

COVER LETTERS

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a document that helps you gain the reader's attention and entice a potential employer to look at your resume.

It is your opportunity to:

- Introduce yourself to a prospective employer
- Expand upon and personalize your resume
- Highlight how your skills and experiences fulfill the employer's needs

Basics Facts of a Cover Letter

- When applying for a job a cover letter should be sent with your resume.
- Should explain the reasons for your interest in the organization and the job you are applying for.
- Make it neatly typed and look professional.
- Tailor it for each company – what skills they are looking for in job description that fit your qualifications
- Be brief - usually one page.
- Always proof for typing errors and grammatical errors.
- Address a specific person if possible.
- Single space the body of the letter and use double spaces between paragraphs.

Basic Format of a Cover Letter

A cover letter should follow the basic format of a typical business letter.

1. Letterhead or return address
2. Date
3. Inside address/Contact's Address
4. Salutation
5. Body
 - a. First Paragraph - **Why** you are writing.
 - b. Middle Paragraphs - **What** you have to offer.
 - c. Concluding Paragraph - **How** you will follow-up.
6. Complimentary Close
7. Signature – in black or blue ink/electronic

Cover Letter Format

Your Name
Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Your Phone Number

Date

Contact's Name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Contact's Last Name):

Paragraph one should introduce you and your purpose for writing. (State your objective.) Be clear about what you want and don't make the reader guess what you're looking for. And, how did you find out about this position. Should be about 2 to 3 sentences.

Paragraph two allows you demonstrate clear connections between what the employer is looking for and what skills or experience you have that is relevant to their needs. Mention specifically how your skills and experience match the job you are applying for. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it. Try to support each statement you make with a piece of evidence of how you executed these key skills.

Paragraph three, your closing paragraph, should be your call for action. Ask for an opportunity to speak with the reader in person. You can include what days and times work for you. Then state how you will follow-up. Also, thank them for taking the time to read and consider you for this position.

Sincerely Yours, (Complimentary Close)

Signature (Handwritten for a mailed letter or electronic)

Your Typed Name