

Cover Letter Overview

A cover letter is a clear, concise introduction of yourself to a potential employer. In about ten sentences, your cover letter should say who you are, what you want, why you want it, and why you should have it. It is not a repetition of your resume, but rather a window into who you are. It is your chance to “sell yourself” and inspire the employer to take a look at your resume and bring you in for an interview.

Cover Letter “Do”

- Address the letter to a specific person. Take the time to find out the name of the person who will be reading your letter and avoid “To whom it may concern.” Be sure to spell their name correctly!
- Write a unique cover letter for each job you apply to. If you’re writing effectively, all your letters should have to be a little different anyway.
- Mention the name of your contact if you found the job through personal recommendation.
- Include skills you have that match the specific requirements listed in the job description.
- Provide examples and personal anecdotes that separate you from the other job seekers.
- Proofread! Look over for spelling and grammar errors. Read your letter backwards to make sure you aren’t skimming over words and have a second set of eyes check it before you send it.
- Write professionally. Cover letters should have a personal touch, but they are still being read by professionals (and most likely your future boss).
- Use active, positive phrases.
- Follow up. Aggressively seeking the job you want is a positive quality. Wait about a week after you send your letter and resume to call about the position and the possibility of setting up an interview.

Cover Letter “Don’t”

- Repeat your resume! Your resume accompanies your cover letter—say something different!
- Use clichés, bland language, jargon, or flowery complicated sentences that just fill up space.
- Write more than 10-12 sentences. Employers simply don’t have time to read all about you.
- Submit a resume with the wrong information on it. Double check that your contact information is correct: dial the phone number you list, send an e-mail to the address you provide, and make sure you give the right house number and zip code.
- Use an unprofessional e-mail address or one that is difficult to spell. Open an account that is simply: [@email.](#)
- Go overboard with your follow up. Calling or e-mailing multiple times a day is not the kind of aggressive behavior employers are looking for.