

What is a Cover Letter?

- A letter you include with your resume when you are applying for a job.

Why send a cover letter along with your resume when applying for a job?

- To introduce yourself to the employer
- To tell them a little bit about yourself and give them an idea of that you are like
- To tell them what job you are applying for and why you are a good fit

Parts of a Cover Letter

- Introduction
- Body
- Closing

Types of Cover Letters

- Write a **letter of application** when you are applying for a specific position that you are sure is open and available.
- Write a **letter of inquiry** when there is a specific company that you want to work for, and you are not sure if there is an open position that you would be qualified for.
- Write a **networking letter** when you are not looking for a job - just career advice from a professional in the field you are interested in. Ask them for help, not a job!
- Write a thank you letter to follow-up a meeting or interview.
- Write a **letter of acceptance** when accepting a job offer.
- Write a **letter of refusal** to decline a job offer in a positive manner.

What Should A Cover Letter Say?

Your cover letter should tell an employer why you are a good fit for the job.

Follow these two steps:

- 1) Look at the ad for the job you are interested in & pick out the main responsibilities and the key requirements.
- 2) Match your skills, abilities, experience, and education to the job requirements and

focus your letter on these points.

Writing the Letter

What are the main things to tell the employer in your cover letter?

- 1) Why are you writing?
- 2) What position applying for?
- 3) How did you learn about the position?
- 4) What experience do you have that is related?
- 5) What education do you have that is related?
- 6) What skills do you have that they would be interested in?

Make Your Letter Interesting

When describing you experience, education & skills use action verbs, adjectives & adverbs to describe what you did and how you did it.

- Use action verbs to describe what you have done?

In my last position I _____ ...

Developed, initiated, listened, assisted, created, supervised, participated, prepared, Improved, managed, organized, contributed, maintained, explained, assessed, trained

- Use adverbs to describe how you did something.

I _____ managed ...?

Accurately, cooperatively, creatively, realistically, quickly, successfully, carefully, efficiently, independently, courteously, precisely, honestly, effectively, sincerely, rationally

- Use adjectives to describe your best qualities?

I am _____ ...

Eager, effective, committed, concerned, enthusiastic, strong, adaptable, organized, positive, valuable, considerate, flexible, creative, excellent, analytical, successful

Cover Letter Sections

Introduction

- Catch the attention of the reader.
- State why you are writing and why you are interested in this organization.
- State the source of your information (location of the advertisement, mention a personal connection to the organization, drop a name, etc.).

Body

- Present your qualifications and achievements.
- Try not to repeat the exact information found on your resume, however, make reference to the enclosed resume.

- State how you could be successful in this position, why you are qualified, and how much you match the requirements of the job description.
- Mention specific accomplishments that directly relate to the field of work for which you are applying and why you enjoy that work.

Closing

- State future action desired.
- If you wish to call them in two weeks to arrange a convenient time to interview, say so, and remember to follow up with the phone call!
- Tell them how you can be reached for an interview and make sure you can in fact be reached that way.
- If additional materials are needed, state that you will be glad to supply them.
- Be sure to say thank you!

Cover Letter “Do and “Don’t”

Do:

- Write a cover letter that says something of interest to the reader
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread! Don’t rely on spell check to catch errors
- Use proper grammar that is appropriate for a college student or graduate
- Convey confidence with positive action words
- Remember to sign the letter

Don’t:

- Hand write the cover letter or the envelope
- Abbreviate or use acronyms (especially those and employer would be unfamiliar with)
- Just repeat your resume in a letter
- Exaggerate or overstate your qualifications
- Include any negatives or refer to your own lack of credentials
- Use passive terms like “hope” and “wish”
- Use slang
- List names of references in the letter

Cover Letter Tips

Make it Personal

Address your letter to a specific person.

Keep it Brief

Limit your cover letter to 3-4 brief paragraphs, and keep it to one page or less.

Be Specific

Highlight key points of your experience.

Tell them what you can do for them, not what they can do for you!

Fill in the Blanks

Provide information that is not in your resume.

Be Positive

Keep your letter positive by not apologizing for poor grades or lack of experience.

Be Professional

Avoid being cute, humorous, or overly pushy.

Be Realistic

If asked to provide salary requirements, give a general range of your expectations, once you have researched salaries for that field.

Check it Twice...At least!

