



Effective **ENGLISH** Communication

For Tertiary Institutions

EDITED BY

Anthony E. Ogu | Obiajulu A. Emejulu
Richard C. Ihejirika | Dan Chima Amadi

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TREASURE BOOKS

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all our English teachers at all levels of education, who lit the light in us that is now a source of illumination to many.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MORE WORK ON LETTER WRITING

Dan Chima Amadi, Ngozi Anigbogu, and Felicia Nwulu

4.1 LETTERS OF APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Letters of application for employment are perhaps the most important letters you will ever write in your life time. They can make or mar you as an individual seeking a purpose in life. If you are seeking employment, letters of application can help you get hired or overlooked in relation to your ambition depending on how well or how badly it is written. In writing, therefore, care should be taken and all the rules accompanying the scripting of such letters must be duly observed. It is a formal letter, and so all the features of formal letter writing should be represented effectively. Remember that you do not need a second chance to make a first impression. Do not forget that thousands of applicants out there have interest in the same position you are applying for and that the employer will always wish for the best.

Letters of application should be simple and straight to the point. The information therein should be clear and accurate. Three considerations are important in writing letters of employment: your purpose for writing the letter; the employer's needs and expectations; the qualities you possess that can satisfy those needs.

- A. **The purpose of the application letter:** This is of course to persuade the potential employer that your qualifications match the requirements of the agency on



the specific position advertised. The immediate goal is to get an interview with the employer so that you can elaborate on the qualification you have mentioned in your letter.

- B. **The qualities you possess:** before writing, pause and ask: What does the person reading your letter need to know in order to invite you for an interview? Firstly, the person may wish to know exactly the position you are interested in. Secondly, do you want a part-time or a full-time engagement? Thirdly he/she must know your qualifications for the position you are applying for. Finally, your reader needs to know the names of your referees and these must be people of reputable integrity who are interested in supporting your claims as well.
- C. **Do your qualities satisfy the need?** Letters of employment are like written curriculum vitae/resume. So it is also advisable to state your sex, age, marital status, place of birth etc. Also state your relevant interests and aptitude in the position you are applying for. It is important that you pay attention to the specifications and requirement of the advertisement which your letter is responding to. This gives you the needed direction.

While writing the application letter, please take note to clearly indicate the following important issues;

- i. How you got information about the vacancy; mention the newspaper or any other advert medium with the date of publication.

- ii. Mention any enclosures such as curriculum vitae, photocopy of credentials, and other relevant attachments.
- iii. Request for interview or indicate willingness to appear if invited by the potential employer

AN EXAMPLE OF LETTER OF APPLICATION (in indented format)

13, Madumere Street,
Owerri,
Imo State
June 15, 2015

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Education,
Owerri,
Imo State.

Dear Sir,

Application for the Post of English Language Teacher

With reference to your advertisement in *The Sun* Newspaper of May 30, 2015 for applicants to fill the vacant position of an English language teacher in your Ministry, I hereby apply for the post.

I am a twenty-seven year old woman married with three children. I am from Ububo Ochia in Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State. I obtained my Senior Secondary School Certificate from Owerri Girls' Secondary School, Owerri in 2005. I studied at the Abia State University

Uturu for a Bachelor's degree in English Language and came out with a second class degree, upper division, in 2012. I went in for the mandatory National Youth Service in the 2012/2013 batch and was posted to Ihioma Girls' Secondary School, Orsu Local Government Area where I taught English language at the Senior Secondary School level. After the service year, I was offered a teaching job by the school and I have taught English language in the School for two years.

Sir, I believe that the teaching experience I have gathered within these years of service shall be a boost for me in relation to the post I am applying for. Moreover, I have always loved teaching, even as a child, a feat I inherited from my late father. I believe that if given the chance, I will discharge my duties effectively.

