

COVER LETTER



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.

HELPFUL HINTS

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, and form letters are sure to land in the trash!

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. The letter should also include a specific request to meet or make contact.

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 of thought. If you deliver a sloppy cover letter, they will assume that is how you work, and you won't make it past the initial screening.

FORMAT

- Use proper business letter format (see sample below).
- Pay attention to details such as alignment, spacing and overall layout.
- Brevity is key! Cover letters are a one page document, 3-4 paragraphs at most.

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 position, 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