



**YOUR RESUMÉ'S BEST FRIEND ...
THE COVER LETTER**



We can help you get there.

YOUR RESUMÉ'S BEST FRIEND . . . THE COVER LETTER

**Career Services, Fort Hays State University
Sheridan Hall 214, (785) 628-4260**

An effective cover letter is as important in the job search as an effective resumé. It serves as an introduction to your resumé, and no resumé should be sent without one. Studies indicate that your cover letter has the life expectancy of about 30 seconds, so it must be brief, informative, and hold the reader's attention. Employers often use cover letters as the initial screening tool in deciding whom to interview.

Where the resumé is the selling tool, the cover letter or letter of application is designed with the goal of obtaining an interview. The cover letter allows you to expand on the resumé and personalize your approach. A good cover letter expresses that you are seeking a more personal conversation about possible employment. It should draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job. Cover letters are intended to summarize, mention particular points, provide additional information and ask for an interview. Cover letters follow the same general rules of resumes—specific, concise and error-free. Always enclose a cover letter when you mail a resumé.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General outline for a cover letter	3
Elements of a professional cover letter	4
Sample application letters	5-9
Sample letters of inquiry	10-11
Sample mutual friend referral	12
Sample networking letter	13



GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Your Mailing Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Date of Letter

Employer's Name
Employer's Title
Organization Name
Mailing Address
City, State ZIP Code

Dear _____:

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing, the name of the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard about the opening.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate your entire resumé. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner, and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Refer the reader to your enclosed resumé or additional media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Tell the employer from where your credentials may be requested. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date. Indicate you are available for a personal interview at the employer's convenience or show your motivation by telling the employer you will be in contact with them.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure(s)

ELEMENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

USE EFFECTIVE FORMATTING RULES

- Your letter should follow the standard personal business letter format.
- Do not exceed one page of approximately three to four paragraphs.
- Use short words rather than long, complicated words; keep jargon to a bare minimum.
- Avoid using script, bold fonts and heavy typefaces.
- Strive to keep your cover letters interesting, concise and to the point.
- Remember to hand-sign your name above your typed name.

PERSONALIZE YOUR LETTER

Write and type each cover letter individually. It should be personalized to each employer and company.

If possible, address your letter to a specific person in the organization. You can often find the employer's name by utilizing Career Services resources, researching company literature or calling the company and asking the receptionist for the contact person's name and job title.

Always refer to the employer as either Mr. or Ms., never Mrs. (unless specified in the vacancy announcement). If you are unable to identify the gender of the employer, omit the "Mr./Ms." title and address correspondence to "First Name, Last Name."

COMMUNICATE YOUR INTEREST

- Identify the desired position or type of position for which you are applying. Focus on your skills, training or experience that relate to the position and draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job.
- Make the addressee want to read your resumé. Be personable. Communicate enthusiasm and motivation.
- Show that you are knowledgeable of the employer and career field.
- Make sure to refer briefly to your resumé or additional enclosures, e.g., transcripts, application blanks or letters of reference.
- Do not make reference to salary unless requested by employer.
- In closing, request an interview at the employer's convenience or indicate that you will be in contact with the employer.

CREATE A PROFESSIONAL-LOOKING FINISHED PRODUCT

Match the paper color and weight of your cover letter with that of your resumé. Use high-quality bond (at least 20-pound weight). Generally, employers are conservative, and a resumé and cover letter prepared on white, off-white, light tan or light gray will receive a more positive response. Additionally, matching envelopes provide a professional look.

Proofread the letter carefully for spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors. It is a sample of your writing and communication skills.



JOB SEARCH TIP

Verbs for positions you no longer hold should be past tense.

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A TEACHING POSITION

1515 Dogwood Patch
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-0000
Date

Mr. David Mickey
Assistant Superintendent
Unified School District 383
2031 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502

Dear Mr. Mickey:

Career Services at Fort Hays State University has notified me of several openings for elementary teachers in Unified School District 383. I will graduate in May 20__ from Fort Hays State University with a B.S. in elementary education and would like to be considered as a candidate.

My field experience and directed teaching have been an invaluable exposure to teaching. In addition, I have volunteered as a second-grade tutor and Bible School instructor. These experiences have made me appreciate children and realize the positive impact I may have on their future.

I have been involved in several campus organizations in various capacities, which has allowed me to strengthen my communication skills and organizational abilities. I feel this, along with my student teaching experience, makes me a strong candidate for an elementary teaching position in the Manhattan school system.

