indicated carelessness to 66 per cent and lack of neatness to 29 per cent; 10 per cent considered these sensible and practical. Faint type indicated carelessness to 83 per cent, while 14 per cent considered this lack of neatness. Typed corrections were approved as sensible and practical by 77 per cent. Only 7 per cent considered such corrections careless; to 11 per cent they showed lack of neatness. Corrections with ink or pencil were sensible and practical to 11 per cent; but 32 per cent checked these as indicating

carelessness, and 57 per cent as showing lack of neatness. Carelessness was indicated to 70 per cent by uneven pressure in typing and to 76 per cent by type out of line. Twelve per cent considered the first of these items showed lack of neatness; 20 per cent thought the same about type out of line. To 8 per cent, uneven pressure was sensible and practical. One person considered type out of line merely evidence of a poor typewriter. These errors were not important to 2 per cent of those answering this question; 3 per cent were unfavorably impressed by all of them.

The final question having to do with the physical appearance of the letter dealt with the relation of the envelope to the letter. Of the sixty persons who answered the question, 5 per cent wrote that they did not see the envelope. To another 5 per cent, the envelope made no difference. There were 23 per cent who considered a legal-size envelope good; to 51 per cent it was acceptable; and to 17 per cent, it was bad form. A window address was considered good by 4 per cent, acceptable by 20 percent, and bad by 67 per cent. An address not properly centered impressed no one as good, 20 per cent as acceptable, and 67 per cent as bad. Forty per cent checked "No return address" as bad; 49 per cent, acceptable. No one considered this good. A return address on the back of the flap would be acceptable to 65

per cent, but 24 per cent checked it as bad. To only 2 per cent was this good form. A stamp upside down or crooked was acceptable to 53 per cent, but 37 per cent considered it bad. An envelope of different stock from the stationery would be acceptable to 16 per cent, but 77 per cent thought it bad. One individual added the suggestion that an envelope that did not fit the stationery in size would impress him unfavorably.

Contents of the letter.--The remaining items on the questionnaire dealt with the contents and composition of the teacher's application letter. Questions 7 and 8, respectively, asked the administrators to list the personality traits and the professional accomplishments which they expected of an applicant. Question 7 was answered on fifty of the sixty-five questionnaires returned; Question 8, on fifty-two.

Judging by the personality traits listed by these college administrators, the qualities of most importance to the applicant are an attractive personal appearance, strong moral character, and poise of manner. The complete list of personality traits is found in Table III, on the following page. Answers slightly different in wording but essentially the same in meaning were grouped together in arriving at the number of times each trait was listed. For example, "vitality" was counted the same as "energy"; "geniality," the same as "cheerfulness."

TABLE 3

PERSONALITY TRAITS EXPECTED OF TEACHERS
BY 50 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS
IN THE ORDER OF FREQUENCY OF LISTING

Trait	Times Listed	Percentage
Attractive appearance	11	22
Moral character	11	22
Poise	11	22
Sincerity	7	14
Honesty	6	12
Energy	5	10
Congeniality	5	10
Intelligence	5	10
Reliability	5	10
Frankness	5	10
Neatness	5	10
Leadership	4	8
Friendliness	4	8
Good manners	4	8
Stability	4	8
Co-operation	3	6
Loyalty	3	6
Adaptability	3	6
Teaching ability	3	6
Cheerfulness	2	4
Sense of humor	2	4
Willingness to work	2	4
Interest in work	2	4
Alertness	2	4
Enthusiasm	2	4
Ability to stimulate students	2	4
Conversational ability	1	2
Aggressiveness	1	2
Simplicity	1	2
Good language	1	2
Outside interests	1	2
Tact	1	2
Initiative	1	2
Good breeding	1	2
Even temper	1	2
Ambition	1	2
Health	1	2
Religion	1	2
Directness	1	2
Reasonableness	1	2
Self-confidence	1	2
Unselfishness	1	2
Force	1	2

The professional accomplishments expected of teachers, as indicated by the fifty-two college administrators who answered this item on the questionnaire form, are summarized below in Table 4.

TABLE 4

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS EXPECTED OF TEACHERS
BY 52 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

Requirement	Times Listed	Per Cent Listing	Per Cent Listing First
Degree; academic training	44	84.6	78.8
Membership in professional organizations	17	32.6	0.0
Research studies	10	19.2	0.0
Experience	10	19.2	1.9
Teaching skill	9	17.3	1.9
Scholarship	9	17.3	7.7
Leadership	2	3.9	0.0
Creative work	1	1.9	0.0
Specialization	1	1.9	0.0
Results	1	1.9	0.0
Good lecturer	1	1.9	0.0
Self-improvement	1	1.9	0.0

Three administrators, or 6 per cent, said that the professional requirements depended upon the position sought. One reply, or 2 per cent, was, "Usual requirements"; another, "Best obtainable."

