

Thank You Letters

Chapter Objectives

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Understand the importance of a thank you letter
- Know when to send a thank you letter
- Know the type of responses to use when sending a thank you letter

Why Send a Thank You Letter?

A thank you letter is an essential component of the interview process, whether for the job search, graduate school, and/or an informational interview. This simple gesture can speak volumes about your interest and true appreciation for the opportunity to interview. Although nearly all job seekers may see value in sending a personalized thank you note, the majority never send one. The thank you letter is another opportunity to show an interviewer what a great fit you would be with their organization or program.

General Tips

- Be sure to write and send the letter within two days of the meeting.
- Remember to be genuine when writing a thank you note.
- If multiple people interviewed you, send a thank you letter to each and personalize each one by talking about something specific you discussed with them. You can mention some key points that you think the employer should remember about you.
- Ask for your interviewers' business cards, or write down the interviewers' titles and the proper spelling of their names before leaving the interview site.
- Conclude the thank you letter by mentioning again how interested you are in the position/program and why.
- Carefully proofread each letter, and have one other person to review it.
- Remember to keep your thank you letter to ONE page.

Formats to Use

Many wonder what type of thank you letter should be sent: typed, handwritten, or emailed. The following descriptions will help you decide:

Should it be...Typed or Handwritten?

Traditionally, the thank you note has been handwritten. If your handwriting is legible, then consider personalizing your correspondence. However, if your handwriting is poor, typing the correspondence is perfectly acceptable. In addition, if the impression from the individual is strictly formal, then typed would be more appropriate. If there is a more informal atmosphere, you may want to hand-write the letter.

What about...Paper and Envelopes?

Thank you note cards with matching envelopes are appropriate for use, as long as you stick to a simple card without cute graphics and sayings. High-quality stationery paper with a matching envelope is suitable as well. Both can be found at stationery stores and greeting-card shops. It's best when sending a thank you note to use neutral paper, such as white or cream, and to stay away from colored paper.

Should it be...Email?

For most situations, e-mailing your thank you note may be seen as too impersonal. However, exceptions do exist. If you are interviewing with a high-tech company, the interviewer may expect your response electronically. Also, if you get the sense the individual prefers electronic correspondence over paper when interviewing, e-mailing would be appropriate. If all previous correspondence was via e-mail, then emailing the thank you letter is fine.

For students participating in on-campus recruiting through the Career Center, it is important to email an immediate thank you note to the interviewer. Many applicant decisions or second-round interviews will be made quickly; emailing a thank you note will reaffirm your interest in the position.

Sample Thank You Letters

There are many samples presented on the following pages. These include:

- Sample Thank You Letter Layout – explains the general layout for thank you letters and specific points for each type of letter
- Specific Samples
 - Informational Interview
 - Reference
 - Career Fairs
 - On-Campus Interview
 - On-Site Visit and Interview
 - Networking

Sample Thank You Letter Layout

Your Address
City, State Zip
Date

Contact's Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State Zip

Dear (Contact Name):

Paragraph 1:

In your introduction, express your appreciation for the time the person spent with you. Mention the time and place where you spoke with the individual in all thank you letters except the reference thank you letter.

For each situation, there will be many differences in how you approach this paragraph:

- Informational Interviews – Reiterate your appreciation for the interviewee's insight or knowledge of the discussed situation (i.e. company or field).
- References – You may have a professional relationship with this individual and want to thank him/her for their continued support in your future success.
- Career Fair – Reiterate your interest in the job/program and your enthusiasm to join the organization.
- Networking – Thank the individual for inviting you to join their professional network or referring you to a network that is of interest to you.
- Interview – Reiterate your interest in the job/program and your enthusiasm to join the organization.

Paragraph 2:

In your message, reiterate certain points discussed with the contact person, as appropriate to the discussion. Mention any important items you may have omitted. Also, add any remaining questions you may have, and expand upon aspects of things mentioned during the discussion.

- Informational Interviews – This is where you mention that you have scheduled an appointment with a contact the interviewee provided you, where you can ask for clarification on a topic that was discussed, or where you summarize a couple of key points that were mentioned that really stuck with you.
- References – Help your reference draw connections by expressing your desire for the position/program for which you have applied, and highlight some of your strengths and how they fit the opportunity.
- Career Fair – State your desire to work for the organization, and highlight a couple of key strengths that are relevant to the company or the position.
- Networking – Highlight continued interest in the area around which the network revolves, and highlight your willingness to join as an active network member (what will you contribute and whether others can contact you).
- Interview - State your desire to work for the organization, and highlight a couple of key strengths that are relevant to the company or the position.

Sample Thank You Letter Layout

Paragraph 3:

In your conclusion, indicate what you will do next, based on the conversation. Be sure to include a phone number where you can be reached.

- Informational Interviews – If you intend on staying in contact with the individual, mention that here and express the purpose of staying in touch. The interviewee may have offered additional assistance such as a resume critique. Mention your appreciation of this offer and forward your resume.
- References – You want to stay in contact with references, so make sure to tell them that in paragraph three. Also mention that you will send updates on your progress during the application process.
- Career Fair – You only had a brief encounter or mini-interview with the contact, so conclude your thank you letter with a request for an interview, or reiterate your interest in the position and/or company.
- Networking – Thank the individual again for his/her assistance, and let him/her know you will stay in touch by providing updates on your career progress.
- Interview -- Re-emphasize a skill or strength, express your interest in the position, and provide contact information should the interviewer have any follow-up questions.

