

Cover Letter Guidelines

Month, Day, Year

Your Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code

Name of Person You are Writing
Title of Person You are Writing
Name of Organization
Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear (Address target formally-Mr., Mrs., Professor, etc. – unless you were instructed to use first name):

In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, specific position or type of work for which you are applying and indicate from which resource (Career Development, news media, friend, alumni) you learned of the opportunity.

Find out who the organization is serving, how it performs compared to competitors, what current trends affect that industry. Then indicate why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or services--*above all, what you can do for the employer*. Note how your work and field experiences/internship experiences, research projects/studies, volunteer activities, extracurricular background, and career aspirations relate to the organization's interests and goals. You will need to outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. Refer to your enclosed resume, but try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume verbatim. This section can be written in one or two paragraphs.

In the closing paragraph, refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application which summarizes your qualifications, training, experiences, or whatever media (i.e. reference list or written references; writing, publications, or work samples; portions of portfolio) you may be utilizing to present yourself. Indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number and/or e-mail in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. For example, state that you will be in the city where the organization is located on a certain date and would like to set up an interview. Or, state that you will call on a certain date to set up an interview. Or, ask if the organization will be recruiting in your area. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (When emailing: It is optimal to scan in your signature. If you are unable to scan, choose a font that resembles handwriting. When mailing: Sign in black or blue ink.)

Your Typed Name

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR WRITING COVER LETTERS

- Design your letters to be work-centered and employer-centered, not "me" centered. Focus on your skills, accomplishments and experiences (what you can do as opposed to who you are). Your letters are marketing tools that should address the needs of employers and motivate them to learn more about you.
- Keep the letter to one page. Be clear, concise, and positive. Eliminate unnecessary words and avoid rehashing your resume.
- Produce an error-free, clean copy.
- Tailor your letters for each situation. Generic and mass-produced letters are unprofessional.
- Show appreciation to the employer for considering your application.
- Always keep your reader in mind. Make your letters easy to read and attractive.
- Be timely. Demonstrate that you know how to do business for yourself and, by implication, for others.
- Be honest. Always be able to back up your claims with evidence and specific examples from your experience.
- Your goal is to communicate that you are a responsible person with a positive attitude who knows how to be productive in a professional environment.
- When emailing a cover letter to a potential employer, make sure you paste the letter in the body of your email. Never send a cover letter as an attachment. It's doubtful that a busy hiring manager will take the time to open it.