

Sample Letter

November 2, 1998

Dr. Naomi Sellers
Chair, English Search Committee
Box 58
Baxter College
Arcadia, WV 24803

Dear Dr. Sellers:

I am writing to apply for the position as assistant professor of English with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition that you advertised in the October *MLA Job Information List*. I am a graduate student at Prestigious University working on a dissertation under the direction of Professor Prominent Figure. Currently revising the third of five chapters, I expect to complete all work for the Ph.D. by May of 1999. I believe that my teaching and tutoring experience combined with my course work and research background in rhetoric and composition theory make me a strong candidate for the position outlined in your notice.

As my curriculum vitae shows, I have had excellent opportunities to teach a variety of writing courses during my graduate studies, including developmental writing, first-year writing for both native speakers and second language students, advanced writing, and business writing. I have also worked as a teaching mentor for new graduate students, a position that involved instruction in methods of composition teaching, development of course materials, and evaluation of new graduate instructors. Among the most satisfying experiences for me as a teacher has been instructing students on an individual basis as a tutor in our university Writing Lab. Even as a classroom instructor, I find that I always look forward to the individual conferences that I hold with my students several times during the semester because I believe this kind of one-on-one interaction to be essential to their development as writers.

My work in the composition classroom has provided me with the inspiration as well as a kind of laboratory for my dissertation research. My project, *The I Has It: Applications of Recent Models of Subjectivity in Composition Theory*,

Use the form of address and title of the contact person as they appear in the job notice.

Refer to the job title as it appears in the notice, and state where you learned of the position.

Mention your major professor by name, especially if he or she is well known in your field. Also, mention your expected completion date.

Make a claim for your candidacy that you will support in the body of the letter.

For a position at a small undergraduate college, emphasize teaching experience and philosophy early in the letter.

Describe your dissertation and plans for future research. Emphasize links between your teaching and research

examines the shift since the 1960s from expressive models of writing toward now-dominant postmodern conceptions of decentered subjectivity and self-construction through writing. I argue that these more recent theoretical models, while promising, cannot have the liberating effects that are claimed for them without a concomitant reconception of writing pedagogy and the dynamics of the writing classroom. I relate critical readings of theoretical texts to my own pedagogical experiments as a writing teacher, using narratives of classroom successes and failures as the bases for critical reflection on postmodern composition theory. After developing my dissertation into a book manuscript, I plan to continue my work in current composition theory through a critical examination of the rhetoric of technological advancement in the computer-mediated writing classroom.

My interest in the computer classroom has grown out of recent experience teaching composition in that environment. In these courses my students have used computers for writing and turning in notes and essays, communicating with one another and with me, conducting library catalogue research and web research, and creating websites. I have encouraged my students to think and write critically about their experiences with technology, both in my class and elsewhere, even as we have used technology to facilitate our work in the course. Syllabi and other materials for my writing courses can be viewed at my website:

<<http://machine.prestigious.edu/~name>>. In all of my writing courses I encourage students to become critical readers, thinkers, and writers; my goal is always not only to promote their intellectual engagement with cultural texts of all kinds but also to help them become more discerning readers of and forceful writers about the world around them.

I have included my curriculum vitae and would be happy to send you additional materials such as a dossier of letters of reference, writing samples, teaching evaluations, and past and proposed course syllabi. I will be available to meet with you for an interview at either the MLA or the CCCC convention, or elsewhere at your convenience. I can be reached at my home phone number before December 19; between then and the start of the MLA convention, you can reach me at (123) 456-7890. I thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

interests.

Mention specific teaching experience that is relevant to the job notice or is otherwise noteworthy.

Refer to relevant materials available on the web.

State your willingness to forward additional materials and to meet for an interview.

Mention any temporary changes in contact information.

Sincerely,

First Lastname