The importance of the opening sentence of a letter of application has been emphasized in the preceding chapter. In Question 10, typical opening sentences were listed; and the reader was asked to check those that would encourage him to read further into the application. Sixty-two persons answered the question. The reactions of those who checked the expressions listed on the questionnaire form are given in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5

PREFERENCES IN "CONTACT" EXPRESSIONS FOR TEACHERS'
APPLICATION LETTERS AS INDICATED BY
62 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

Expression Listed	Per Cent Checking
"Having heard of a vacancy in your _____ department, . . ."	11.0
"Mr. Blank, head of the X College Placement Bureau, has suggested. . ."	40.3
"The Blank Commercial Agency has no- tified me of a vacancy in. . ."	11.0
"May I submit my qualifications for a position in your ___ department?"	29.0
"Do you anticipate a vacancy in ___ this year?"	19.4
"The following data present my quali- fications to fill your vacancy in ___."	19.4

Three of the administrators considered any of the expressions effective; one thought that the circumstances determined the one that should be used.

It will be recalled that in the preceding chapter, it was stated that an applicant should give his reasons for wishing to make a change in employment. College administrators apparently agree. Of the sixty-four who checked the second question on the form, which asked for a statement on this matter, 95 per cent preferred that the applicant give his reasons for changing; only 3 per cent did not appreciate such a statement. Two per cent did not care whether the applicant gave his reasons for change or not.

The administrators were asked to express their opinion of the applicant with an impressive record and strong references who has errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation in his letter of application. Of the sixty who answered this question, 82 per cent expressed the opinion that the poor impression created by such errors could not be overcome; 10 per cent thought that it could be. Slightly more than 8 per cent thought that circumstances would determine the answer to this question.

Sixty-five persons answered the inquiry as to how an applicant should treat the question of salary in his first letter, unless he had been specifically asked to discuss the matter. Their reactions were as follows: 75 per cent thought that salary should not be mentioned; 25 per cent believed that the applicant should state the

minimum salary he will accept.

Two questions dealt with references and recommendations. The question regarding the number of references was answered on sixty-four of the forms. Only 2 per cent thought that the number of references made no difference in the effectiveness of the application; the remaining 98 per cent preferred one or two reliable references each for training, experience, and character to a long list of leading citizens as references.

In the other question of this group, the administrators were asked to check their preference among the following items:

a. Letters of recommendation mailed with the application.

b. Recommendations mailed at the request of the applicant.

c. References listed in the letter.

Sixty-four answers were received to the question. Two per cent checked a; 23 per cent, b; and 75 per cent, c. One person commented that he preferred recommendations from college placement bureaus; another, that recommendations mailed with the letter were useless.

In question 12, the reader was asked to indicate the weight given to the religious belief of the applicant. Of the sixty-five who answered, 28 per cent preferred that the applicant have some definite religious identification; to the other 72 per cent, religious belief

made no material difference.

In Question 14, the presidents were asked to indicate the weight given to the marital status of the applicant. To 54 per cent of the sixty-one persons who responded, the marital status of an applicant makes no difference, so long as the person appears to be efficient. A divorced person is considered unfavorably by 25 per cent; 8 per cent do not consider married women; a like percentage prefer an unmarried man. For 3 per cent, the position in question determines the consideration given to an applicant's marital status. One answer was, "Prefer married man"; another, from a Catholic convent, was, "Prefer unmarried woman."

Summary

From the few publications dealing specifically with application letters for teaching positions, one finds that the same rules governing applications for business positions apply also to the teacher's application. It is especially important that the teacher's letter have the "you" attitude toward both the superintendent and the members of the school board. The introductory type of letter, with a separate data sheet, is growing in favor over the lengthy letter containing all data in the body of the letter proper.

A summary of the results from the questionnaire used in this study will be found in Appendix II.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF SIXTY-FIVE LETTERS APPLYING FOR COLLEGE TEACHING POSITIONS

Introduction

Using the analysis sheet shown in Appendix III, a study was made of sixty-five application letters from the files of the office of the president of North Texas State Teachers College.

This analysis sheet was compiled by using the outstanding requirements of (1) business letters in general, (2) application letters in general, and (3) teachers' applications in particular. These requirements were considered under the general headings of contents and mechanics.

As stated in Chapter I, much of this analysis could not escape being subjective, since the writer's personal opinions necessarily influenced the scoring of such points as character, consideration, or tone. However, as much as possible, even such subjective items as these were checked in the light of the requirements revealed by the data from documentary sources and from the questionnaire form sent to the college and university presidents. The data on the points under "Mechanics"

have no such limitations, since these items are purely objective in nature.

Errors in the Observance of the Eight "C's"

The first question asked on the analysis sheet is, "Does the letter observe the eight "C's" of business correspondence?"

Consideration.--Only 9 per cent of the letters analyzed showed a careful analysis by the writer of the position and of the reader. Examples of statements that do show reader-consideration and the "you" attitude are the following:

If you have need for an additional man on your staff in accounting or related fields next year, will you please study my technical preparation, field experience, and teaching experience in the light of your needs?

Is there likelihood of a position in my fields of work at your college for which I could be considered? Since my qualifications combine teaching ability in several subjects, journalistic experience and training, and knowledge of student problems and needs, my services may satisfy requisites of your curriculum.

In view of the steady increase in enrolment at North Texas State Teachers College, if you find it necessary to increase your staff in the History Department, I should like to be considered for the place.

