
COVER LETTERS

What's a cover letter and why is it important?

- It's a formal letter that accompanies a resume, where you connect the dots of your experience for the employer, and make it obvious that you are worth interviewing.
- It's a sample of your writing and communication skills so it must be clear and free of any errors.
- It's where you show some personality so that an employer gets a sense if you would be a good match for the company culture.

General Tips

- Focus on *what you have to offer*, as well as why you want the position.
- Revise your letter for each position you apply for. Careful research, relevant examples, and specific reasons why you are interested in this position and this company/organization will set your cover letter apart from the pack.
- Be authentic - be yourself!
- Approach it as if you are telling a story.
- Hiring managers are looking for what's *not* communicated in your resume.

Format

- Use the same header and font as your resume.
- Keep it to one page and use a 10-12 point type size.
- Set the margins so the letter is balanced on the page.
- Use standard business letter format for the address format, greeting, and closing



Getting Started

- Research the company so you can explain why you're interested in working for them.
- Go over the job description with a fine tooth comb, writing down key words and the required skills and abilities.
- Whenever possible, address your letter to an actual person, not "To Whom It May Concern." If you can't find the name, use a title such as "Dear Internship Coordinator."

Opening Paragraph

- A cover letter is an employer's first impression of you so it's critical to engage their attention quickly. The 1st paragraph is where you "hook" the reader.
- Identify the position you are applying for.
- If someone recommended you apply, or you know someone at the company, mention their name.
- Attempt to answer these questions: What skills do you have to offer? Why do you want to work for this employer?

Middle Paragraph

- Use examples from your previous experiences to demonstrate you can meet and exceed expectations. Previous experiences can include paid and unpaid work, internships, volunteer work, and class projects.
- Emphasize your accomplishments *that are related* to the position.
- Don't regurgitate what's on your resume. Instead, connect the dots for the employer, making it obvious that you are *a good fit* for the position.

Closing Paragraph

- Briefly summarize how you might be uniquely qualified for the position.
- Indicate a desire to meet to discuss in more detail what you have to offer.
- Be eager and positive!
- Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.



Cover Emails

When you apply for a job by attaching a resume and cover letter, the letter may not get read. That's why the email that accompanies your application should act as a short version of your cover letter.

- Cover emails are short; you don't want the reader to have to scroll (5-6 sentences)
- Be specific - focus on the most important aspects of your experience and skillset that qualify you for the position.
- Include relevant links to bios, personal websites, projects, etc. so that the reader can quickly learn more about you.
- Write to fit the tone of the company or organization.
- Subject line - Oftentimes job ads will tell you exactly what to put in the subject line. If they don't, do something practical like, Application for Children's Ministry Intern - John Smith.
- Greeting - Try to find out the name of who you are writing to. Try to find out who the person is on the company's website. If you can't, keep it neutral and just say "Hello" or "Good Afternoon."
- Body - Include the info you want the hiring manager to notice and remember about you. Keep it simple but include these 5 points. Who you are. Why you're interested in this job. What you've done that's relevant to the job (make the connections for them). How you're the best one to get the job done. Where they can find out more about you. Close by thanking the reader for their time and expressing enthusiasm. Use your full name as the signature and include any links to your social media accounts.
- Don't use emoticons, a strange email address or unusual fonts.