Sincerely,

(your handwritten signature)

your name typed

NOTE: When writing a thank you letter, it should be only ONE PAGE.

Sample Informational Interview Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, Zip
Today's Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr. _____ :

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me Thursday to discuss professional possibilities in the healthcare industry. I was impressed by your knowledge of today's complicated issues and appreciated your insight regarding the ways I can apply my Communications and Economics majors to contribute to hospital administration.

You gave me the name of Harriet Health at ABC HMO to contact, and we have an appointment early next month when she returns from a business trip.

I will be in contact from time to time to keep you posted on my career research. I will send a copy of my resume to your office as soon as it is ready and thank you in advance for your generous offer of a resume critique. Thank you for your help and valuable information.

Sincerely yours,

(Your signature)

Your name typed

Letters adapted from: Information Interviewing, Martha Stoodley, 1990.

Sample Reference Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, Zip
Today's Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Dr. _____ :

Thank you very much for your willingness to act as a reference for me in my job search. I place a great deal of trust in your judgment and ability to evaluate critical areas of my abilities and am honored that you will support me in this process.

I will be in contact from time to time to keep you posted on my career research. I will also send a copy of my updated resume to your office as soon as it is ready. I would appreciate any feedback you might provide. I thank you again for your assistance with this important step to my success.

Sincerely yours,

(Your signature)

Your name typed

Letters adapted from: Information Interviewing, Martha Stoodley, 1990.

Sample Career Fair Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, Zip
Today's Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for talking with me today at the Vanderbilt Career Fair. I appreciate your time and attention in the middle of such a busy event. I enjoyed speaking with you and learning more about Fosters Group. You were very helpful in explaining Fosters' Management Trainee Program.

My enthusiasm for the program and interest in working for Fosters Group were greatly strengthened as a result of our conversation. My degree in Human and Organizational Development from Vanderbilt and the leadership positions I have held on campus are two qualities you said were important to success at Fosters. I am confident that both my education and work experience provide a good fit with your requirements for the Management Trainee Program.

I look forward to an opportunity to visit Fosters Group and speak to you further about the Management Trainee Program. Please feel free to contact me at 615-555-1234 or by email at joanne.public@vanderbilt.edu if you would like me to provide you with any additional information.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)

Joanne Public

Sample On-Campus Interview Thank You Letter

400C Hunter Ridge
Nashville, TN 37240
(615) 555-1111
student@vanderbilt.edu

October 26, 2005

Ms. Glenna Wright
Human Resources Manager
Fashion Department Store
2000 Line Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Ms. Wright:

I enjoyed interviewing with you during your recruiting visit to Vanderbilt University on October 25. The management trainee program you outlined sounds both challenging and rewarding, and I look forward to your decision concerning an on-site visit.

As mentioned during the interview, I will be graduating in December with a Bachelor's degree in Economics. Through my education and experience, I've gained many skills, as well as an understanding of retailing concepts and dealing with the general public. I have worked seven years in the retail industry in various positions from Salesclerk to Assistant Department Manager. I think my education and work experience would complement Fashion's management trainee program.

I have enclosed a copy of my college transcript and a list of references, as you requested. Thank you again for the opportunity to interview with Fashion Department Store. The interview served to reinforce my strong interest in becoming a part of your management team. I can be reached at (615) 555-1111 or by email at student@vanderbilt.edu, should you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Student
Enclosures

Sample On-Site Visit and Interview Thank You Letter

170 Rockin Street
Nashville, TN 37240
(615) 555-6241
student@vanderbilt.edu

March 3, 2005

Ms. Patricia Smith
Personnel Manager
Super Computers and Electronics
1212 Lark Lane
Richmond, VA 23230

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you and see your facilities last Wednesday. Both the interview and the tour made for an exciting and complete day.

I was particularly impressed with your warehousing procedures. Mr. Allen was so thorough in explaining your process to me, and I will be corresponding directly with him to express my appreciation. Incidentally, the process you use is quite similar to one I have been researching through an independent study this term. Perhaps I can share my final report with you and Mr. Allen.

The expense report you requested is enclosed.

Again, thank you for your hospitality during my visit and for all your efforts to arrange my visit. Having seen your operation, I am all the more enthused about the career opportunity that Super Computers and Electronics offers. I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

Super Student

Enclosure

Sample Networking Thank You Letter

7 Apple Court
Nashville, TN 37240
615-555-0303

Ms. Lisa Jones
Great Business Systems, Inc.
1000 SW 4th Avenue
New York, NY 11111

Dear Lisa,

Thank you again for agreeing to be a member of my personal "network." This is an important time in my life as I take the plunge to begin my career, and I truly value the advice of professionals like you who know the consulting field so well.

I especially appreciate your offer to introduce me to other professionals and consults in your network, which I know will be extremely helpful to me in establishing myself.

Lisa, I can't thank you enough for your willingness to help me launch this phase of my career. I will be sure to keep you informed of my progress. And please do not hesitate to contact me if you think of any additional suggestions for expanding my network and establishing myself as a consultant.

Sincerely,

Great Student