



## Cover Letter Checklist

A cover letter is used to introduce yourself, summarize your skills and abilities as it relates to the position, and gives evidence of your written communication skills. It should be tailored for each application and pique the interest of the reader. A cover letter should be written for every resume sent, unless instructed not to.

### **Format**

- Use same personal information header as resume
- Date letter is sent
- Contact person's name, title, organization name and address
- Font style and size matches resume
- Margins .5 – 1 inch, white space balanced with content
- Single spaced, double spaced between paragraphs
- Does not exceed one page
- Greeting is addressed to a person **not** "To Whom It May Concern"

### **Content**

#### **Opening Paragraph**

- Provide an opening statement that grabs his/her attention and entices the reader
- State the name of the position and how you learned of the opening
- If referred to the position, mention the person's name and title

#### **Main Paragraph**

***Purpose:*** *Demonstrate the value you bring to the position/organization*

- Give specific examples of the skills and abilities you have developed, link those to the skills and abilities mentioned in the position description
- Expand on your resume, as opposed to repeating your experiences/skills stated in your resume
- Demonstrate what you know about the organization and the value you would bring
- Bullet statements (if used) are concise

#### **Conclusion Paragraph**

- Thank the person; express appreciation for the person's time and consideration
- Indicate follow up time and state the reason for the follow up
- Conclude with "Sincerely," your full name and signature

### **Overall Considerations**

- Letter is concise and to the point, well organized, and free of irrelevant information
- Free of spelling and grammar errors that Spell Check software missed, especially the spelling of names and organizations
- Utilized powerful action verbs and phrases
- Used keywords from the industry and/or job description
- Persuasive rather than narrative
- Tailored to the company's specific wants and needs, as indicated in the job description
- Focused on your strengths and abilities, personal attributes, and recognitions • Utilize the Writing & Resource Center, if necessary



# COVER LETTERS

A cover letter accompanies your resume and together they serve to introduce you to an employer. A cover letter must be well-crafted, targeted, and speak eloquently on your behalf.



## WRITE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

### Cover the Resume

It is proper business etiquette to include a cover letter with the resume even if not specifically requested. If you are sending your resume via email, write a brief cover letter in the body of the email and attach your resume.

### Customize the Letter

Don't draft a form letter and just change the recipient's address. Employers can spot a form letter a mile away!

### Contact Information

Know the name, correct spelling, and job title of the person to whom you are writing. If it is not stated in the posting or you are unable to identify the receiver, address the letter to "Hiring Manager."

### Grab Attention

You must engage the reader and state your reason for writing in the first paragraph. Name the position to which you are applying and mention how you learned/read about it. Did someone refer you? Say so.

### Positive Language and Tone

Express an eagerness to contribute to the organization's success.

### Do your Research

Know something about the organization's products, services, mission, values, etc.

### Employer's Perspective

As in any writing exercise, keep your audience in mind. Tell the employer what YOU can do for THEM. Describe how your skills and experiences contribute to the organization.

### Use Specific Examples

Never just state that you have experience. Back it up with concrete evidence! Do not repeat everything that is on your resume. Highlight two or three key experiences and describe how they directly relate to the position for which you are applying.

### Include Attributes and Attitudes

While it is difficult to convey your positive attributes in a resume, you can do so in a cover letter. Is the employer seeking someone with resilience? Provide an example of a time when you developed and demonstrated that trait.

### Write Well

Employers scrutinize the letter for proper grammar, spelling, style, and coherence.



# FORMAT

- Use one font style throughout the entire resume (Arial, Helvetica or Tahoma).
- Use a font size of 10 to 12.
- Left justification only. Margins should be between 0.5 -1" on all sides.

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Date

Contact Name Title and/or Department Organization Name Street Address City,  
State Zip Code

Dear Mr.\_\_\_\_\_, Ms.\_\_\_\_\_, or Hiring Manager,

Opening Paragraph: In your first paragraph, attract the reader's attention. State your reasons for writing, indicating the position or type of work for which you are applying and how you learned of the job opening and/or the employer. State why you are interested in the position, the employer, and/or the field. Focus on something that sets this organization apart from similar employers and why that appeals to you. State why you are qualified for the role, i.e. what you can do for them.

Second Paragraph: Interpret your background for the employer. Explain which of your experiences have prepared you to meet the specific requirements of the positions, and specify how. For example, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate. Do not rewrite your entire resume; rather, elaborate on a few important points that relate to the qualifications sought by the employer.

Closing Paragraph: Indicate your desire for a meeting or an interview and indicate your ability to meet. (For example, offer to call the organization during a specific day or week to arrange a time, or ask for an appointment on a date when you plan to be in the area.) Make sure to list your phone number and email address, even though it is already on your resume. Thank the reader for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Full Name