

Cover Letter Writing

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a tool to help introduce yourself in a memorable, personal way during the job application process. This single piece of paper is all about marketing you, your experiences, talents, and successes as solutions to an organization's needs. Most jobs require a cover letter to be submitted along with your resume.

Each cover letter needs to be unique to the job you are applying for. Cover letters are not one size fits all. Thorough research of the industry, organization, and position need to take place before drafting your cover letter.

This letter is your introduction to an employer and because first impressions count, you should take great care to write an impressive and effective letter. Remember that the letter not only tells of your accomplishments but also reveals how effectively you can communicate.

Successful cover letters have these elements:

- A memorable introduction
- Specific, organized examples of relevant work done and problems solved
- Customized language and research based on the specific job posting
- Addressed to an individual. Use names. Make an intense effort to find the name, correct job title, and address of the human being who will receive your letter
- Concise conclusion with a call to action

Cover letter mistakes to avoid:

- Typos and other unnecessary mistakes such as failing to use capital letters when called for.
- Writing the wrong tone and style of letter to the right person does you no good. Is your industry or career field casual and breezy or button-down and formal?
- Summarizing your resume wastes the readers' time. Add sales sizzle to new information.
- Canned cover letters — like generic resumes— risk being treated like junk mail.
- Too many unsupported assertions and victory laps. Validate claims with specific facts and numbers.

QUICK TIPS FOR COVER LETTER WRITING

Don't Regurgitate Your Resume. A cover letter gives you the freedom to use full sentences to expand upon your resume points and tell the story of why you're the perfect fit for the company.

Do your research. Use LinkedIn, social media, and the organization's website to gather information for your cover letter.

Cover letters also showcase your writing abilities. It is imperative that your cover letters be error-free and grammatically sound. Avoid beginning every sentence with an "I" statement.

Reference the job description language. Underline the verbs in the job posting to identify key skills.

Sample Cover Letter Format

[Use Same Header as Your Resume]

October 23, 2021 (*date you are sending cover Letter*)

Specific Name (if available)

Position Title (if available)

Company Name

City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Thomas (or....Dear Hiring Manager...or....Dear Internship Coordinator...):

Paragraph 1: Specifically state the company name and position you are applying for and transition into the rest of the cover letter

Example: Please accept this resume and cover letter as an indication of my interest in [name of position] at [name of company]. I am interested in this opportunity because [something about the company or position]. I believe the combination of my educational background and internship [or leadership or...] make me an excellent candidate for this position.

Paragraph 2 - 3: Examine the job description and identify the skills and abilities they are seeking. Evaluate your own experience and identify which experience best demonstrate that you possess those skills and abilities.

Example 1: This past summer, I worked at ABC Company and was responsible for answering phones, scheduling meetings, and conducting mail merges. I believe this prior experience would allow me to excel in doing the same tasks at XYZ Company.

Example 2: Serving a volunteer for LKJ, I developed a level of professionalism and comfort with a variety of people not typically seen in an entry-level professional.

Example 3: After taking a course in, my professor took me on as an intern to work on. My internship there included reading reports, analyzing data, partaking in active research contacting persons of interest to arrange interviews, and giving reports of my findings. From my coursework and professional experience, I have developed the researching and analytical thinking and writing skills necessary to be successful as _____.

Example 4: My organizational and communication skills are well demonstrated in my internship experiences with non-profits and leadership positions in student organizations. My current internship at XYZ Company has similar responsibilities with the position at where I will provide administrative support, focusing on maintaining a contact database of local arts, creating a new filing system for the organization and constructing email campaigns.

Paragraph 4: Close out your cover letter by briefly summarizing your value and restating your interest in the position. Make sure to indicate your contact information again.

Example: Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to further discussing my skills and abilities with you in an interview. I can be reached by phone (555-555-5555) or email (name@loyno.edu). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name

(Handwritten Signature)