

Cover Letters

A cover letter is an opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Use it to connect the dots between what the employer is looking for and the skills you have.

- Write an original cover letter for each employer and position – never copy cover letters
- Demonstrate originality and enthusiasm
- Make your points succinctly; every point should support your application
- Proofread for typos, accuracy of address and telephone numbers, and get feedback
- Don't exaggerate your skills or experience
- Cover letter should be one page, in a 3-paragraph format

To begin writing your cover letter, there are four components that need to be included: headline, opening, body, and closing.

Headline: Address, phone number, and date. Then, name of person you are addressing the letter to, title, name of organization, and address. Also, include “Dear Mr. /Ms. ___,”. Use LinkedIn, a company directory, or call the organization to find out the hiring manager to address your letter to. No one is impressed when you begin your letter “To Whom it May Concern...”

Opening: “Why are you writing?” and “what do you want?” are the questions you should answer in this paragraph. If you are applying for an advertised opening, indicate the position's title and the publication in which it was advertised.

Body: Discuss your “3 Best” selling points. This paragraph includes information that may not have been covered in your résumé. Also, let the employer know that you've done your homework. Indicate that you know something about the organization, and how you would contribute. Comment on their vision or mission statement and show how their philosophy connects with your own.

Closing: This is your closing paragraph. You may say: “Enclosed is my résumé. Thank you for your consideration.” Or “I look forward to hearing from you.” If you wish to be more assertive try: “I will be calling you on (date) to discuss an appointment.” If you try the last approach, you must follow up and call when you said you would. Lastly, don't forget to sign your cover letter, even if you are submitting it electronically.

TIP: A word on CVs

Use a Curriculum Vitae (CV) to apply to graduate school or an academic position. A CV is an expanded version of your resume which paints a picture of you as a scholar. It should be multiple pages & can include sections for: relevant classes, research/academic projects, publications, workshops/ classes taught, internships, memberships, & conferences attended.