Statements such as the following are typical of those showing a lack of reader-consideration:

If you need a business administration teacher in your summer school I would like to have the position.

I am looking for a summer school teaching position in Business Administration and Economics for the coming summer, and if you will have such a position open, I shall appreciate it very much indeed if you will hand this inquiry to the person charged with the responsibility of selecting the summer school staff.

Completeness.--Nearly 54 per cent of the letters were incomplete in some particular. Many of the applicants gave no personal data at all. One writer stated that he had four degrees, including a Doctor of Philosophy, but he did not tell what institution granted him the doctorate. Another named the institutions at which he had taught but did not tell how long he had taught. Another stated that he had studied in Paris and in London but failed to specify with whom or at what school he had studied.

Clearness.--Omissions such as those discussed above naturally made for a lack of clearness in some instances; in others, awkward sentence structure necessitated reading the letter two or three times before the meaning was completely clear. Altogether, 37 per cent of the letters lacked complete clearness in some details. Several applicants failed to make clear whether they were still in school or were unemployed. One applicant rambled through three paragraphs (of a duplicated letter) before finally making it clear that her field of work was health and education. Another gave as references his "former instructors and col-

leagues," but he failed to give any of their names.

Courtesy.--A glance at the table summarizing this analysis, at the end of this chapter, will show that 78 per cent of the letters lacked courtesy. This figure is based on the statement from Hotchkiss and Kilduff (See page 10, Chapter II) that mere avoidance of discourtesy in a business letter is not sufficient. Letters, therefore, that were merely neutral were graded negatively on this point.

Conciseness.--Sixty per cent of the letters were not as concise as they might have been. Perhaps the outstanding example of this error was not in the actual letter of application but in the presentation of data attached to one applicant's letter. Instead of the customary tabulated data sheet, he used two full pages, single-spaced and with narrow margins, to present a biographical sketch and a complete list of his publications, including periodicals, books, dissertations, and even student theses and reports.

Concreteness.--While many letters told too much, 58 per cent were not specific enough in what they did tell. For instance, "I have . . . a great deal of experience in the field of handicrafts," instead of saying exactly how many years; "I have done some work in statistics," instead of telling how much work--these illustrate vague generalities.

Character.--It is hard to specify any one way in which a letter does or does not show character, or personality; it is largely a matter of the way it impresses each individual reader. However, in the opinion of the writer, 77 per cent of the letters showed little or none of this quality. Much of the lack of character resulted from too close an adherence to the stereotyped pattern for applications: "Please consider my application for . . ."; "I hold the B. A. and the M. A. degrees. . . ."; "I have had ten years of teaching experience . . ."; etc.

Correctness.--It is rather astonishing that of sixty-five letters applying for college teaching positions, 71 per cent should violate, in some way, the rules of correct letter-writing. Under this general heading were considered errors in mechanical form, typing, diction, grammar--any departure from any accepted standard of form. A more detailed analysis of these errors is given later in this discussion.

Other Errors in Contents and Mechanics

Composition.--The term "composition" is used here to include the essentials of unity, coherence, and emphasis. The last-named quality was the one most lacking; 83 per cent of the letters failed to emphasize outstanding points as effectively as possible. In most

cases, this resulted from weak opening sentences or from weak endings. The number of letters that lacked unity approximated those lacking coherence; 34 per cent were lacking in unity; 37 per cent, in coherence.

The beginning and the end.--As stated above, many of the letters lacked effective opening paragraphs and strong closing sentences. Weak openings were found in 91 per cent. Outstanding examples of how not to begin a letter of application are the following paragraphs:

Will you please advise if there will be an opening for a mathematics instructor at the North Texas State Teachers College for the coming year?

At this season of the year there seem to be many so-called job hunters in the teaching profession. Aside from this unfortunate situation, it is the time of year in which changes are made known and vacancies are filled by people with proper qualifications.

I am writing to request that my name be placed on file for consideration in the event that a vacancy occurs in your staff . . .

Of the 75 per cent of the letters with weak closing sentences or paragraphs, 8 per cent resulted from the participial type of ending. The following is quoted as another type of weak close.

As I do not have the funds to return to the University of Chicago this summer I would be willing to teach for a very reduced stipend. Shall I come for an interview?

Tone.--It will be remembered that the tone of the effective application is forceful without being egotis-

tical. A total of 75 per cent of the letters in this study violated this principle: 60 per cent were weak or noncommittal in tone, while 15 per cent were egotistical.

Witness the following:

With this background of experience and education, I feel that I can readily interpret the work of your school to the public so that desirable students may be attracted, financial support may be gained, and prestige may be raised.

Since you are constantly looking for better teachers and administrators for your school, I am inclosing some data concerning myself with the hope that you will consider me for any position that may develop in your institution into which my qualifications and training might fit me.

