

Getting Started: Cover Letter Tips & Template



San Juan College Career Center - Room 1715, Phone: 566-3423

10 Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

- 1) Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Cambria font; size 11 or 12 in black print.
- 2) Use the same "Name Heading" from your resume at the top of your cover letter.
- 3) Write a targeted (direct) letter for each position you are applying for, if possible.
- 4) Always mention the company's name in your letter to demonstrate that it has been written specifically for them.
- 5) Information should be presented in concise sentences with common words. Stick to 2 – 3 body paragraphs and always keep it to one page.
- 6) Write your cover letter after you have written your resume.
- 7) Focus on what you have to offer them; not what you are looking to get out of the company. (Very Important!)
- 8) Do not re-write everything on your resume. Your cover letter is a brief introduction of yourself rather than a long list of experience and qualifications.
- 9) Avoid common clichés and vague descriptions such as: "I think outside the box" or "I'm a people-person."
- 10) Use your cover letter to explain gaps in employment, career changes or other special circumstances that may leave a hiring manager with questions after reviewing your resume.

Examples of Powerful Cover Letter Phrases

- After reviewing the position description for the (*position*), I feel that I have much to offer the (*name of business or organization*).
- As you refer to my resume, you will see that I have much experience in (_____) which is directly related to the skills (*name skills*) necessary for this position.
- I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to meeting with you in a personal interview.

Things to Never put in a Cover Letter

- Personal information: age, marital status, kids, health condition etc. (unless explaining gap in employment etc.)
- Jokes - It's not necessary to break the ice with humor.
- Criticism of a past or present employer.
- Someone else's words. Do not cut and paste someone else's cover letter or copy online templates.

Targeted Cover Letter Template

Name Heading (same as resume heading with Name, Address, Phone etc. –or- traditional address block)

Month, Date, Year

< 2 Spaces>

Name of Organization

Street or P. O. Box Address

City, State Zip Code

< 4 Spaces>

Dear Hiring Manager: (specify name, if available, or “Dear Human Resources”, or “Dear Sir or Madam” etc.)

< 2 Spaces>

Opening Paragraph: State why you are writing, the exact name of the position you are applying for, how you heard about the position, and very basic info about yourself. If you are a career changer or recent graduate this is a good spot to mention this, especially to justify lack of relevant job experience.

< 2 Spaces>

Body Paragraph 1: Explain why you are interested in the employer and how your skills match the employer's best interest. Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

< 2 Spaces>

Body Paragraph 2 (optional): Expand on experience or narrate example(s) of accomplishments made in previous work situations that would relate to the new position you are applying for. Set yourself apart from the rest; tell the employer why they should hire you.

< 2 Spaces>

Closing Paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity for a personal interview with (company name) to learn more about the position and to discuss, in further detail, what you have to offer. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his time and consideration.

< 2 Spaces>

Sincerely or Respectfully,

< 4 Spaces for handwritten signature>

Your Handwritten Signature [Blue ink preferred, never any color other than black or blue ink])

Your Name (Typed)

Enclosures ((In parenthesis) [Number of Documents attached, such as resume, applications, reference sheet etc.]