The following people will be willing to write reference letters on my behalf:

1. The Principal,
Ihioma Girls' Secondary School
Orsu LGA, Imo State
2. Prof P.C. Ndubisi
Department of English Language,
Abia State University, Uturu
3. Prof. E.C Nnanemere
Directorate of General Studies,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Yours faithfully,
Mrs. Faith Nnaji

4.2 WRITING OF CURRICULUM VITAE

Your curriculum vitae (CV) or resume is an introduction of who you are to another person who may not have a privileged knowledge of your person. In Latin, from where the expression was taken, "curriculum" means the story of one's life. It is a written account of a person's details and the account takes cognizance of one's educational background, work experience, hobbies, one's areas of interest, and one's likes and dislikes. A glance through a person's curriculum vitae provides all the necessary information about such a person.

The curriculum vitae is also called a resume. In British English it is referred to as curriculum vitae while in American English it is known as resume. Both varieties refer to the same kind of document with some variations in style and content. The two should not be mixed up.

The curriculum vitae is a useful tool especially when one is searching for a job. It is one's CV that tells the story about who the person is to the potential employer. A good CV reviews the qualifications and the competence of a person in his field of endeavour. It will speak for you and take you to greater heights in life. This is why every educated person should have his/her CV handy at any point in time.

Curriculum Vitae/Resume are written and submitted for job application. So in writing one's CV, one must present it in such a way that it reveals one's personal data, educational qualifications, one's work experience and other achievements/awards. A good curriculum vitae must be such that gives the impression of one as a motivated and hard working person and that when given a job offer, one will do

one's best to deliver effectively on the job specifications and expectations. The CV should also include those achievements/accomplishments that make one stand out among one's peers, such as awards and recognitions. Other details that may be included are research publications, teaching/work experience (if any), grants and fellowships, professional associations, patents and licenses, as well as other information relevant for the person to be assessed and appreciated by the agency wishing to hire him for the new job and assignment.

While writing one's CV/Resume, one must be brief, concise, factual and straight to the point. Every piece of information provided is subject to verification; so, avoid flowery language and long stories that add nothing specific to the information.

The Structure of the Curriculum Vitae

A typical CV in Nigeria has the following structure and contents:

- i. **Caption:** The caption is "Curriculum Vitae"
- ii. **Identification:** Give your name (beginning with your surname), post applied for, home address, work address, date and place of birth, sex, marital status, nationality and other necessary personal details.
- iii. **Educational Background/Qualifications:** This has to do with the schools attended (it is best to start listing this from the most recent to the furthest). Relevant dates and qualifications obtained in each case should be stated and listed as well.
- iv. **Work Experience:** This is the summary of your work experience beginning with the most recent

employment and going back in time to every aspect of one's employment history. It is necessary because your potential employer desires to know your experiences and achievements at work.

- v. **Publications:** This is a list of all your publications written in the format of the references list in a research report. This aspect is only relevant in applying for academic posts such as lecturing in a higher institution.
- vi. **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Under this heading, you are expected to include your hobbies, personal interests, games and sporting activities. It also demands you stating things that interest you or things you dislike. It is generally aimed at further advertising yourself through emphasizing your personal attributes.
- vii. **References:** You should provide at least three names and addresses of persons who are your referees. These must be people who have known you for a very long time and can give testimonies about your person and suitability for the job. Your referees must also be relevant to your educational and working career.

Other contents of the CV may depend on the requirements of the potential employer which are stipulated in the job advertisement. That is why it is always important to see the advertisement so as to respond appropriately. Some employers may insist on some special skills, such as knowledge of the computer, fluency in some languages, driving ability, or specific years of work experience, etc. Your CV must emphasize such required skills and experience.

SAMPLE TEXT OF CURRICULUM VITAE

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Ike, Ebere Amarachi (Nee Okonkwo)
Permanent Home Address: Community Primary School,
Ububo Ochia, Awarra,
Ohaji/Egbema L.G.A., Imo State,
Nigeria
Current Postal Address: C/O Paul C. Nwulu, Faculty of
Humanities,
Imo State University, P.M.B 2000,
Owerri, Nigeria.
Email: ebereamarachi@yahoo.com
Mobile: 08036459859
Date of Birth: 18 August, 1970
Place of Birth: Umuaku Isuochi, Abia State
Sex: Female
Nationality: Nigerian
Marital Status: Married

Educational Institutions Attended (with dates):