Reasons for unemployment or for change.--Data from documentary sources and from the questionnaire indicate that most administrators appreciate a frank statement from an applicant as to why he is unemployed, or, if he is employed, as to why he wishes to make a change. However, care must be used to make this statement tactful; the applicant should never hint that he is unemployed because of his own failure, nor should he cast any reflection on the institution at present employing him. Of the letters analyzed, 57 per cent gave no reason for unemployment or for wishing to make a change; 6 per cent of the applicants stated their reason for applying but did not do it tactfully. If an applicant stated in his letter that he was at present enrolled in an educational institution, or that he had only recently

completed work for a degree, he was counted among those who gave a tactful reason for unemployment.

Mechanical errors.--As a whole, the percentage of errors in the physical make-up and appearance of the letters was low. Only 8 per cent were written on stationery other than the standard size of $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 inches. The quality of stationery was inappropriate in only 12 per cent, and only 8 per cent used unsuitable letterheads. In regard to this last item, the letterhead of a school was considered appropriate for an applicant employed by the institution at the time of writing the letter. Inappropriate letterheads were those such as the two with the applicant's photograph printed on the stationery, or the college letterhead with the applicant's name and department typed in the upper right-hand corner.

Only 3 per cent of the letters were handwritten. However, 5 per cent of the letters were duplicated (these letters, incidentally, were judged lacking in courtesy, regardless of their wording), making a total of 8 per cent of the letters that were not typed. Of the sixty-three typed or duplicated letters, 62 per cent contained errors in typing.

Extreme layout styles, such as the strict block, were used in only 5 per cent of the letters. Placement on the page was poor in 32 per cent.

Aside from errors in typing, there were errors in grammar (largely incorrect sentence structure) in 66 per cent of the letters; in punctuation, in 65 per cent; and in spelling, in 5 per cent. Words were incorrectly divided in 9 per cent of the letters.

The letters analyzed followed the trend toward the one-page letter, with a separate data sheet for any additional information needed, as only 9 per cent of the letters were more than one page in length. Slightly more than 23 per cent of the letters had attached data sheets.

Surprising as it may seem, 69 per cent of the letters contained errors in the heading, the inside address, or the salutation. Abbreviations were common, especially in the heading. One inside address read,

Office of the President
North Texas Teachers College
Denton, Texas.

Another showing either carelessness or ignorance on the part of the applicant was as follows:

Mr. W. J. McConnell, President,
Texas State Teacher's College,
North Denton, Texas.

One applicant using a duplicated letter did not even bother to insert an inside address.

Forty-four of the letters did not give references. Of the remaining twenty-one, 48 per cent limited the names used as references to not more than three or

four; the same percentage gave the references in itemized form. Of the letters that named people who could furnish credentials, 86 per cent did not state whether or not permission had been obtained to use the names. Many of the applicants who did not give names for references mentioned the fact that they could furnish references or recommendations if the college president so desired.

Summary

Judging by the sixty-five applications for college positions that were used in this analysis, teachers' applications are weakest in the following points, since each of these faults was found in 75 per cent or more of the letters: lack of reader-consideration; weak "contact" expressions; lack of emphasis, courtesy, and character; a weak closing; and a weak or egotistical tone.

The complete results of this error-analysis are summarized in Table 6, on the following page. A copy of the analysis sheet used in making the study of the letters will be found in Appendix III.

Sample copies of some of the letters analyzed will be found in Appendix IV.

TABLE 6

TYPES OF ERRORS FOUND IN SIXTY-FIVE LETTERS APPLYING
FOR COLLEGE TEACHING POSITIONS, LISTED
IN THE ORDER OF THEIR FREQUENCY

Type of Error	Percentage of Frequency
Lack of reader-consideration	90.7
Weak "contact" expression	90.7
Lack of emphasis	83.0
Lack of courtesy	78.5
Lack of character	76.9
Weak closing	75.4
Weak or egotistical tone	75.4
Incorrect in some particular	70.8
Error in heading, inside address, etc.	69.2
Grammatical error	66.2
Errors in punctuation	64.6
Failure to give tactful reason for change	63.1
Not concise	60.0
Typographical errors	60.0
Not concrete	58.5
Incomplete	53.9
Not clear	36.9
Lack of coherence	36.9
Lack of unity	33.9
Poor placement on page	32.3
References without permission	27.7*
Too many references	15.4*
References not itemized	15.4*
Poor quality stationery	12.3
Incorrect word-division	9.2
Longer than one page	9.2
Unsuitable letterhead	7.7
Wrong size stationery	7.7
Extreme letter style	4.6
Duplicated letter	4.6
Misspelled words	4.6
Handwritten letter	3.1
Abbreviations in body	3.1

*Applies only to the forty-four letters listing references.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From this study, certain conclusions may be drawn as to the characteristics of an effective letter of application for a teaching position.

Mechanics.--The following statements are true of the physical make-up and mechanical structure of any good application letter in general and of a letter applying for a teaching position in particular.

1. The letter should be typed.
2. Only good quality bond paper, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 inches in size, should be used. White is preferable, but very pale tints, such as cream or pale yellow, are sometimes permissible.
3. It is usually permissible to use the letterhead of the school or college employing the applicant; but in case of doubt, use a plain sheet.
4. The letter should be set up in one of the standard styles--block, modified block, or indented.
5. Current trends indicate a preference for the modified block style.
6. If a printed letterhead is used, the date should

be typed in the upper right-hand corner of the letter block, on one line, without abbreviations.

