

WRITING SAMPLES FOR JOBS & INTERNSHIPS

Submitting a Writing Sample for a Job or an Internship

Some employers will ask you to submit samples of your writing as part of the application process. Your goal is to demonstrate how clearly and accurately you communicate in writing. Writing samples further demonstrate your ability to analyze information and display your communication skills. Writing samples may be required if you are applying for a position in a writing-intensive field such as advertising, journalism, public relations, law, media, or research.

If you are unsure about the appropriateness of your writing sample, visit the CLS for assistance or contact the organization to ask clarifying questions.

WRITING SAMPLE TIPS

Do Not Submit a Writing Sample Unless It Is Specifically Requested

If requested, then you must provide a sample to be a viable job candidate.

Follow the Application Instructions

Most employers will specify how many pages in length they expect the sample to be.

- If the employer does not specify length, submit 2–5 pages of writing, double-spaced. You may use an excerpt from a longer document. Mention at the top of the first page that you are submitting only a section from a longer document. Be sure to specify what the writing prompt was.
- Clearly label each submission with your name, an appropriate title, and the origin of the piece (if necessary).
- If you are providing hard copies, print them on résumé paper and/or put them in a presentation binder.

Consider Content

While some employers may specify the subject matter they wish your writing sample to address, that is not always the case. If they do not, submit something that would be similar to the type of writing expected in the position. For example, if you are applying for a position within a public relations firm, something similar to a press release might be most appropriate. If you are applying for a research position at an economics think tank organization, submit a research paper that demonstrates your research and writing abilities. For non-research focused positions, pick a sample that shows off your ability to write about complex issues or research in a way that is accessible to a non-specialist audience.

Do Not Submit Anything Too Old

You want to make sure that you are giving employers a recent example of the quality of your work.

Submit Only Your Own Work

If you incorporate others' work, cite your sources. (A short bibliography does not usually count toward your total number of pages.)

Adapted from the Georgetown University Cawley Career Education Center's "Writing Samples & References."