

# Writing a Cover Letter

## WHY WRITE A COVER LETTER?

- Whenever you mail an application or drop off a resume to an employer, it should be accompanied by a cover letter
- The cover letter is the first contact you have with a prospective employer
- The purpose of a cover letter is to create a favorable, professional impression while you introduce your background and interest in employment
- Entice the employer with your cover letter so they will read your resume

## WHAT THE STRUCTURE OF A COVER LETTER?

- Use a three paragraph format (introduction/body/closing)
- Follow professional business letter style
- Align the letter to the left justification setting
- Always use a colon when addressing the person in the cover letter (i.e. Dear Mr. Jones:)
- Address cover letter to a specific individual (NOT “To Whom It May Concern”)
- Length should not exceed one page
- Use resume heading for cover letter or follow letter style (see cover letter template)
- Print on high quality bond paper (matching resume paper)

## WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE?

- How you learned about the opportunity at the company
- What attracts you to this particular job
- What elements of your education or experience would enable you to do an outstanding job
- Thank the employer for considering your candidacy and establish a follow-up strategy

## Tips

- When addressing a woman, if marital status is unknown, use the salutation Ms. or Dr.
- If gender is unknown, use full name in greeting. Ex. Dear Jamie Edwards:
- Use transitional phrases to help the cover letter flow (i.e. In addition to; However, etc.)
- Highlight your strengths and skills (be specific)
- Personalize the cover letter to the company and show you’ve done your research
- Remember to sign the letter
- Never mention salary in a cover letter
- Be brief and generate interest with the content of the cover letter
- Remember, the purpose is to entice the employer and get an interview
- Emailing your resume and cover letter: send it as an attachment and include a brief message in the body of the text
- **PROOFREAD!**





# Cover Letter Template

Your Street Address

City, State, ZIP

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Date

>

Name of Contact

His/her Title

Company/Organization Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

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Dear Mr., Ms., or Dr. (Contact's Name):

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State the position you are applying for. Mention something interesting you learned from your research about the company or make reference to a previous conversation, if you had one. Next, write a statement that defines the purpose of your letter. This can include which position you are seeking and where you learned about it. Demonstrate that you have researched the company, which will help to sell you as a candidate.

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In the second paragraph, highlight specific skills that will be useful to the employer. Refer to some additional information that may not be highlighted in your resume such as international, special, technical, or cultural experiences. Connect the point you make with the position requirements. Provide strong examples of your experience that directly support what the employer seeks in skills. Show how you would benefit the company and what you have to offer.

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To conclude the cover letter, indicate that you are interested in action. This may include indicating that you will follow up to set an interview date or that you look forward to hearing from them. Refer to your enclosed resume and thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

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Sincerely,

>

> *Your Signature*

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Typed Name