My enclosed resumé further highlights my qualifications. Would you please send me the necessary district application forms? I am interested in joining your faculty and will provide any additional information you need to consider my qualifications. I look forward to visiting with you during a personal interview.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A TEACHING POSITION

115 West Third
Phillipsburg, KS 67661
(785) 543-0000
Date

Dr. Frank Ybarra
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel
Topeka Public Schools USD 501
624 West 24th
Topeka, KS 66611-1294

Dear Dr. Ybarra:

In response to the advertisement in the June 26 edition of the Topeka Capital-Journal, I am applying for the Social Studies teaching position at Topeka High School. In May of this year, I received a B.S. degree in history from Fort Hays State University, and I am eager to apply my leadership and creativity in the classroom.

My directed teaching experience at Phillipsburg High School heightened my interest in teaching at the high school level. This rewarding experience gave me an opportunity to utilize a variety of teaching methods to stimulate and interest students in history, social studies and government classes. My enclosed resumé further highlights my related teaching accomplishments.

I am also interested in supervising after-school activities or clubs and coaching both volleyball and track. During my directed teaching, I had the opportunity to assist with the high school volleyball team. Additionally, I have directed after-school sports and activities sponsored by the local recreation commission for the past three years.

My credentials are being forwarded from Career Services at Fort Hays State University. If any additional information is needed, please contact me. I am excited about the opportunity to teach at Topeka High School and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A SPECIFIC VACANCY

P.O. Box 1156
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 628-0000
Date

Ms. Carol Jackson
Personnel Director
ABC, Inc.
2301 Walnut Grove Lane
Dallas, TX 75215

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am writing in reference to your advertisement for a Personnel Trainee, as listed with Fort Hays State University Career Services. I will graduate in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology with a minor in economics. My current cumulative GPA is 3.65/4.0 scale.

As you will note from the enclosed resumé, I have had a one-semester internship at Consumer Credit Counseling Service and have worked for several summers as a head lifeguard, with responsibility for a staff of 15 other lifeguards. Additionally, I have held leadership positions in campus activities. I believe my academic background and my work and campus experiences have prepared me for management training and have helped me to develop many of the skills required of your training position.

I look forward to visiting with you during a personal interview at your convenience. You may reach me at (913) 628-0000 to set up a time to further discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A SPECIFIC VACANCY

7012 Southway
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-0000
Date

Mr. John Smith, District Manager
Marketing Personnel Affairs
The Upjohn Company
3500 Sprinkle Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Dear Mr. Smith:

In a recent issue of the Denver Post, I noticed your vacancy for a Pharmaceutical Representative in the Denver area. I am confident that with my experience and education I qualify as a competitive candidate and would like to be considered for the position.

With my position as a surgical nurse and my past retail sales experience, I feel I have the necessary qualifications needed to work in pharmaceutical sales. I have the ability to perform accurately and quickly when under pressure. This is demonstrated through my working with doctors and anesthesiologists under stressful conditions. I have developed a sensitivity to the importance of good communication skills, and this understanding will benefit me in relating to various medical professionals.

My friendly and outgoing personality has always been a plus in dealing with the public and medical personnel. I also have the ability to adapt quickly to change. My familiarity with clinical and hospital settings and my technical skills will prove useful to a career in pharmaceutical sales with The Upjohn Company.

Would you please consider my request for a personal interview to discuss my qualifications and to learn more about this opportunity? I will call you next week to see if a meeting can be arranged. Should you need to reach me, please feel free to contact me at (838) 673-4345 or jonesm@scatcat.fhsu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

APPLICATION LETTER FOR AN INTERNSHIP POSITION

4239 Clinton Street
Wichita, KS 67201
(316) 833-0408

Date

Ms. Elaine Johnson
Vice President and Intern Coordinator
American Creative Advertising
527 Parkway Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66100

Dear Ms. Johnson:

As my senior year at Fort Hays State University rapidly approaches, I am eager to apply and supplement my business administration and advertising studies through an internship. After researching advertising and public relations firms, I found that you offer an Advertising/Public Relations internship opportunity—and that many of my qualifications reflect my suitability for this position.

As my enclosed resumé indicates, I have focused my studies and work experiences in business areas—particularly marketing and advertising. On a practical level, as advertising manager of The Leader (the university newspaper), I achieved record sales last year, helping the newspaper reach a yet unequaled financial security by implementing a unique sales/advertising incentive program. I gained basic accounting experience as a cashier at Whitham's Department Store, and based upon my work record and related interests, was asked to design seasonal merchandise displays.

I would like to speak with you to learn more about the specifics of the Advertising/Public Relations internship at American Creative Advertising. I will call you on Monday, January 18, should you not contact me before, so that we might arrange a date to discuss the details of this position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

LETTER OF INQUIRY

247 South Haven
Pomona, VA 24635
(703) 241-0004
Date

Mr. Michael Kennedy
Personnel Manager
Xerox Corporation
P.O. Box 7777
Rochester, NY 14606

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

In May of this year I will receive my B.A. degree in fine arts with a major in graphic design from Fort Hays State University. Since I am interested in the Xerox Corporation, I am inquiring about career opportunities which may exist in your design or advertising departments.

