

Cover Letter Basics

Your Name (Header)

Your Street Address, Your Town, Your State, Your Zip
(m) 555.555.5555 • your.email@yotes.collegeofidaho.edu

Date

Name of Contact Person, Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear (Contact Person),

1. Tell Your Story

- If you were referred, remember to include the person's name (never use the name of a person you have not checked with first).
- Use an example of an accomplishment
- Give an example about personal experience with company
- Comment on your knowledge of the company (their products, services, or special projects) and why you are interested in them

2. Sell Yourself

- Identify strengths and abilities
- Briefly state how you would be a good fit for the company, emphasizing how you can help the company reach its goals
- Connect you to the company

3. Closing Paragraph

- Neatly wrap up the letter with polite yet assertive closing that asks for an interview
- Affirm your interest in the position
- Tell them when you will follow-up

Sincerely,

(sign your name)

Your Typed Name

Cover Letter Overview

Your job search is an advertising campaign. You are the product! Your resume, cover letter, references and interview all need to deliver the same message.

Think of your resume as a part of your marketing plan. It's the fact sheet. Your cover letter is a well-conceived advertisement. Your references are customer testimonials and your interview is the customer's first interaction with the product (you).

Remember:

Employers want to know 2 things:

- What's in it for me?
- Why should I hire you?

2 Types of Cover Letters

- Prospecting indicates that you are writing to express your interest in possible opportunities.
- Applying for a specific position usually mentions the specific position and where you learned of the position.

Why a Cover Letter?

Always include a Cover Letter with your resume!

This one page document is an opportunity for you to make a positive first impression. Also, gives you an chance to tell your story and why you would be the best candidate for the position.

White Space

Make good use of formatting to cover the page. Too much white space is bad. But keep it to **1 page!**

PROOFREAD!

There is no excuse for mistakes.

The Center for Experiential Learning

Careerservices@collegeofidaho.edu

Hendren Hall 459-5508

THE COLLEGE
of IDAHO



Additional Tips

Do personalize your letter.

No one likes to receive impersonal mail. Cover letters that begin with phrases like "To Whom it May Concern," sound informal rather than an important correspondence. You expect the company to take the time to read through your material, so you need to take time to research the correct addressee. Call the company, look on its Website or talk to others to find the correct contact.

Don't send a generic cover letter to many different companies.

Hiring managers can spot a mass mailing a mile away. What gets their attention are letters that address the company, and its needs specifically. Research the company prior to writing the letter. Check out recent news and read through the company's Website, and incorporate what you learned into your letter. Doing so will demonstrate to employers that you are informed, motivated and willing to go the extra mile.

Don't make the reader work too hard to see that you are right for the position.

Include specific examples about your past successes and experience. If you are looking for a marketing position, give the reader detailed information about a marketing campaign you successfully executed. Don't just tell the reader that you are motivated. Give an example that shows your motivation. You need to lay all of your pertinent information out in a way that lets the person making the hiring decision easily see how your experience and qualities fit the company's needs.

Do get to the point.

Employers receive letters and resumes from dozens and even hundreds of applicants, and often just don't have the time to read lengthy, wordy letters. Be direct. In the first paragraph, include the title of the position you are interested in and then move on to your specific qualifications immediately.

Don't end your letter passively.

Since you are the one looking for work, you need to take the initiative and follow up. Instead of ending the letter with "I look forward to hearing from you," close with "I will call you next week to discuss a time for us to meet." Once you've included this call to action, however, make sure you follow your own promise.

Do write and edit your letter with great care.

Nothing says "I don't really want this job" like a cover letter with typos, incorrect information, or spelling errors. Make sure the company's name is spelled correctly. Check to see if the contact is a male or female. And, while it sounds almost too obvious to mention, be sure to sign your letter. Careless and mistakes tell the company that you did not take this simple task seriously.

Do address the specific position advertised.

Companies that post openings are making your life easier by telling you the qualities they are seeking. Show the company that you paid attention. One way to do this is by making a table for yourself before writing your letter. List the company's stated needs in one column, and your corresponding experience and qualifications in another column. You can then use that information to write a letter that tells them exactly what they want to know.

Example:

Company's Stated Needs	Your Corresponding Experience and Qualifications
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	