

## 4. Intros to Each Section

*Purpose:*

Your introductory pages are meant to help guide your reader through the portfolio. These should be attractive and include words, and or pictures or quotes which are helpful in noting what is included in the upcoming section of your portfolio.

**Send a cover letter with your résumé and keep in touch.** When I began to look for my second job—to get closer to home—I sent out letters long before the schools knew they had a position. The point was to get my name out there and in their minds. So I sent the following letter to all the department chairs at schools where I wanted to teach. Here's the first one, which I sent to them in October:

*Dear Burlingame High School:*

*The school year is only just getting to its feet. So you ask yourself why this young teacher is already inquiring about jobs for next year. I live in San Francisco, and that is where I will stay because we have the good fortune to have a house here. I have taught for three years in the English department at Castro Valley High School, which has twice been awarded the National Exemplary School Award. During my tenure at Castro Valle, I have distinguished myself through my teaching and contributions to the surrounding East Bay community.*

*I have included my résumé and a list of my publications as evidence of my commitment to the English profession. I am young and still have much to learn; I am also committed and have much to offer. Let me emphasize that there is absolutely no discontent or desperation that urges me to leave Castro Valley High School. I like it there and am genuinely proud to be a member of the faculty. I simply wish to get closer to home and to bring my own community the efforts and contributions that I have given to others. Please consider me should any positions become available for the next school year.*

*Sincerely,  
Jim Burke*

This letter yielded a response and encouraging words, but no offer. So a few months later I sent them this letter:

*Dear Burlingame High School:*

*Some measure of time has passed since I last wrote you inquiring about jobs at your school. Certainly the educational terrain has grown only more rocky in the months following my query. These difficulties naturally make the hunt more challenging, the desirable jobs a more elusive prey.*

*My own situation at Castro Valley High School remains both stable and satisfying; thus I reiterate my previous letter's emphasis that I am not leaving for reasons of dissatisfaction or disfavor. I merely want to work closer to my own home and my own community.*

*I am enclosing my latest column from California English, the bimonthly publication of the California Association of Teachers of English. You will also find an article of mine from the latest English Journal which details my work with remedial students at Castro Valley High School. The articles show two things I bring to any school and the students I work with: commitment and professional understanding of those ideas current in English education.*

*Please contact me if you have any need for qualified, committed teachers at your school. I am distributing my résumé only to those schools where I would be happy to work. I look forward to hearing from you when you have more insight into your school's needs for the coming year.*

*Sincerely,  
Jim Burke*

When, a few months later, I learned through a friend that they had an opening—always let people know you are looking so they can look for you, too—I was ready to move and sent the following letter which ultimately got me the interview and, subsequently, the job. Here is the last letter:

*Dear Burlingame High School:*

*Schools are so busy entering into the homestretch of this school year that it hardly seems feasible to consider looking for new teachers for next year. Yet the fact is that your district has many teachers retiring and others taking year-long leaves, so you are ready to look and interview.*

*I have written on several occasions already to express my interest in teaching at your school next year. Today I am writing only a brief letter to remind you of my existence and to announce that Carol Murphy at your district office has placed my application into the file for active consideration. Thus when you begin in the weeks ahead to interview people to teach high school English—and related areas, including Psychology—please consider me.*

*Thank you for your time and attention. I hope to hear from you soon.*

*Sincerely,  
Jim Burke*