

Cover letters are typically part of an application. They are formal documents you use to introduce yourself and discuss your knowledge, skills, and experience. Cover letters function alongside your resume and can be submitted physically, attached as documents, or typed into an online form. This resource provides basic information about cover letters, but you should always tailor your work to your audience and prompt.

Parts of a Cover Letter

A cover letter includes introductory information followed by the body of the letter. Cover letters are generally reviewed in 20–40 seconds, so your letter should be concise, persuasive, and mirror the language used in the application prompt or guidelines.

Introductory Information

For physical or attached documents, include **your contact information, the recipient's contact information, and the date**. Include the introductory information at the top of the page, left-aligned. If you are including a header, the heading format should match your resume. Include **a salutation**. Address the person in charge of filling the position by name. If unknown, use a generic greeting like “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Selection Committee.” For online forms, skip the introductory information, and start with the salutation.

Body of the Letter

In the **opening paragraph**, name the position you are applying for and how you learned about it. For example, if you learned about the position from a current employee, mention the person by name. Identify keywords from the job description and use that same language to discuss your qualifications. Summarize the qualifications you will highlight in your letter in an agenda or thesis statement.

Write two or three concise **body paragraphs** detailing your relevant knowledge, skills, experience. Describe specific accomplishments and explain how these accomplishments qualify you for the position or program. Do not simply repeat information from your resume. Remember, your cover letter and your resume work in conjunction with each other.

In your **closing paragraph**, thank the reader for reviewing your application and express your enthusiasm for the position. If needed, restate your contact information, list times you are available for an interview, and, if the job description does not specify when you will hear back, consider stating your intention to follow up on a certain date. Note that date in your own records, so you can contact the person again by email or phone.

Tips for an Effective Cover Letter

- Establish your strengths based on facts. Be confident but not boastful.
- Highlight your fit for the position or program rather than assuming or insisting you have been selected.
- Avoid stating that you have good “communication skills.” Your cover letter demonstrates those skills.
- Use a positive tone and avoid mentioning negative experiences at previous jobs.
- Proofread carefully and ask someone else to provide feedback on your letter.
- Take your letter to a writing center or a career development center for additional help.

Example of a Cover Letter

Header with your contact information	Jane Park 800 W University Ave · Orem, UT 85917 · 801-555-9847 · Jpark@gmail.com
Today's date	June 1, 2024
Recipient's Contact Information: Use the person's name and title, if available.	Mariana Duncan, Hiring Manager Garland Warner Inc. 9600 West Center Street Richland, UT 84007 m.duncan@garlandwarner.com
Salutation: For online forms, start with the salutation.	Dear Mariana Duncan,
Opening paragraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Name of the positionHow you learned of the positionSummary of your qualifications in an agenda or thesis statements	I am writing to apply for the Communications Specialist position at Garland Warner Inc., which I learned about from your office manager, Jamal Jones. I have extensive experience in writing, marketing, and social networking, and I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to your team.
Body paragraphs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use language from job descriptionKeep paragraphs brief but detailedExplain qualifications that translate to the program or position	In my current role, I manage all writing and marketing projects for our agency. This includes creating content for our monthly newsletters, typesetting newsletters and informational flyers, and updating our website weekly and our social media accounts bi-weekly. Since starting this position two years ago, I have tripled our social media traffic which has increased workshop attendance by 26%. I also have significant experience with website management through my freelance work and personal blog. Through my blog, I have helped other learn how to use Google Analytics and search terms to increase traffic. My freelance work has helped several companies increase their website traffic by an average of 34%, a result I am confident I could replicate at Garland Warner Inc.
Closing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Offer thanksExpress enthusiasmState intention to follow up, if needed	Thank you for considering my application. I am eager to discuss my potential contributions to your team and help Garland Warner Inc. achieve its goals. If I have not heard from you by the 15 th , I will follow up to answer any questions you may have about my application. Sincerely, Jane Park