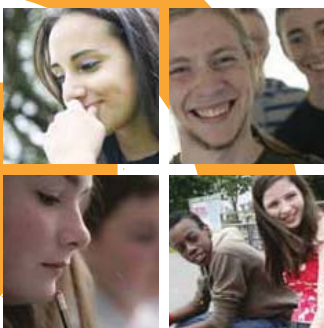




How to...

write a speculative letter

if you are 13–19



What is a speculative letter?

It has been estimated that 75% of jobs are never advertised! One way of finding out about these jobs is to send a speculative letter with your CV to companies you would like to work for.

A speculative letter asks the employer to consider you for any vacancies they may have, even if you have not seen an advert for staff.

It's worth a try!

A speculative letter:

- introduces you to the employer
- sets out the reasons why you think you would be a valuable asset to their company
- shows what you have to offer.

You need to accept that you may not get many letters back from the employers. If you do find an employer with a vacancy this way, there will usually be less competition for the job. The employer may also keep your CV on file until they have a vacancy that they think might suit you.



How to prepare

- First think about the type of work you want, and how your skills and qualifications will suit you for the work. If you are unsure, talk to your Connexions Personal Adviser (PA).
- Next decide which employers you want to contact. Use the following resources to find companies offering the type of work that may interest you:
 - Yellow Pages or www.yell.com.
 - Trade directories found in local libraries.
 - Connexions centres and www.connexions-cd.org.uk.
 - Your PA.
 - Training providers.
 - The Internet.
- Then work out what you have to offer.
 - What are you interested in?
 - What motivates you?
 - What could you contribute to these organisations?
 - What skills do you have?

If you know the answer to these questions, you should now find it easy to write a letter that might interest an employer. If it is well-written your letter might result in the employer asking you to go for an interview.

How to start

- Always write to a named person if possible. People take more notice of letters addressed to them.
- You can get this information by phoning the company and asking them who you should write to. By doing this, it shows you've done your homework.

If you can't get a contact name, address your letter to the Head of Recruitment.

- Your first sentence is important, so be sure to catch the reader's eye. For example, put the type of work you are looking for in bold. Be specific, employers don't have time to read 'waffle'.
- Make sure you sell yourself by highlighting:
 - Why you are writing.
 - What your skills and experience are (make sure this is relevant and up-to-date).
- Keep the letter as short as possible, it should be no longer than three paragraphs on one page.
- Finally, thank the reader for taking time to read it.



Getting it right

- If possible, type your letter as it makes it look professional and is easier to read.
- Use good quality paper and envelopes.
- Always do a rough copy first.
- If you are sending the letter to a named person, you should end it with 'Yours sincerely', but if you begin it with 'Dear Sir/Madam', it's 'Yours faithfully'.
- Never send out a standard letter. Individual letters are more relevant and interesting, and less likely to be overlooked.
- Always suggest when you are available for interview, and the best way to contact you.
- It's also a good idea to include a stamped, addressed envelope to encourage the employer to reply to you.
- Remember to send them your CV with the letter.
- You might like to follow-up your letter with a telephone call – don't be worried about seeming too keen!

Be sure to always check your spelling and grammar!

Check list

- Before you send off your letter, use this check list to make sure it's perfect:
- Have you stated clearly why you are writing?
 - Is your letter short and to the point?
 - Is the letter clear, easy to follow, and with no spelling mistakes?
 - If you are writing to a named person, have you got their job title correct?
 - Have you explained clearly how you can be contacted?
 - Have you included your CV and a stamped, addressed envelope?
 - Have you asked someone to read it through? You could ask your PA.
 - Keep a list of the employers you have contacted and what happened. This saves you contacting them twice!

Remember that employers are interested in people with determination and a good attitude to work; a speculative letter is a good way of showing this!

Example speculative letter

Mrs E Red	(Your address)
Centre Manager	5 Battle Street
Walkway Leisure Centre	Walkway
Warren	Devon
Devon	PL79 0XX
PL79 7DF	Telephone: (your number)
	Email: (your email)

20th June 2010

Dear Mrs Red

Possible opportunity as a Trainee Leisure Assistant, Walkway Leisure Centre

I am writing to find out if there are likely to be any vacancies for a Trainee Leisure Assistant in the near future. If so, could you please consider me for this type of work.

I enclose my CV, which gives details of my relevant experience. I enjoy all sports and have good customer service skills. I can attend for interview at any time, and have included a stamped, addressed envelope for your reply.

Thank you for reading my letter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Your name)

Enc.

Additional sources of information

- www.connexions-cd.org.uk
- www.connexions-direct.com
- www.apprenticeships.org.uk

To get in touch...

with your PA or to find your nearest Connexions centre go online to www.connexions-cd.org.uk or give us a call on **0800 9755111**. Calls from a landline are free and you'll be connected to your nearest centre. Calls from a mobile may be subject to a network charge – you'll be connected to our head office, but we can redirect you to your nearest centre.

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