- Township Primary School, Owerri 1976-1982
- Umuaku Secondary School, Isuochi,
Abia State 1982-1983
- Girls Secondary School, Owerri,
Imo State 1983-1988
- Abia State University, Uturu 1991-1996
- Imo State University, Owerri 2000-2002

Qualifications Obtained (with dates):

- M.A., English Language 2006
- B.A. (Hons) English Language,

Second Class, Upper Division	1996
• School Certificate / GCE 'O' Level	1988
• First School Leaving Certificate	1982

Work Experience:

- Master II Secondary Education Management Board,
Ubomiri Girls Secondary School 2000-date
- National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Programme
with the Nigeria Immigration Service,
Zone E, Headquarters, Owerri, Imo State 1998-1999

Publications:

Ike, E. A. (2015). Language and Character: A socio-linguistic study of Wole Soyinka's *The Road, Death and the King's horseman, and The trial of brother Jero*. In *Humanities Journal*, 3, 23-34.

Ike, E. A. (2016). The advertiser as a linguist, a stylo-linguistic study of trade language. In *Journal of African Linguistics*, 5, 36-47.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Singing, Travelling and Cooking

References:

- Professor Ekejiuba Nnaji
English Department,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Professor Jude Iwuala
Faculty of Sciences,
Federal University of Technology, Owerri.
- Professor Maduakolam Nwoye
Faculty of Humanities,
Imo State University, Owerri.

CLASS ACTIVITY: Do Exercise 1 of Chapter Four in the workbook to practice writing letter of application for employment and curriculum vitae.

4.3 LETTERS OF COMPLAINT

4.3.1 Introduction

Complaint letters are formal letters which alert individuals, establishments, companies, institutions and offices to problems. Sometimes, you may wish to complain about certain situations affecting you or situations which you have observed within your immediate environment. Therefore, in a complaint letter, you point out a problem or irregularity and demand a solution or correction. Also, you are expected to state the complaint correctly and tender adequate and relevant documents that would substantiate the complaints. In most cases, when writing a complaint letter, you should state ways of overcoming the problems. Furthermore, you may wish to use the print media in the forms of newspapers and magazines to express your opinions on certain issues or problems.

4.3.2 Features of Complaint letters

Good letters of complaint should be succinct, factual, positive, assertive, cordial and objective. These features would produce the favourable response needed from the authorities concerned.

i. Succinctness

Letters of complaint should capture the main and vital points of the problem. So, when you are writing a letter of complaint, state and explain the problem or awkward

situation in a concise manner. Even if the conditions involved are complicated, you should make the letter clear and synoptic. This is imperative because letters that are unclear or woolly may not be read accurately. Also, a busy executive may not have the patience to read a very detailed letter and would prefer the matter stated in a concise form. Furthermore, other relevant details could be attached in the form of photocopies, reports/descriptions or notes.

ii. Facts

Basic facts are necessary in a letter of complaint especially dates, time, and reference numbers. Similarly, you must justify the facts with adequate evidence. This is mandatory when the complaint involves loss of funds or resources. Also, the key facts and the evidence tendered would help the receiver in solving the problem.

iii. Positivity

No matter the extent of the problem or damage, you must present your facts positively. So, you should present your facts without being rude. You should refrain from using abusive, derogatory or negative statements that would mar the existing bad situation. Also, being positive would create greater opportunities to improve the circumstance than being provocative.

iv. Assertiveness

Good letters of complaint should be assertive. This is particularly critical for very serious complaints with financial consequences. Thus, to achieve the assertiveness required, the letter should show confidence, firmness and clarity. Furthermore, writing assertive letters is exigent to avert

situation in a concise manner. Even if the conditions involved are complicated, you should make the letter clear and synoptic. This is imperative because letters that are unclear or woolly may not be read accurately. Also, a busy executive may not have the patience to read a very detailed letter and would prefer the matter stated in a concise form. Furthermore, other relevant details could be attached in the form of photocopies, reports/descriptions or notes.

