

Sample Cover Letter for History Internship (With Annotations)

Alexandra Giliani
455 North Park Street
Madison, WI 53706

Emily Dobish
Manager of Volunteer Services
History Colorado Center
1200 Broadway
Denver, Colorado 80203

April 5, 2016

Dear Ms. Dobish,

I would like to apply for the Photography Collection Internship with the History Colorado Center, as posted on the Center's website. I am graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May with a degree in history, and am looking for a position in a museum or archive. My coursework in history and my experience as a student assistant in our Health Sciences Library's Historical Collection would be valuable in researching and re-housing photographic materials in the David DeHarport Collection.

As part of my history major, I have taken classes on the American West and in environmental history. These courses gave me an introduction to the cultural and political contexts of westward expansion, but more important, they taught me to conduct research using both primary and secondary sources and write analytical research papers. In addition, the overlaps I saw in the content of these courses led me to pursue an independent study project on the Colorado River Compact of 1922 and its consequences. To locate sources, I used databases like America: History and Life, but I also integrated current arguments about allocation using newspaper articles and reports from federal agencies. As a result, I learned about the history of water rights in the Four Corners area and developed my research skills further - both of which would lend themselves well to investigating photos in the History Colorado Center's collections.

In addition to my coursework, I have experience in museum and archive settings as well. For the last two years, I have been a student assistant in Historical Services at UW's Ebling Health Sciences

This letter uses standard business format – contact address for both applicant and recipient, along with a professional salutation.

The first paragraph identifies the job the applicant is interested in, states in brief the applicant's background, identifies two important credentials, then shows knowledge of the position by using language from the job ad ("researching and re-housing photographic materials in the David DeHarport Collection." The tone is conversational yet polite and professional.

The second paragraph elaborates on the credentials mentioned above (following the same order). The applicant notes some relevant coursework and describes what she learned (conduct research and write reports), using a specific example of a database and a project that might interest her potential employer.

The applicant concludes the second paragraph by directly connecting what she learned from her courses to the job requirements, again referring to the ad (which mentioned knowledge of the Four Corners region as a possible credential).

The third paragraph opens with a transition that shifts the topic from the applicant's coursework to their other experience.

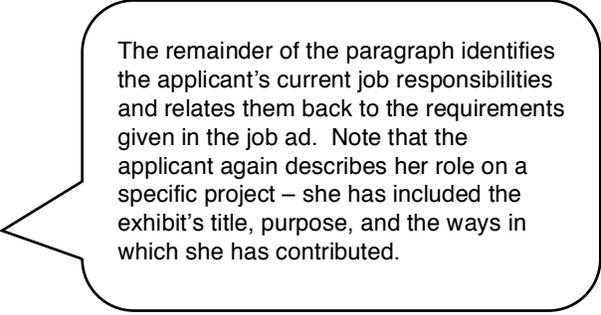
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Library. My tasks include conducting research to answer patron questions, tracking usage requests, updating records in our cataloguing software, and assessing the condition of items in the collection. Though I work primarily with print media, the basic handling methods I learned are still applicable to film; many of the books and pamphlets in the Collections are rare or delicate, and therefore require careful handling. For example, this summer I photographed images from Vesalius's *De Humani Corpis Fabrica*, which was printed in 1568 and requires special handling. The images are for an upcoming exhibit, titled "Nothing But Skin and Bones," that highlights anatomical illustrations of skeletons and dermatology from our holdings. My main role is to identify relevant images for display, then research the source and prepare brief summaries for the display labels. Along the way, I have learned new handling methods and standard arrangement practices for exhibits, which would be valuable in researching and re-housing photographs in the History Colorado Center's collections.

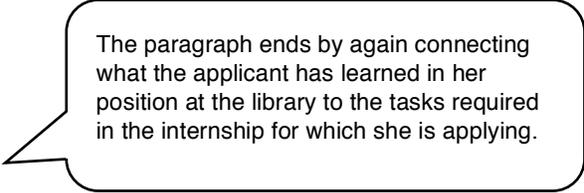
I believe my knowledge of the American West, my research experience, and my familiarity with developing exhibits make me a solid candidate for an internship at the History Colorado Center. I have included with this letter my résumé, complete with references, and I am happy to provide any additional information you may need. Thank you for your time; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

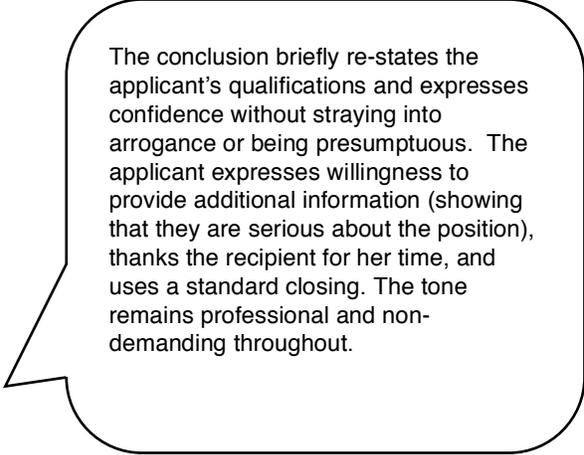
Alexandra Giliani



The remainder of the paragraph identifies the applicant's current job responsibilities and relates them back to the requirements given in the job ad. Note that the applicant again describes her role on a specific project – she has included the exhibit's title, purpose, and the ways in which she has contributed.



The paragraph ends by again connecting what the applicant has learned in her position at the library to the tasks required in the internship for which she is applying.



The conclusion briefly re-states the applicant's qualifications and expresses confidence without straying into arrogance or being presumptuous. The applicant expresses willingness to provide additional information (showing that they are serious about the position), thanks the recipient for her time, and uses a standard closing. The tone remains professional and non-demanding throughout.