

### I. First Paragraph:

*Does the reader get a sense of you who are and why you're interested in their opportunity in your first paragraph? Have you mentioned relevant skills that qualify you for the opportunity?*

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**Researching an opportunity is essential before writing a cover letter or letter of intent.** Otherwise you may not be able to make the most impactful arguments using your most relevant experiences in your letter. Ways to research a position include:

- Using LinkedIn, Glassdoor, the organization's website, etc., to learn more about a company and/or its employees
- Inviting someone in your network who is affiliated with the opportunity to coffee so you can learn more about their experience working there
- Using UCSF Alumni resources to find someone who is, or has been affiliated with the opportunity so you can invite them to coffee and learn more about their impressions and experience in regards to the organization.

***Before: Here's a sample of what a generic first paragraph might look like without a person having researched a position:***

I am writing in response to the pharmacy job posting on your website. I am currently finishing up the last quarter of my training at UCSF. Your organization sounds like it aligns with my skills and goals. I believe I have the skills and qualities necessary to be a successful addition to your team.

***After: Here's a sample of what a more targeted first paragraph might look like after a person has researched a position:***

I am interested in the Pharmacy position that was listed on the Safeway website. Cindy Smith, a friend and former Pharmacy Intern at the Irvine Safeway branch, suggested that I forward my resume. Currently I am 3<sup>rd</sup> year student pharmacist and believe that my strong attention to detail, multitasking and communication skills would enable me to succeed on your team. As a leader in the retail grocery marketplace, Safeway is the perfect place to launch a career. I believe this position is a wonderful match for my prior experiences working in fast paced, team oriented community and hospital pharmacies.

**Having trouble identifying what an employer is looking for?**

On the OCPD website are copies of dissected job descriptions that can help you learn how to analyze a job description so you can better customize your application materials to fit employer needs.

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### Your Turn:

1. Fill out the column on the right below:

First Paragraph Questions	Write Out Your Answers in Complete Sentences
How did you learn of the position?	
What is your academic training?	
What are your RELEVANT skills or experiences that align with what the organization/team is looking for ?	
What interests you about the organization/team or opportunity? OR What are your goals in reference to the opportunity (i.e. how will this experience help you achieve your goals?)	
What excites you or what would you like to contribute to this organization/team?	