I am very interested and involved in the activity of designing various kinds of items, including industrial products and packaging material. My enclosed resumé provides a more detailed description of my education, interests and work experience.

I am particularly interested in the Xerox Corporation because of its reputation, the products Xerox produces and the designs used in your products and advertisements. I feel my qualifications are competitive and my skills would prove to be an asset. I see this company as being progressive, and I look forward to the opportunity of being able to contribute to the company's continued success.

I would appreciate your consideration of my credentials. I am available for a personal interview at your convenience, and I will be in contact with you to arrange for a time to meet with you.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

SIMPLIFIED LETTER STYLE

(Used when there is no contact name listed)

230 Walnut Road
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 623-0000
Date

Personnel Department
Minneapolis Public Schools
807 N. Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413

FALL TEACHING POSITION

I am writing to inquire whether there will be fall teaching openings in the Minneapolis Public Schools for which I might be considered. My B.S. degree will be conferred from Fort Hays State University in May with a double major in elementary education and special education.

As you will note from the enclosed resumé, I am currently student teaching in the special education department at Felten Middle School. Following completion of this eight week, full-day experience, I will be teaching in a third-grade classroom at Harwood Elementary Magnet School in Kansas City, Missouri. My certification will be in both elementary and special education, and I am interested in securing a position in either subject area.

My credentials, including references, are on file at Career Services, Fort Hays State University. I would appreciate receiving application materials and any additional information regarding application procedures. Thank you for your consideration.

(Handwritten Signature)

YOUR NAME TYPED IN ALL CAPS

Enclosure

MUTUAL FRIEND REFERRAL

389 East 32nd Street
Salina, KS 67401
(785) 826-0000
Date

Mr. Patrick DiLaura
Professional Staffing Representative
Hallmark Cards, Inc.
2501 McGee Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64141-6580

Dear Mr. DiLaura:

Our mutual friend, Mr. Kenneth Rutgers, has suggested that I get in touch with you to learn about business marketing opportunities with Hallmark Cards, Inc. Because my career interests are in strategic product development and product management, Mr. Rutgers believes that I could make a positive contribution to your organization.

In December of this year, I will receive a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in marketing from Fort Hays State University. Throughout my academic career, I have had a special interest in the personal communication industry. My studies of marketing plan development and design, as well as merchandising and retailing concepts, have been especially rewarding, and now I would like to expand my abilities as a professional in the field.

As noted on my enclosed resumé, I have gained insight into the operations of the Hallmark Corporation through my three years of employment at the Hays, Kansas, Hallmark store. This experience has further heightened my interest in the company.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how my skills can contribute to the success of Hallmark Cards. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule a personal interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

NETWORKING LETTER

(Used for making a connection between you and the reader)

843 Oak Street
Valley Center, KS 67032
(785) 483-0000
Date

Ms. Jennifer Cartney, Partner
Long and Hower Brokerage, LLP
100 Broad Street
Topeka, KS 65843

Dear Ms. Cartney:

Dr. Alex Jones, professor of finance at Fort Hays State University, suggested that I contact you. He thought that, as an alumna, you would be in an excellent position to assist me with a career decision.

As a finance student, I am exploring which career path to pursue. Securities, trading and investment banking all sound interesting to me at this point, but I want to go into my campus interviews next semester with a clear sense of direction. I would like to get your advice on the long-term career implications of each path as well as a better understanding on the day-to-day activities of a broker.

I will call you next week to see if we can arrange a brief meeting at your convenience. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

06/07/06

DOs and DON'Ts

FOR DESIGNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

DO

- Enclose a cover letter when you mail a resumé.
- Use effective formatting rules.
- Follow the standard personal business letter format.
- Keep jargon to a bare minimum.
- Keep your cover letters interesting, concise and to the point.
- Personalize your letter.
- Write and type each cover letter individually for each employer.
- Address your letter to a specific person in the organization.
- Refer to the employer as either Mr. or Ms.
- Communicate your interest.
- Identify the desired position or type of position for which you are applying.
- Focus on your skills, training or experience that relate to the position.
- Communicate enthusiasm and motivation.
- Refer briefly to your resumé or additional enclosures.
- Request an interview at the employer's convenience
- Proofread the letter carefully for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

DON'T

- Exceed one page of approximately three to four paragraphs.
- Use long, complicated words.
- Use script, bold fonts and heavy typefaces.
- Make reference to salary unless requested by employer.



FORT HAYS STATE
UNIVERSITY

CAREER SERVICES
600 PARK STREET
HAYS, KS 67601

(785) 628-4260
careers@fhsu.edu