7. If plain paper is used, do not abbreviate any part of the writer's address in the heading. Put each item on a separate line.

8. The inside address, consisting of the complete, correct title and address of the addressee, should be typed not less than three nor more than six spaces below the last line in the heading.

9. Avoid any abbreviations except those such as Mr., Mrs., or Dr. in the inside address.

10. The salutation usually should be the title of the addressee followed by his last name; the degree of formality will be determined by the familiarity of the writer's acquaintance with the addressee.

11. The complimentary close should agree with the salutation in degree of formality. Very truly yours or Yours truly is always safe and correct.

12. The letter itself should be limited to one page. If this will not include all data necessary, use a separate data sheet.

13. The letter should be free from typing errors. If corrections are made, they should be neatly done with the typewriter.

14. Never use a duplicated letter of any sort.

15. The envelope should correspond to the stationery

in size, color, and quality. The standard size ($6\frac{1}{2}$ inches long) is preferable, unless an envelope is included for reply.

16. The address should be correctly centered on the envelope; the return address should be in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope.

Contents.--The actual contents and composition of the letter should conform to the following characteristics.

1. Before writing the letter, find out everything possible about the position and the administrator; keep his needs, not yours, in mind as you write.

2. Never try to obtain a position by a hard-luck story. The administrator buys your services, not your misfortunes.

3. Avoid the use of "I" as much as possible, but do not do so to the extent of awkward sentence structure.

4. Avoid stereotyped "contacts." If the letter is written on the advice of a college placement bureau, mention this fact in the opening paragraph; but administrators do not favor commercial placement agencies.

5. Emphasize your good points, but do not be egotistical.

6. Emphasize your training, experience, membership in professional organizations, and any research work or publications to your credit.

7. The letter must be free from errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation.

8. Since an attractive personal appearance makes a vital impression, it is usually well to enclose a good, recent photograph.

9. Most school administrators appreciate a frank statement as to why the applicant wishes to change positions, or of why he is unemployed, provided such statement is tactfully made.

10. If references are given, (a) limit them to three or four strong ones, and (b) list them in itemized form. References may be left until the interview or for a follow-up letter.

11. Never use a name as reference without permission, and be sure to state that you have this permission.

12. Letters of recommendation should not be mailed with the application.

13. The applicant's religious identification and marital status should be mentioned but not emphasized.

14. When practicable, always close the letter by asking for a personal interview. If you cannot come for an interview, it is safer not to mention the subject; instead, close the letter with an expression of willingness to send further information or references.

15. Not only should the letter avoid bluntness or other forms of discourtesy; it should possess the posi-

tive value of courtesy.

16. Check and re-check your letter to be sure that it observes all of the "C's" of business correspondence.

Recommendations

In view of the error-analysis of the application letters used in this study, the following recommendations are made. These are given in the order of their need, as indicated by the frequency of the occurrence of the errors.

1. Give more attention to reader- and position-analysis; write the letter with the "you" attitude.
 2. Strive for stronger, more original "contact" expressions.
 3. Emphasize more strongly the main idea of the letter and your own central selling point, both by the wording of the letter and by the order of the paragraphs.
 4. Be sure that your letter reflects genuine courteous consideration for the reader. Say "thank you" and "please" as if you meant them.
 5. Make your letter reflect your own character and personality.
 6. In the closing paragraph, bring a final forceful, favorable focus on the action desired from the reader. AVOID THE PARTICIPIAL CLOSING.
 7. Make the tone of the letter forceful but not egotistical.
-

8. Be sure that your letter is correct in every particular. If you are not sure about any point, consult a reliable reference, or have someone whose judgment you trust to check your letter.

9. If you can do so tactfully, give your reason for unemployment or for wishing to make a change.

10. Make your letter concise; but also be sure that it is complete.

11. Be specific and concrete in your statements. Prove every claim that you make for yourself.

12. Be sure that your letter can be clearly understood with the first reading.

13. See that your letter has only one corethought (unity) and that this thought is logically developed, with all ideas smoothly connected (coherence).

14. See that your letter is attractively placed on the page.

15. Give references only with the permission of the persons whose names are used. Limit them in number, and itemize them.

16. Type the letter unless you know positively that the administrator prefers a handwritten one. Remember, even though a person says he prefers a written letter, he usually does so only when the handwriting is superior.

17. Avoid extreme letter styles.

APPENDIXES

I ILLUSTRATIONS OF STANDARD LETTER STYLES

Block Style

March 28, 1940

President W. J. McConnell
North Texas State Teachers College
Denton, Texas

My dear President McConnell:

We have here in our department a graduate student assistant who has taken on the responsibility of trying to find out how the quality of application letters for teaching positions can be improved.

Part of the study requires the reaction of college administrators, who have very close contact with the application problem.

Won't you co-operate in this practical study by expressing your opinion on several points? If you do not have the time to do so yourself, why not let the person next in line of responsibility give us a "picture" of the standards adhered to in your office?

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Professor of
Business Education

HDS:PC
Enc.

