

The Cover Letter

Writing a well-prepared letter to a prospective employer is an important component to gain an opportunity to interview. It's a competitive market out there.

Your cover letter not only allows employers the opportunity to evaluate your experiences but also to view a sample of your written communication skills.

It is *essential* that each letter is carefully planned and well written.

The cover letter must do three things:

- ✓ Catch your reader's attention – each letter should be written with an individual employer in mind.
- ✓ Create a desire for your services.
- ✓ Ask for the opportunity to discuss a potential interview time.

Tips for Preparing the Cover Letter

1. Always send a cover letter with your résumé. *Tailor* each letter to *each* job you are applying for. While every letter may have similar components – a new letter must be created toward the specific job you are applying for. A “one size fits all” letter is obvious and tells the employer you didn't take the time to make your letter, and likely your résumé/application, a priority.
2. Always address the letter to someone by *name and title*. If you do not know the name of the person who will be interviewing/hiring, contact the company and *find out*.

3. Make sure you have researched the company and that it is evident in your letter. You may have done this through a telephone call or on the company's website. One of the most important things to search out is a *mission statement*. This will give the best information about a company.
4. State that you are applying for a *specific job* and indicate *where* you learned about the opening.
6. Provide specific information that highlights your skills as they apply to the specific position, and then refer the reader to your résumé for further information that qualifies you for that job.
7. If mailing your cover letter and résumé, use résumé paper and matching envelope of the usual business correspondence size (8 1/2" x 11"). If sending electronically, keep text formatting the same between the two documents to create a uniform presentation.

Cover Letter Example

Your Name
Return address
City, State Zip

Current date

Name of person
Title
Company name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. / Ms.: (Best Practice - use the name of person hiring if possible. If you absolutely cannot identify who to address it to, use "To Whom It May Concern").

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and mention how you heard of the opening.

Middle paragraph(s): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and be specific as to your reasons for desiring this particular position. By referring your reader to your resume, you can point out significant work experience, achievements, skills, or other qualifications that make you stand out. This is your opportunity to let your personality and experience shine and set you apart.

Closing paragraph: Indicate to your reader that you are very interested in the company and position being offered. Let them know that you will be calling within a specified time frame to further discuss opportunities for an interview. (Then follow through!) Thank them for their consideration and that you are looking forward to speaking with them soon.

Sincerely,

(If you leave space, don't forget to sign your name!)

Name

Enclosures/Attachments (If you are enclosing/attaching your résumé, make sure it is noted)