

Cover Letter Writing Essentials



The Purpose of the Cover Letter:

- Identifies the job for which you are applying
- Introduces you to the employer and creates an important first impression
- Gives a personal overview of your skills and experience
- Indicates your interest in obtaining an interview

The Structure of the Cover Letter:

Using a business letter format, your cover letter will include:

1. Your address, including city, state and zip code
2. The date
3. The company's address and person to whom you are writing
4. A greeting to that person
5. The information you want to convey about yourself and your abilities
6. A closing statement or salutation
7. Your name, phone number and e-mail address

The Body of the Cover Letter:

1. Introduction (1st paragraph)

Explain why you are writing, the position for which you are applying, how you heard about the job, and why you are interested in that particular position.

2. Specifics (2nd paragraph)

Explain why you are qualified for the position by briefly describing your education, personal work qualities, and experiences. Next, describe how these qualifications meet the minimum qualifications, and how your employment will benefit the company. Explain any gaps in your work history, if necessary.

3. Closing (3rd paragraph)

Thank the reviewer for his or her time and consideration of your application. Let him or her know that you will be contacting them in the next week to schedule a meeting where you can further discuss your qualifications and how you will benefit their company. Make sure to include contact information such as telephone number and e-mail address.

Salary History and/or Requirements

Some job ads may ask you to share your salary history, and it is acceptable to share the information in your cover letter. It is important to be truthful because recruiters use this as a tool to narrow the list of applicants. Rather than list all salaries, you can simply give an average salary from your most recent jobs. Another way to comply with the salary request is to use the website www.salary.com and research average salaries for the position advertised, and share this information in the cover letter.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO

Annette Wilson
Director of Career Services
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
One University Way
San Antonio, TX 78224

Phone: (210) 784-1342
Fax: (210) 784-1498
Email: Annette.Wilson@tamusa.tamus.edu
Website: www.tamusa.tamus.edu/careerservices/index.html

Cover Letter Do's:

- **Do** keep the letter to one page.
- **Do** find the name or title of a person to whom to address the letter.
- **Do** start with "Dear" and end with "Sincerely" or "Respectfully".
- **Do** share information in a creative, truthful, professional manner.
- **Do** keep your paragraphs short.
- **Do** check spelling and grammar. Have someone check it also.
- **Do** print on quality paper.
- **Do** emphasize experience. List transferable skills if you have not worked in the field.
- **Do** convey confidence in your skills and abilities.
- **Do** ask for an interview or meeting.
- **Do** remember to sign the letter in pen.
- **Do** follow up with the employer.
- **Do** keep a copy of the letter.

Cover Letter Don'ts:

- **Don't** lie. Big or small. Ever.
- **Don't** write "To Whom It May Concern"
- **Don't** duplicate information on the resume.
- **Don't** use abbreviations or jargon.
- **Don't** use italics as they scan poorly.
- **Don't** start every sentence with "I" or "My".

(Sample Cover Letter)

9999 Abbey Lane, #135
Carrollton, KS 77802

February 10, 2011

Mr. Bob Jones
Jones Medical Supply Center
1000 Division Street
Kansas City, KS 66103

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am interested in applying for the position of Account Representative, as posted on www.careerbuilder.com. My career goal is to gain additional knowledge in the field of sales and marketing and I am confident this position will offer that opportunity.

As can be seen from the enclosed resume, my work-study experience at Adams College has been in the areas of direct sales and new product marketing. This background, coupled with my formal education in marketing, provides the qualifications and experience appropriate for the entry-level position available in your department.

Jones Medical Supply has a reputation for quality products, and I would enjoy selling your line of medical supplies. I am eager to put into practice some of the marketing strategies I have spent the last two years learning, especially with a company recognized as an industry leader.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you in more detail about my qualifications. I can be reached at the above address, by phone at (812) 268-1666, or via e-mail at hopsosn@hotmail.com. Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

(Sign your full name here in pen)

Sarah Hopson

Enc.

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(Sample Cover Letter)

206 Lancart Street
Farmers Branch, TX 75244

October 25, 2010

Ms. Carolyn A. Beatty
President of Corporate Accounting
Central Company
555 Corporate Way
Dallas, TX 75255

Dear Ms. Beatty:

Review of your company's college recruiting literature has piqued my interest in your Accounting Trainee Program. The idea of having rotational assignments in accounts receivable and accounts payable sounds like a perfect fit for my experience and career goals. Subsequently, I am interested in scheduling an interview with your firm.

I will obtain an Associate in Applied Sciences degree in accounting in December of this year. As an outstanding student, I have been recognized for my academic achievement through the receipt of various awards and scholarships, which are detailed on my enclosed resume. In addition, I have always been industrious and hard working. This is evidenced by the fact that I have been continuously employed, either full-time or part-time, since the age of sixteen. In addition, I have managed to participate in several extracurricular activities that demonstrate my ability to effectively organize and plan my time to maximum advantage. With my solid academic performance, work ethic, drive, organization skills and strong interest in the accounting field, I am confident I have the necessary elements to be a valuable contributor to Central's accounting program.

I would be pleased to have the opportunity to interview with you and hope you will give the enclosed resume favorable consideration. I will contact you the first week in November to discuss setting up an interview time. Thank you and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

(Sign your full name here in pen)

Margaret Temple

Enc.

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(Sample Letter)

111 Washington Street
Hunter, IL 60660

March 1, 2011

Human Resource Manager
Lucas County Health Department
Human Resources Office
300 Greenville Rd
Lucas, IL 00000

Dear Manager of Human Resources:

When I read your advertisement for a Patient Care Representative on Lucas County's website, it seemed that the job description had been written with me in mind. As you require, I am fluent in both English and Spanish and have excellent interpersonal skills. Additionally, I have experience in handling cash and performing inventory.

For the past three years, I have been caring for an elderly relative who is now deceased. During that time, I gained a considerable amount of experience scheduling appointments and communicating with medical staff and patients. Several doctors commented on my empathy and patience in dealing with the confusion and fear experienced by my relative.

As soon as I complete my Associates in Art degree next month, I am available to start work. As you will notice on my attached resume, I have set aside ten hours weekly to actively practice my typing skills and I am confident that I can meet your expectations in this area.

I am eager to make a difference at the Lucas County Health Department. I will contact your office at the end of the week to verify that you have received my letter and resume, and to discuss with you further the job requirements and my qualifications. Until then, feel free to contact me at (555) 567-0000 or at jadams@jmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

(Sign your full name here in pen)

John Adams

Enc.

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