Modified Block Style

March 28, 1940

President W. J. McConnell
North Texas State Teachers College
Denton, Texas

My dear President McConnell:

We have here in our department a graduate student assistant who has taken on the responsibility of trying to find out how the quality of application letters for teaching positions can be improved.

Part of the study requires the reaction of college administrators, who have very close contact with the application problem.

Won't you co-operate in this practical study by expressing your opinion on several points? If you do not have the time to do so yourself, why not let the person next in line of responsibility give us a "picture" of the standards adhered to in your office?

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Professor of
Business Education

HDS:PC
Enc.

Indented Style

March 28, 1940

President W. J. McConnell
North Texas State Teachers College
Denton, Texas

My dear President McConnell:

We have here in our department a graduate student assistant who has taken on the responsibility of trying to find out how the quality of application letters for teaching positions can be improved.

Part of the study requires the reaction of college administrators, who have very close contact with the application problem.

Won't you co-operate in this practical study by expressing your opinion on several points? If you do not have the time to do so yourself, why not let the person next in line of responsibility give us a "picture" of the standards adhered to in your office?

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Professor of
Business Education

HDS:PC
Enc.

II A COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THIS STUDY

In order to present in summary form the data discussed in Chapter IV, the percentage of returns on each item is given here. The original questionnaire was typed in Gothic type, requiring only one 8½ by 14 inch page. A copy of the letter used in Appendix I was sent with each form, together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

1. Which statement best describes your reaction to a handwritten application letter as compared with a typewritten one? (Sixty-one answers.)

0.0% a. You do not read it.
54.1% b. You read it reluctantly.
19.7% c. You are impressed to find someone who writes his letter rather than use the impersonal typewriter.

2. Do you appreciate a frank statement by the applicant of why he wishes to change from his present position? (Sixty-four answers.)

95.3% Yes 3.1% No

3. From your point of view, which salutation is most suitable for a letter to a college president? (Sixty-five answers.)

16.9% a. Dear Dr. ____: (If holder of a doctorate)
33.9% b. Dear President ____:
27.7% c. Dear Sir:
10.8% d. Dear Mr. ____:
10.8% e. My dear Dr. ____:

4. In your opinion, which is the most effective form for an application letter, considering current style trends? (Sixty-one answers.)

- 24.6% a. Block: All lines in the inside address and in body of letter begin at left margin.
- 70.5% b. Modified block: Inside address blocked, but first line of each paragraph indented five spaces.
- 3.3% c. Extreme forms: All lines except date begin at left margin; address of writer at end of letter; etc.
5. Other qualifications being equal, which person would you consider more seriously? (Sixty-four answers.)
- 0.0% a. The one listing ten or twelve leading citizens of his community as references.
- 98.5% b. The one listing one or two reliable references each for training, experience, and character?
6. A commercial teacher took the time and trouble to present his qualifications in the form of a balance sheet. In your opinion, do such "freak" make-ups (Sixty-four answers.)
- 7.8% a. Create a more favorable impression;
- 45.3% b. Detract from the effectiveness of the application;
- 42.2% c. Add nothing to the application?
7. List the essential personality traits you look for in an applicant. (Fifty answers. See Table 3, page 59, for answers.)
8. What are the professional accomplishments (degrees, membership in professional organizations, etc.) that you expect of an applicant? (Fifty-two answers. See page 60 for answers.)
9. Can an applicant with a doctor's degree, twenty years of experience, and references from people high in public life overcome the undesirable impression created by errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation? (Sixty answers.)
- 10.0% Yes 81.7% No
10. Which of the following "contact" expressions would encourage you to read further into the letter? (Sixty-two answers.)
- 1.1% a. "Having heard of a vacancy in your _____ department, . . ."

- 40.3% b. "Mr. Blank, head of the X College Placement Bureau, has suggested. . ."
- 1.1% c. "The Blank Commercial Placement Agency has notified me of a vacancy in your _____ department."
- 29.1% d. "May I submit my qualifications for a position in your _____ department?"
- 19.4% e. "Do you anticipate a vacancy in _____ this year?"
- 19.4% f. "The following data present my qualifications to fill your vacancy in . . ."
11. Unless the applicant has been asked to state in his first letter the salary expected, should he (Sixty-five answers)
- 75.5% a. Make no mention of salary;
- 24.7% b. State the minimum salary he will accept;
- 0.0% c. Say "Salary no object"?
12. What weight does religious belief have with you in teacher selection? (Sixty-five answers.)
- 27.7% a. Makes no difference so long as the person is moral.
- 73.3% b. Prefer that the applicant have some definite religious identification.
13. Which of the following would you consider most seriously? (Sixty-four answers.)
- 1.6% a. Letters of recommendation mailed with the application.
- 23.4% b. Recommendations mailed to you at the request of the applicant.
- 75.0% c. References listed in the letter.
14. What weight do you give to the marital status of the applicant? (Sixty-one answers.)
- 8.2% a. Prefer unmarried men.
- 8.2% b. Do not consider married women.
- 24.6% c. Consider a divorced person unfavorably.
- 54.1% d. Makes no difference so long as person appears efficient.
15. If for good reasons an applicant cannot come for a personal interview unless he can be reasonably sure of obtaining the position, do you think (Sixty-five answers.)

