

Cover Letters

Note: This document should only be used as a reference and should not replace assignment guidelines.

Hiring managers generally spend about 20-40 seconds initially scanning your cover letter, so it should be concise, persuasive, and echo the language of the job description.

Today, most cover letters are submitted electronically. If you are emailing your cover letter, copy and paste the full text in the body of the email in addition to attaching it as a document to the message. Format the enclosed message like a formal email.

Parts of a Cover Letter

Introductory Information

Do your best to find out the name of the person in charge of hiring for the position. If you cannot locate this information, use a generic greeting like “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Sir or Madam.”

To keep your documents uniform, consider using the same heading on your cover letter that you use on your resume for your contact information.

For paper or electronic letters (such as pdfs or Word documents), include your return address, the mailing information of the person you are writing to, and the date in a left-aligned header. Include the name and title of the person you are addressing in the mailing address.

For online forms, use a style similar to a formal email (for instance, “Dear Ms. Duncan”). Skip the employer contact information and include only a greeting.

Introductory Paragraph

Name the position you are applying for and perhaps how you learned about the job (if you found out from a current employee, for example, name the person). Consider also mentioning two or three of the qualifications you meet by using the language of the job description.

Body Paragraphs

Include two or three concise paragraphs that detail your experience or skills in areas named in the job description. Do not simply repeat the information on your resume, but rather describe specific accomplishments and briefly explain how your skills would translate to the position.

Closing Paragraph

Politely thank the reader, and, if reasonable, state your intention to follow up on a certain date. (Make note of the date so that you can contact the person again by email or phone.) You might also restate contact information, times you are available for an interview (if appropriate), or your enthusiasm to learn more about the position.

Tips for an Effective Cover Letter

- You don’t need to explicitly state you have good “communication skills” because a well-written cover letter will be an example of those skills.
- Proofread carefully and have someone else look at your work. You can take your letter to the Writing Center or the Career Development Center for help.
- Establish your strengths based on facts. Be confident but not boastful.
- Stay positive and avoid mentioning bad experiences at previous jobs.
- The purpose of a cover letter is not to ask for a job, but to show what you can do for the potential employer.

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Header with personal contact information: Can match resume header.	<p style="text-align: right;">Blake Park 456 East 700 South · Highfield, UT 85917 · 801-429-9847 · bpark@gmail.com</p>
Today's date	<p>October 1, 2016</p>
Contact information of the hiring manager: Use the person's name and title, if possible.	<p>Mariana Duncan, Hiring Manager Garland Warner Inc. 88 West Center Street Richland, UT 84007 m.duncan@garlandwarner.com</p>
Professional greeting: For an email, leave off the employer contact information and begin with the greeting.	<p>Dear Ms. Duncan:</p>
Opening paragraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of position• How you learned of position• A couple reasons why you're qualified (optional)	<p>I am writing to apply for the position of Communications Specialist, which I learned of from your office manager, Jamal Jones. I would bring significant writing and social networking experience to this position.</p>
Body paragraphs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use language from job description• Keep paragraphs brief and full of detail• Explain how your experience would translate to the new job	<p>My success in marketing would translate well from the public sector to your company. In my current position, I manage all writing and marketing projects for our agency, including writing content for our monthly newsletters, typesetting and designing our newsletters and informational flyers, updating our website weekly and our Facebook account bi-weekly. Since beginning this position two years ago, traffic to our Facebook page has tripled and our workshops have seen an 26% increase in attendance.</p> <p>I also have significant experience with blogs. I maintain a personal blog with advice for bloggers, including entries on using Google analytics and search terms to increase traffic, which you can view at www.readmyblog.wordpress.com. My freelance work with several companies has helped them to increase traffic to company blogs by an average of 34%, a result which I hope to replicate with your firm.</p>
Closing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer thanks• State intention to follow up or other closer, if applicable	<p>Thank you for your consideration. I will follow up with you next Monday to see if I can provide you with any other information.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Blake Park</p>