

COVER LETTER GUIDE (PARTS OF A COVER LETTER)

SAMPLE LETTER

RETURN ADDRESS (PART 1)

Your Mailing Address

City, State Zip Code

Today's Date

(4 "Return"s or "Enter"s on Keyboard)

INSIDE ADDRESS (PART 2)

Employer's Name

Job Title

Business Name

Business Address

City, State Zip Code

SALUTATION (PART 3)

Dear (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) (Use the name of the person that will read the letter):

BODY (PART 4)

In response to the February 24th advertisement in the Bangor Daily News, I have enclosed my resume for the Receptionist position.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

1ST MAIN PARAGRAPH

Describe your qualifications. Sell your skills and knowledge. Tell why you are interested in the company or college. Point out any related experience you have.

I have two years of prior work experience as a head waitress at The Frosty Mug in Holmen Wi. My work has involved greeting customers in a fast-paced setting and delivering superb customer service. I have also been responsible for all managing other Frosty Mug team members, as well as reordering supplies and completing nightly closing functions. I am very detail oriented and able to handle multiple tasks simultaneously.

2ND MAIN PARAGRAPH

Continue to describe qualifications. Highlight relevant training or classes that relate to the job or major for which you are applying.

I am currently completing my high school diploma and plan to attend UW LaCrosse with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration. I have gained valuable experience in several computer programs including Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access during the past 3 years of High School. Additionally, my training has provided me with the skills to reach my goal of office management.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Close by thanking the reader and requesting an interview.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person. I can be reached at (207) 555-1234. Thank you for your time and consideration.

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE (Part 5)

SIGNATURE

Sincerely,

(4 "Return"s or "Enter"s on Keyboard)

NAME

Joe Doe

ENCLOSURE

This indicates that you have enclosed other items (resume, transcripts, etc.) for the reader to see.

Enclosure

EXAMPLE 1: "BEFORE" COVER LETTER

Renee Simmons

15 Elm St. | Sometown, NY | 555-555-5555 | renee@somedomain.com

June 16, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am submitting my resume for your review for the retail manager position. I have a long and successful career with XYZ Company and I'm looking for a new career challenge.

My experience and training in management techniques is enhanced by my strong work ethic and ability to learn new concepts quickly. I am an excellent communicator, a results-oriented performer and get great satisfaction from making a difference. I thoroughly enjoy working with people and have done so throughout my career. I bring top results in managing a retail operation.

I have a wide array of skills that will increase productivity and effectively contribute to an already successful company such as yours. I am a professional who is detail-oriented, flexible and able to meet deadlines, both independently and in a team environment.

Given the challenge the current market presents, my ability to quickly assess and provide solutions would be valuable. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications and learn more about the open position. Thank you for your time and consideration of the enclosed resume, and I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Respectfully,

Renee Simmons

EXAMPLE 2: "AFTER" COVER LETTER

Renee Simmons

15 Elm St. | Sometown, NY | 555-555-5555 | renee@somedomain.com

June 16, 2010

Ms. Ellen Jones
HR Manager
ABC Company
15 Park Place
Sometown, NY 55555

Re: Retail Manager (Ref Code: 12345) position, advertised on Monster

Dear Ms. Jones:

My 15+ years of experience managing big-box retail operations is an excellent match to the qualifications you are seeking for your New York City store manager. I bring to the table a record of delivering breakthrough improvements, multimillion-dollar sales growth and goal-surpassing performance-to-plan.

Since 1995 I have worked for XYZ Company, advancing through promotions and receiving dozens of awards for driving company-leading results across all key business metrics. In my current role as manager overseeing a \$9 million flagship store, I have recently achieved:

- A 14% (\$1.1 million) increase in quarterly store sales, despite the challenge of a severe market slowdown in the retail industry.
- An 8% reduction in shrink from 2008 to 2009, benchmarking a new-store best in this category across the district.
- A 15% increase in employee retention and improved staff morale by focusing on innovative employee training and incentive programs.
- Recognition for achieving the highest dollar-per-transaction averages companywide in 2009.

In all positions held, I have consistently met or exceeded profit and revenue growth goals. I would be honored to serve as manager of your New York City store and lead the team to achieve gains in revenues, service levels and customer satisfaction. If you agree that a meeting could be to our mutual benefit, please contact me at 555-555-5555 or email renee@somedomain.com. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Renee Simmons
Enclosure: Resume

COVER LETTER TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Your cover letter is a potential employer's first impression of you and can be the most vital part of the application packet. A well written letter entices the employer to read your resume. A poorly constructed cover letter may doom your resume to the "No Need to Read" pile. The same can be said for a college or scholarship application that includes an introductory letter. It is important to highlight your skills, knowledge, and experience. These will indicate what you can contribute to the company or school. Effective cover letters must convey a sense of purpose and project enthusiasm. A "form" cover letter rarely does this. Researching the employer, college, or scholarship prior to writing the cover letter will give you the opportunity to effectively personalize your letter.

1. **Always** include a cover letter when mailing your resume. A letter of introduction will prove useful when applying to colleges. It may act as the basis for a college essay or it may be a useful addition to an application packet.
2. Unless the advertisement specifies "no phone calls please" and the name is not given in the ad, find out the name and title of the individual who will be receiving your letter. Make sure you spell the name properly and get the proper abbreviation (Mr., Mrs., Ms.).
3. Do not use "form" letters or photocopies. Personalize each letter. If possible, explain why you want to work for the organization or attend the school.
4. Use a proper business format for your letters.
5. Make sure the letter is **PERFECT!** Spelling, punctuation, and grammar count. Have someone proofread the letter before mailing it.
6. Create the letter on a computer word processing program (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, etc.) and use a laser printer, if possible. Use good quality paper. Cheap, flimsy paper makes your application seem very ordinary. However, do not use flashy colors!
7. Utilize a one inch margin on all 4 sides. This white space draws the reader to the body of the letter.
8. In the opening paragraph, tell the reader the purpose of the letter.
9. Use "I" statements and action verbs when describing your experience.
10. Get to the point! Employers do not have the time to read lengthy letters. A cover letter should never exceed one page.
11. Focus on the specific skills and interests you possess that you can offer the employer or college. Concentrate on skills which match the advertised employment qualifications or the desired program of study. Stress what you can do for the company or college, not what the company or college can do for you. Sound upbeat and confident. Sell yourself!
12. Don't mention salary expectations unless the advertisement specifically requests it. In that case, the best strategy is to give a range. For example, "My earnings have ranged from \$7.00 to \$10.50 per hour in the various sales positions I have held."