- 47.8% a. He should say so frankly in his last paragraph, giving his reasons;
4.6% b. Request an interview regardless of its practicability;
47.8% c. Make no mention of an interview?

16. Which of the following sizes of type do you prefer in a letter? (Fifty-seven answers. On the original form, the name of each size was typed in that size of type.)

1.8% Gothic 75.4% Elite 17.5% Pica

17. Clothes may or may not make the man; but what relation does the envelope have to the letter inside? (Sixty answers.)

	Good	Acceptable	Bad
a. Legal size to attract attention	22.6%	51.0%	17.0%
b. Window address	3.7	20.0	67.3
c. Address not properly centered	0.0	20.0	67.3
d. No return address	0.0	40.0	49.1
e. Return address on back of flap	1.9	64.8	24.1
f. Stamp upside down or crooked	0.0	52.6	36.8
g. Envelope of different stock from stationery	0.0	15.7	76.7

February
 18. While a fancy dateline, such as Twenty-Eighth, may 1940
 attract attention, do you admire such novel methods of expressing one's personality? (Sixty-one answers.)

4.9% Yes 85.6% No

19. Which of the following complimentary closes would leave you feeling most kindly toward the writer? (Sixty-four answers.)

34.4% a. Very truly yours
37.6% b. Sincerely yours
28.1% c. Respectfully yours
6.3% d. Cordially yours

20. Which do you consider more effective, (Sixty-four answers.)

9.4% a. A letter of two or more pages, giving all data in the letter proper;
85.5% b. A concise, one-page letter, with a separate data sheet?

21. Check your opinion of the person whose letter has
(Sixty-two answers.)

	Shows Careless- ness	Sensible and Practical	Shows Lack of Neatness
a. Finger smudges or smudgy erasures	55.0%	0.0%	60.0%
b. Strike-overs or uncor- rected errors	65.5	10.3	29.5
c. Type faint to the point of invis- ibility	83.0	0.0	13.6
d. Neatly-made, typed corrections	7.1	76.8	10.7
e. Errors corrected with ink or pencil	32.1	10.7	57.2
f. Uneven pressure in typing	70.0	8.0	12.0
g. Type out of line	75.9	0.0	20.4

III COPY OF THE ANALYSIS SHEET USED TO CHECK THE
SIXTY-FIVE APPLICATION LETTERS

Contents

1. Does the letter observe the eight "C's" of business correspondence?
 - a. Consideration
 - b. Completeness
 - c. Courtesy
 - d. Clearness
 - e. Conciseness
 - f. Concreteness
 - g. Character
 - g. Correctness
2. Does the letter have the essentials of good composition?
 - a. Unity
 - b. Coherence
 - c. Emphasis
3. Does the opening paragraph attract favorable attention and arouse interest?
4. Does the close of the letter bring a final, favorable focus on the action desired?
5. Is the tone of the letter forceful without being egotistical?
6. Does the applicant tactfully state why he is unemployed or why he wishes to change positions?
7. Is the letter free from errors in the following?
 - a. Spelling
 - b. Grammar
 - c. Punctuation
8. If references are given,
 - a. are they limited to three or four;
 - b. are they given with permission;
 - c. are they arranged in itemized form?

Mechanics

9. Is the stationery appropriate as to
 - a. size;
 - b. quality;
 - c. heading?

10. Is the letter typed?
 11. Is the letter set up in one of the standard forms?
 12. Is the letter attractively placed on the page?
 13. Is the letter free from typing errors?
 14. Are the mechanical parts (heading, inside address, etc.) correct and appropriate?
 15. Is the letter limited to one page, with separate data sheet if additional space is needed?
-

IV EXAMPLES OF THE SIXTY-FIVE APPLICATION LETTERS ANALYZED IN THIS STUDY

The letters on the following pages are copies of three of the sixty-five applications for teaching positions in North Texas State Teachers College, analyzed in Chapter V. The first letter, although it is by no means a perfect application (Notice the typing errors.), is presented as one of the stronger letters. The other two are examples of what a teacher's application should not be. Both contain mechanical errors (Notice the extreme space between the letter body and the complimentary closing of the first; the incomplete inside address, and the error in capitalization in the salutation, in the second.); both violate most of the "C's" of good letters. The first applicant is more interested in helping his daughter attend college than he is in really serving the institution; the second applicant never makes it quite clear whether he is applying for a position or merely trying to obtain information.

In all of the letters, names of places or institutions have been changed, to prevent any possible identification of the applicants. For the same reason, the headings were omitted.

President W. J. McConnell
North Texas State Teachers College
Denton, Texas

Dear President McConnell:

If you have need for an additional man on your staff in accounting or related fields next year will you please study my technical preparation, field experience, and teaching experience in the light of your needs?

My Ph.D. Degree will lack only the dissertation of being completed in June, 1939. Back of this degree are the B.A. Degree which I received from Union Polytechnic Institute in 1932 and the M.B.A. Degree from The University of Macon in August, 1937. In both my undergraduate and graduate work I have majored in accounting and minored in finance, business law, and economics.

