

10 North Lake Avenue
Norman, OK 73069

Joan Livingston
Great Lakes Coastal Science Corporation
4241 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14605

January 1, 2010

Hello Ms. Livingston,

I am pleased to respond to your job posting for a research chemist. I am finishing my master's degree in chemistry at the University of Oklahoma, and I believe I am exactly the person Great Lakes Coastal Science needs to uphold its reputation for excellence. Allow me to explain why you should hire me.

My academic work has given me a strong background in water quality management. I have been working on a project that uses fluorescence spectroscopy to determine the amount of organic matter present in lake water — a project my supervisor says is innovative and novel. Indeed, I have presented my work at many national conferences and received many compliments from prominent researchers. Fresh water is our greatest resource, and I hold the key to preserving our lakes for the future.

I believe I will meet and exceed your expectations for this position. I look forward to talking with you in an interview. If I do not hear from you in two weeks, I will call you to track the progress of my application. For more information, please refer to the enclosed résumé.

Sincerely,

Jorge Janssen

Enclosure: Résumé

Jorge has adopted an inappropriate tone right from the beginning of the letter. His language here is arrogant. He is overly confident that the company will hire him, and he suggests that the company's reputation will suffer if it does not. Jorge does not identify any skills or credentials that might recommend him for this position. Instead, he issues a command to the reader: "Allow me to explain...."

Jorge opens this paragraph well by stating that his academic work is relevant to the company's area of expertise. Unfortunately, this quickly becomes a chance for him to boast about his accomplishments. Instead of claiming that his work is novel and worthy of praise, Jorge should have explained his project in more detail and let the reader decide for herself whether this experience is important or useful to the company.

In the last paragraph, Jorge is both arrogant in claiming that he will exceed expectations and too aggressive in pursuing an interview. He has given Ms. Livingston a deadline for responding to his letter — not a good strategy when writing to busy interviewers. Ms. Livingston may have many applications to review and may not be able to respond quickly; by placing demands on her time, Jorge comes across as impatient and demanding. These are not qualities an employer would want in a new hire. Overall, the poor tone of this letter may hurt Jorge's chances of getting an interview.