

Crafting Your Cover Letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce you and expand upon the experience in your résumé. A good cover letter should:

- Immediately state the purpose of your letter
- Include specific information about why you want to work for the employer
- Demonstrate knowledge of the position
- Align your experience with the desired qualifications of the employer



Know the employer

In your cover letter, show why you are a good fit by researching the employer's organization to see how your skills, experiences, and abilities meet their needs. Always send your cover letter to a specific person. If it's not possible, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Members of the Selection Committee."



Explore the job description

Design your cover letter to match the job qualifications and responsibilities. If the job listing is vague, research similar positions online or talk with someone in a similar position to understand what abilities and skills might be needed.



Analyze your background

"What have you done that is similar to what the job requires?" Reflect on your internship, work experience, summer jobs, volunteer experience, extracurricular involvement, courses taken, class projects, and study abroad.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- State in the first sentence why you are writing
- Write a targeted cover letter for each position
- Show your career goals and values are aligned with the organization
- Run spell check, proofread, and have a professional review it, as well
- If you haven't heard anything in 2-3 weeks, follow up with the employer and let them know you are still interested

COVER LETTER DON'TS

- Write more than one page and four paragraphs
- Send the same cover letter to multiple employers
- Leave out pertinent contact information
- Forget to use spell check or proofread
- Forget to match your experience, skills and abilities to the job description
- Overuse sentences that begin with "I"

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH COVER LETTER

First Name Last Name

2361 Bonaventure Street • St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 • 716.555.5555 • student @sbu.edu

Month Day, Year

Cover letter header can match your resume header.

Mr./Mrs./Dr./Mx. First Name Last Name

Title

Name of Organization

Street or P.O. Box Address

City, State, Zip Code

Address your letter to a direct person in the company. The information can be found through researching the company's website or LinkedIn profiles. Can use a title such as "Hiring Manager" or "Dear Members of the Selection Committee".

Demonstrate your research and knowledge of the company and express your enthusiasm and interest.

Dear Ms. Hire Me,

Introductory Paragraph – *Establishes the purpose of your letter and arouses interest.*

State why you are writing by naming the position you are seeking. Tell how you heard about the position.

Specify your major/minor/concentration, college affiliation, and graduation date. If applicable, mention the contact person's name and title who referred you to the position.

Middle Paragraph – *Generate interest by referencing how your skills/background match the employer's needs.*

Outline your strongest qualifications – focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment. Convince the employer you have the personal qualities and motivations to contribute to the organization. Do not simply repeat your resume in this section.

Closing Paragraph – *State your commitment to action.*

Can request a meeting if appropriate. Thank the reader and express appreciation for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tailor your cover letter to the requirements of the position and the employer's needs.

Proofread and then proofread again! Spelling, grammar, format, and punctuation all matter.

First Name Last Name