



# Writing Samples: How to Write Your Way to the Top!

At some point during your job search process an employer may require that you submit a writing sample as part of your application. If a writing sample is requested, you can be assured that strong writing skills are particularly important in that work environment. The employer wants to know if your writing abilities match their needs, so choose your sample carefully.

## SELECTING A WRITING SAMPLE

*When selecting a writing sample, keep in mind that this is part of your entire application package and is just as important as your cover letter and resume.*

### YOUR WRITING SAMPLE SHOULD BE:

- Authored entirely or primarily by you (if you are not the sole author of the document, clearly indicate which portions of the sample you were responsible for writing)
- A strong example of your writing ability
- Brief, 3-5 pages is best unless otherwise specified
- Relevant in subject matter to the job and/or career field, if possible
- A recent example of your work (e.g., graduate coursework, internship, most recent job)
- Accompanied by a brief memo setting the context (e.g., if it is part of a larger paper or class assignment)

## EXAMPLES OF WRITING SAMPLES

*Writing samples can take many forms. Spend some time locating a sample that best reflects your abilities. Here are just a few examples:*

- ➔ Grant or project proposal
- ➔ Paper or analysis submitted for class (an excerpt is appropriate if a short explanation is provided; however, you may need to rewrite the end of the excerpt so that it doesn't end abruptly)
- ➔ Newspaper or Magazine Article
- ➔ Brochure or Newsletter

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ✓ Read the sample you select carefully making sure it's error-free and reflects your writing ability.
- ✓ Submit a clean copy of the sample, not one with a professor's comments or other notes.
- ✓ Be sure the purpose of the sample is clear (i.e., why are you submitting this particular document).