



Ten Tips for an Effective Job Application

Pam Stephens

What exactly is a job application and how is it used in the hiring process? Job applications are a method of standardizing and sorting information obtained from job seekers. They frequently provide those who are in charge of hiring with a way of determining which candidates are offered interviews. Bear in mind that your application is likely one of many. Making your application stand apart from others is vital in obtaining your first teaching job. This month's column provides some tips for preparing a stellar job application.

Tip 1: Self Marketing

Similar to your résumé, your job application is a marketing tool. You are, in effect, marketing yourself, your skills, and your potential as a quality art educator.

Tip 2: It's a Test!

Read through the entire application before responding. Follow instructions as if you were taking an exam.

Tip 3: Fill in All the Blanks

Be as thorough as you can. Do not leave blanks without an explanation. A simple "NA" for not applicable is sufficient if a question does not apply to you. This response will let a potential employer know that you did not overlook a question.

Tip 4: Honesty Counts

Be absolutely honest. There is no need to stretch the truth or bend the facts. If you feel compelled to be less than honest in order to secure a job, ask yourself what the consequences will be.

Tip 5: Neatness

If the application is in hard copy, complete it with blue or black ink unless otherwise requested. Carefully write your responses in a legible manner; after all, teachers need to have handwriting that their students can read. Do not fold the application. Submit the application in a large manila envelope.

If the application is electronic, there is little that you can do to ensure neatness other than to check for misspellings or other errors.

Tip 6: Keep it Active and Positive

Find a way to respond with the use of active verbs. Take care that all responses are phrased in a positive tone. Here is an example that could result in a call for an interview: "Developing critical thinking skills through art interpretation contributes to the ultimate success of my students." The reader will want to know how this works.

Tip 7: Consistency

Double-check that the information on your résumé is the same as the information on your job application. Make sure that dates, titles, names, and other information are consistent between the two documents. Inconsistency is a red flag to the reader.

Tip 8: References

If asked, provide a list of references. It is important that you first seek permission from your references to include them on your résumé and application. Your university instructors, a cooperating teacher, and previous employers are appropriate references.

Tip 9: Skills and Strengths

Look for any opportunity to highlight your specific skills and strengths. For example, if you are asked to explain your teaching style, respond with an explanation of how you teach rather than with a list of strategies. Demonstrate that you are more qualified than other applicants through your response to open-ended questions.

Tip 10: Edit

Nobody expects you to be perfect, but it is imperative that your application be checked for misspelled words, punctuation, grammar, and typographical errors. If the application is completed online, ask someone else to read and edit it before submitting. If you are required to complete the application in person, sit back for a few moments before carefully re-reading your responses. ☺

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