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serious damages. Also, this would affect the response or the attitude of the receiver of the letter who would then respond promptly and well too.

v. Cordiality

A cordial tone is essential when writing a complaint letter. This would encourage the receiver to reciprocate in a friendly tone too. A complaint full of resentment may not produce a favourable reply rather the receiver may respond aggressively too. So, the cordial tone produces a cooperative impression and shows maturity on the part of the writer. Furthermore, a cordial approach is pivotal as it respects the worth and motives of the recipient. Thus, it is wise and advisable to identify with them so that the problem can be resolved easily.

vi. Objectivity

It is crucial not to exaggerate problems. You must be objective no matter the problem. This shows that you are reasonable. You are advised to write the letter of complaint objectively as this relaxes the person at the other end and makes him willing to help and resolve the matter.

4.3.3 The Structure of a Complaint Letter

According to the Oxford dictionary, the letter of complaint should follow the standard composition format for a formal letter.

This structure includes:

- a) The writers' address
- b) The recipients' address
- c) The salutation

- d) The title/subject of the letter
- e) The content
- f) The subscription/farewell/closing

AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLAINT LETTER

Blueprint Consultancy,
12, Nike Drive,
New Haven,
Enugu.
25th April, 2016.
The Managing Director,

Apex Aluminum Firm,
P.M.B. 1060,
Emene,
Enugu.

Dear Sir,

A Complaint Letter

I write to complain about the shortfall of the goods ordered from your company. On 20th March, 2016, the consultancy placed an order with your firm to supply 3,000 roofing sheets. However, the consignment contained only 1,500 sheets. Consequently, this shortage has forestalled the completion of the roofing of our administrative complex.

I request that you promptly make up the shortfall as this would enable the consultancy to complete the roofing of the new administrative complex at the anticipated time. I have enclosed the invoice for adequate correction too. I am

afraid if the conditions are not adequately met, the consultancy would have no option but to take a legal action. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Onuoha.

Director

CLASS ACTIVITY: Do Exercise 2 of Chapter Four in the workbook to practice writing letter of complaint.

4.4 ROUTED LETTERS

Routed letters are guided correspondence in the civil service, companies, parastatals or public institutions where there are defined organograms. Correspondence within an establishment is either routed from top to bottom or vice versa. It is conventional to apply to the man at the head of the organization or the chief executive. He conveys his approval or otherwise either through minutes on the application or in an entirely fresh letter through his subordinate.

Correspondence is a body of letters between individuals or communication between an officer and his boss. Since it is a body of letters, we do not say "correspondences". The man at the head of the institution runs it through memos, minutes, circulars etc. Thus, routed letters appear in different formats:-

Directorate of General Studies,
Federal University of Technology,
Owerri.
15 February, 2016.

The Vice- Chancellor,
Federal University of Technology,
Owerri.
Thro:
The Director,
Directorate of General Studies,
Owerri.

Dear Sir,

**Application to Attend an International Conference at
the Department of English, University of Nigeria,
Nsukka**

I wish to apply to attend an international conference at the Department of English, University of Nigeria (UNN), Nsukka holding between 6th-10th April, 2016 at the Princess Alexandria Hall, UNN with the theme: **"The Role of Language in the Development of Nations"**.

I hereby present the cost of attending the conference:

1. Conference fee.....	N15,000.00
2. Vetting fee.....	N3,000.00
3. Transportation.....	N10,000.00
4. Hotel accommodation for three days (@ N7000.00 x 3).....	N21,000.00
Total.....	N49,000.00

Attached are photocopies of my letter of invitation and the flyer of the conference for your perusal and consideration, please.

I shall be grateful if my request gains your kind approval.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Paul Nosike

Note that the letter is routed through the Director, Directorate of General Studies whose comment is critical for the Vice-Chancellor to know what to do. Since the Vice-Chancellor cannot be in every department, he needs the advice of directors, heads of department, deans, and academic advisers etc. to take the right decisions. If the letter had come through another department like the Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) the story would be slightly different:-

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering,
Federal University of Science and Technology,
Owerri.
15/02/2016.

The Vice-Chancellor,
Federal University of Science and Technology,
Owerri.

Thro:

The Dean,
School of Engineering and Engineering Technology,
Federal University of Science and Technology,
Owerri.

Thro:

The Head of Department,
Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering,
Federal University of Science and Technology,
Owerri.
Dear Sir,
Etc.....