Edit and proofread your letter at least twice for grammar, spelling, duplications & omissions!

Cover Letter Format

Today's Date

Contact Person

Title

Company/Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms./Mr.:

FIRST PARAGRAPH - INTRODUCTION

The opening paragraph should arouse the interest of the employer. State why you are writing and why you are interested in this organization. State the source of your information (drop a name, mention a personal connection to the organization, location of the advertisement, etc.).

Introduction Examples:

"I am applying for the position of Medical Assistant as advertised in the Syracuse Post Standard. My clinical experience and my interest in quality patient care are an excellent fit for this position."

"This letter is an expression of my interest in the Management Trainee position with your company. I am excited about the opportunity for employment in an organization that stresses a commitment to customer service and strong client relationships."

"John Smith at the ABC Company told me about your plans to open a new facility in Boston, Massachusetts. I will soon be relocating to the Boston area, and would enjoy the opportunity to speak to you regarding this new initiative."

SECOND PARAGRAPH - BODY

Present your qualifications and achievements (This may include your academic background, work experience and skills.) Try not to repeat the exact information found on your resume, however, make reference to the enclosed resume. State how you could be successful in this position, why you are qualified, and how well you match the requirements of the job description. Mention specific accomplishments that directly relate to the field of work for which you are applying and why you enjoy that work (you may also want to cite a specific experience on the job, project, committee, or task that you worked on).

Body Examples:

"Throughout my clinical experiences for Smith Hospital, my supervisor assigned me such tasks as assisting patients with therapeutic exercises, transporting patients to various locations, and observing various medical procedures."

"My four years of progressively responsible experience as an Assistant Manager both in a retail business setting and a corporate setting qualify me for this position. Additionally, I can offer you and an Associates Degree in the area of Business Technology."

"With the education and training I have received in the field of Mechanical Technology, I feel that I could be valuable to your company as a Drafter. Consider my knowledge and familiarity with the following equipment and programs..."

THIRD PARAGRAPH - CLOSING (Push for Personal Contact—an Interview!)

State future action desired. If you wish to call them in two weeks to arrange a convenient time to interview, say so, and remember to follow up with the phone call! Tell them how you can be reached for an interview and make sure you can in fact be reached that way. If additional materials are needed, state that will be glad to supply them. Be sure to say thank you!

Closing Examples:

"I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background with you and learn more about the position. I shall call you next week to see if a meeting can be arranged. If you wish to contact me, I can be reached at 315-555-1212. Thank you very much."

"I am sure an interview would substantiate my knowledge and abilities and give you an opportunity to explore further how I can be an asset to your company. I can be reached at 315-555-1212. Thank you and look forward to hearing from you."

"I will be in the area after July 1st, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my candidacy. I will call you then regarding a possible meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration."

Sincerely,

Your Handwritten Signature

Your Typed Name

Sample Letter of Application

Advertisement Posted on Monster.com:

ABC Computer Center has an immediate opening for the position of Computer Technician. The position we seek to fill requires a person that is very computer literate with PC computers and all versions of the Windows operating system. The position will require some configuration and installation of new computers on a network, and migrating of files and applications software from older computers to new ones. Most of the work will be at the computer/workstation level and not at the server. Ability to set up a Novell Client and corporate anti-virus is desirable. Much of the work will involve supporting end users. We seek an individual with two or more years experience, with a two-year college degree in information science or one of the following certifications (A+, Network+, CNA, MCSA, or MCP). All applicants should have a thorough knowledge of Microsoft Office software, Microsoft Outlook and other popular Microsoft programs.

October 4, 2008

Ms. Gail Roberts
Recruiting Coordinator
Department DRR 1201
Database Corporation
79 Ninth Street
Syracuse, New York 05876

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Your advertisement for Computer Technicians listed on Monster.com caught my attention. I was drawn to the ad by my strong interest in networking, installation, and configuration.

I have worked in the areas of hardware & software troubleshooting and also have substantial experience in installing new computers on a network, and transferring files from old to new systems. I am also very familiar Microsoft Office, and have recently gained my Network+ certification. Because of this experience, I can make a direct and immediate contribution to your department. I have enclosed a copy of my resume, which details my qualifications and outlines how I might be of service to your company.