My teaching experience consists of four years' teaching in the high schools of the state and two years as a part-time instructor in accounting at The University of Macon, where I am now employed.

I feel that my experience in the business world has been so varied and of such a nature as to be invaluable to me as a teacher. Not only does it help me to see the student's point of view, but, even more, it enables me to give my teaching the ring of authentic and practical reality in the student's ears.

If the more detailed picture of my preparation on the attached data sheet suggests that I may be the sort of teacher you need, will you please investigate the references and tell me what else I can do to further our acquaintance?

Yours respectfully,

May 6, 1939.

Dr. W. J. McConnell,
N. Texas State Teachers College,
Denton, Texas.

Dear Dr. McConnell:

I have a daughter who will be ready to enter college next September. She is interested especially in languages and music, having studied music for ten years. I am also interested in your college from the standpoint of a position. I have decided to make a change this year if I can get a suitable position where my daughter can take the work she desires. Now I have been wondering whether you would have an opening for me for next year.

I have an M. A. degree from Vinneburg College, have studied a year at Creighton University, one year abroad attending the University of Altrusa, and one quarter at the University of Durango.

I have taught at Sanson University, the Woman's College of the University of St. William, Vinneburg College, Johnstown College, and this is my tenth year as head of the department of modern languages at Oldhill College. I have taught French, Spanish, German and Italian; most of my experience has been in French.

If there is any possibility of an appointment for next year, I shall be glad to send you a complete statement of my training, experience, references, etc.

Very truly yours,

Dr. W. J. McConnell,
Denton, Texas

Dear sir:

Some college somewhere needs just what I have to offer by way of abilities and equipment. Maybe it is yours. For me, an ideal job would be to handle a foreign language schedule and also to coordinate or aid in coordinating the audio-visual functions of the college and any secondary school in connection with it.

At any rate, you are in a position to render me a very great service by telling me (1) how foreign language enrollment is holding up in your school, and (2) whether you have had any particular or unique success in the use of any one type of audio-visual aid. It is decidedly to my interest to learn what colleges are already doing in this field.

With thanks and best wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

Two mimeographed sheets were attached to this letter. One listed the projection equipment owned by the applicant, with its uses in a college. The other gave very brief personal data, the degrees held by the applicant, and a list of positions held.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Aurner, Robert Ray, Effective Business Correspondence, second edition, abridged, Cincinnati, The South-Western Publishing Company, 1939.
- Babenroth, A. C., and Ward, Peter T., Modern Business English, revised, New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1934.
- Boyd, William Paxton, Some Fundamentals of Good Letter Writing, Austin, Texas, The University Co-operative Society, Inc., 1936.
- Buck, Charles Edgar, The Business Letter-Writer's Manual, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1938.
- Burd, Henry A., and Miller, Charles J., Business Letters, Their Preparation and Use, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1930.
- Hall, S. Roland, The Handbook of Business Correspondence, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1923.
- Hepner, Harry Walker, Finding Yourself in Your Work, New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1937.
- Hoffman, William G., and Davis, Ray, Write and Speak Better, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1937.
- Hotchkiss, George Burton, and Kilduff, Edward Jones, Advanced Business Correspondence, third edition revised, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1924.
- Kilduff, Edward Jones, How to Choose and Get a Better Job, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1921.
- Lockley, Lawrence Campbell, Principles of Effective Letter Writing, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1933.

MacDougall, William A., Techniques of Teacher Self-Placement, Grand Forks, North Dakota, The Holt Printing Company, 1935.

McCloskey, John C., Handbook of Business Correspondence, New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1932.

Pence, Raymond Woodbury, College Composition, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929.

Picken, James H., Business Correspondence Handbook, Chicago, A. W. Shaw Company, 1927.

Shawyer, M. A., The Art of Writing Business Letters, New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931.

Sheehan, Paul V., Better Business Letters, Chicago, Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., 1939.

Tanner, William M., Composition and Rhetoric, New York, Ginn and Company, 1922.

Weseen, Maurice H., Write Better Business Letters, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1933.

Young, Virginia, You'll Like to Write Letters, Chicago, The Gregg Publishing Company, 1939.

Periodicals

Coyne, Jean, "If You're Looking for a Job by Mail," The Scholastic, XXXII (May 14, 1938), 7-8, 12.

Davis, Frank O., "Which Letter Gets the Job?" The School Executive, LVII (May, 1938), 408, 443.

Donaldson, Ernestine, "Current Business Correspondence Standards," The Journal of Business Education, XII (April, 1937), 21-23.

Edlund, Sidney W., "Offer Your Services Instead of Asking for a Job," The Business Education World, XX (March, 1940), 564-566.

Edlund, Sidney W., "To Get Attention, Be Different," The Business Education World, XX (April, 1940), 650-653.

Eldridge, H. D., "Questions About the Job," The Clearing House, XIII (May, 1939), 527-528.

Gloor, A., "Gems from the Application File," The American School Board Journal, LXXVIII (June, 1929), 46, 161.

Jansen, Charles J., "Fundamental Principles of Seeking Employment," The Business Education World, XVIII (April, 1938), 621-625.