

Writing a Cover Letter

A cover letter is an introduction to your resume. Although you do not always need a cover letter when you are presenting your resume in person, it is essential when you send your resume to a prospective employer. You may find cover letters referred to as letters of application. Even if there is not a specific spot to upload your cover letter you can always add it to any additional documents upload section. The cover letter shows the employer your writing capabilities, which are important in any profession. The cover letter also allows you to highlight your skills and talents more precisely than just using a resume.

Cover Letter Rules:

- Should always be typed.
- Must always be included with a resume.
- Should be individualized and addressed to a specific person whenever possible.
- Emphasize achievements. If you make claims, back them up.
- Avoid making the letter look like a form letter; tailor it to fit a specific position.
- Be brief and concise. Like your resume, the letter will be skimmed. Should be one page with three (3) to five (5) short paragraphs.

Cover Letter Formatting:

- Sender's Address: Begin with your current address. You do not need to include your name in the heading. (If you do not have space for this, you are able to take this part out)
- Date: This should be the date that you are writing the letter.
- Employer's Address: Do not assume that a person uses the title "Mrs". Always include the person's title. If you don't have the address, look it up on the company's website. If there is not one specific person listed feel free to address them as Hiring Manager or Hiring Committee
- Greeting: Refer to the reader by his/her last name. Use a colon after greeting, not a comma

The easiest way to think of a cover letter is as if it were a love letter:

- Your first paragraph highlights why you love them (the company you're applying for).
 - You'll start off by saying what position you're applying for at that company and how you found out about it. If you spoke to a recruiter or representative you can mention them in this paragraph.
 - Talk about some of the qualities, projects, or values the company has that you admire.
 - End the paragraph by connecting basic information about yourself that explains why you would be the best candidate.

- The second and/or third paragraphs highlight why they should love you.
 - Write about your important experiences that relate to the position, try not to rehash your resume.
 - Take this time to explain some experiences on your resume more thoroughly or if there is something you're concerned about that the employer might not understand (i.e. if there is a gap in your employment).
 - You can also use this section to tell the story of how your skills will be beneficial to the position.
- The last paragraph is setting the date!
 - Wrap everything up that you've talked about.
 - Include your contact information so they'll know how to reach you to set a date for the interview and end it by saying something like "I hope to hear from you soon".
- Sign off (Sincerely, Kind regards, Regards, etc.) at the end of the letter, leave a space to include a signature between the sign off and your name.