I would like very much to meet with you to discuss your open positions for Network Administrators. If you wish to arrange an interview, please contact me at the above address or by telephone at (315) 271-9999.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith

Sample Letter of Application (Referral)

*Candidate was told about the open position by a colleague
of Jane Doe from Big Public Accounting, Inc..*

February 16, 2008

Ms. Jane Doe
Partner-In-Charge
Big Public Accounting, Inc.
123 N. Main Street
Chicago, IL 48267

Dear Ms. Doe:

I was referred to you by Mr. Dave Zbecki, a Partner with your Syracuse office, who informed me that the Chicago office of Big Public Accounting is actively seeking to hire quality individuals to fill positions in Auditing.

I have more than two years of accounting experience, including interning as an Auditor last year with the Syracuse office of Ernst & Young. I will be receiving an Associate in Applied Science in Accounting this May from Onondaga Community College, graduating Magna Cum Laude. I am confident that my combination of practical work experience and solid educational experience has prepared me for making an immediate contribution to Big Public Accounting. Having interned with a leading firm in the public accounting field, I understand the level of professionalism and communication required for long-term success in the field. My background and professional approach to business will provide your office with a highly productive Auditor.

I will be in the Chicago area the week of March 16. Please call me at 217-222-3456 to arrange a convenient time when we may meet to further discuss my background in relation to your needs. If I have not heard from you by March 9, I will contact your office to inquire as to a potential meeting date and time. I look forward to meeting you then. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Trevor Q. Graduate

Trevor Q. Graduate

Enclosure

Sample Letter of Inquiry

April 11, 2008

Ms. Suzanne Martin
Wonderful Child Care Center
1 Pine Street
East Syracuse, NY 13057

Dear Ms. Martin:

With my college degree in hand, I knock on your door to ask if you anticipate any employment opportunities.

I enjoy working with children and my enthusiasm, creativity, and support encourage learning. My dedication to scouting has provided many hours and opportunities for quality time with children designing and implementing educational programs aimed at building character and skills.

Through very responsible work experiences, I have become disciplined and adept at multitasking and developed good people skills. During a recent internship, I gained valuable experience in developing stimulating programs and balancing a calendar for a diverse population. As a result of volunteerism, community service, and life residence in Syracuse, I have developed many resources and affiliations in this community.

I have supplemented my experience and strengthened my skills through educational courses at Onondaga Community College. While working on a degree in the Liberal Arts & Sciences - Childhood Education curriculum I learned the foundations of education, child psychology, and health and safety awareness. I also completed a year of training in Recreation Leadership and some Human Services coursework.

I enclose my resume for your consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss how my qualification will solve a future staffing need. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tricia Yongst

Tricia Yongst

Enclosure

Sample Networking Letter

September 15, 2008

Ms. Katherine Jackson
Vice President for Sales
Morgan Enterprises
2 Juneway Path
Syracuse, NY 13202

Dear Ms. Jackson:

Within a few months, I will graduate from Onondaga Community College and enter the job market. Since my area of interest is sales, the Career and Applied Learning Center gave me your name as someone who might be willing to provide me with advice on how to begin my job search. I am familiar with your company's products and have been impressed with your sales representatives.

I already have some sales experience, which I acquired during college by working part-time at Sears. I have further learned about sales and marketing careers through volunteer work with Pilot Communications. I would like to begin my career as a sales representative and eventually move into a management level position.

I am trying to gather as much information as possible before applying for positions. Could I take a few minutes of your time next week to discuss my career plans? Perhaps you could suggest how I might improve my resume, which you will find enclosed, and who might be interested in my qualifications. I will call you on Monday, September 20, to arrange a phone meeting at your convenience.

I would appreciate any help you could provide and look forward to speaking to you. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 315-555-2154. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Evan Wright

Evan Wright

Enclosure

Sample Thank You Letter

October 21, 2008

Mr. Brian Kelso
Human Resources Director
Lyons & Foster Accounting
472 Auburn Street
Syracuse, NY 13202

Dear Mr. Kelso:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview on October 15 for the Staff Accounting position at your firm. I was impressed by the thoroughness of your interview process and by the effort on everyone's part to insure that my day was informative and interesting.

It was clear to me that you have set out to secure the very best people available for Lyons & Foster Accounting. I think that the experience I gained in my internship has given me good insights into what would be expected of me if I was hired. I would welcome the opportunity to be among your new staff accountants and would bring great enthusiasm to the position.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Kristen Small

Kristen Small

Enclosure