

HOW TO CREATE A COVER LETTER

The cover letter is your introduction to the employer on paper or via email. It is designed to accompany a resume when you apply for a job. The goal of the cover letter is to tell the employer why you are appropriate for this position and why they should review your resume for further consideration. Write the letter to sell yourself for the particular job you are seeking. Identify your experience, education, and skills that are most directly related to that job. Highlight items covered in your resume but **DO NOT** repeat your resume. You want the employer to **READ** your resume so only give the most important pieces of information from your resume, written in concise sentences that tell the **SHORT** story of you. Continue to use the key words from your resume to focus on your skills.

A cover letter should be no more than one page. You **MUST INCLUDE**:

- WHAT position it is you are applying for
- How you found out about the position
- Why you want to work for **THIS** company
- Why you are the **RIGHT** person for the job
- How your education and area of study fit with the position
- How your past experience has prepared you for this position (focus on **SKILLS**)
- How to contact you

COVER LETTER FORMAT (See sample)

- Be sure your letter is individually tailored for the job (**never a form letter**)
- **Address it to the contact individual by name** (call and find out the name if you do not know it), including his or her correct job title, company name, and address. As a last resort, use the title given on the job description such as "Dear Intern Coordinator" but please do **NOT** use "To whom it may concern".
- Write in your own words in a conversational style with short sentences.
- Start with an introduction paragraph, followed by one or two paragraphs covering your education and experience, emphasizing the skills you have that match the position.
- Close with a summary statement about your qualifications and interest and a request for action (ask them to contact you). Include both your phone number and email address as forms of contact and end with a "thank you" for consideration.
- Remember to sign the letter. When online applications are preferred, try to use an electronic signature or scan a copy of your letter with a true signature.
- Send the signed original, on the same quality paper stock as your resume, in a 9" x 12" envelope. Always keep a copy of your signed originals for your records.
- When emailing your application, attach both the resume and cover letter. **DO NOT** write the cover letter in the body of the email. The body of your email should say something like, "Please see the attachments as my application for the policy analyst position."

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

PHONE #
EMAIL ADDRESS

ADDRESSEE
TITLE
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

DATE

Dear ADDRESSEE:

The first paragraph indicates why you are writing. State the position you are applying for and how you learned of it. Emphasize what you offer to the employer related to the position you are seeking (not what they can do for you). Cover letters are usually three to five paragraphs long, centered on one page, and written in a conversational style with short sentences.

The middle paragraph(s) highlight the most significant information the employer will find when they read your resume. Briefly state your qualifications. Describe your education, highlighting your specialized training, related courses, and class projects. Describe your work experience, activities, and skills which are related to the job you are seeking. Provide specific examples of accomplishments and situations where you demonstrated job related skills. You may also add information about your experiences or personal work characteristics not listed on your resume.

Summarize your qualifications and interest in the employer. Close the letter with an appropriate request for action. (Ask the employer to contact you and provide your phone number, OR indicate when you will contact them to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.) Thank the employer for their consideration.

Sincerely,

YOUR SIGNATURE

YOUR NAME

Benjamin Fuller

3526 Bates Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

(412) 555-9621
ben.fuller@gmail.com

Ms. Judy Wright
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
242 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

January 4, 2010

Dear Ms. Wright:

Please accept the enclosed information as my application for the summer internship with the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) that is advertised on the La Follette Career Development Webpage. I am currently a candidate for a Master of International Development degree at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). My particular interest in institutional and political reform in China and my past work with human rights issues fit well with CECC's work and mission.

As shown on my resume, I have already had significant experience with China. I graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton Wisconsin, double majoring in History and East Asian Languages and Cultures. My work focused on the history, culture and politics of China. I have also had substantial Chinese language training, including two separate terms of study in Mainland China. My coursework in the Masters program at GSPIA has focused on additional work in Chinese politics, corruption and good governance, economic policy analysis, and statistical methods. Studying and working in China for two years has helped me understand the Chinese culture. I also tested into 4th year advanced Chinese for next year and have very good reading ability in particular.

Additional details of my education and work experience are included on the attached resume. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to learn more about the position. You can reach me by phone at 412-555-9621 or by e-mail at ben.fuller@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Benjamin A. Fuller

Benjamin Fuller

Benjamin Fuller

3526 Bates Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

(412) 555-9621
ben.fuller@gmail.com

Ms. Judy Wright
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
242 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

January 4, 2010

Dear Ms. Wright:

Please accept the enclosed information as my application for the summer internship with the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) that is advertised on the La Follette Career Development Webpage. I am currently a candidate for a Master of International Development degree at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). My particular interest in institutional and political reform in China and my past work with human rights issues fit well with CECC's work and mission.

My most relevant experience includes the following:

- Double majored in History and East Asian Languages and Cultures.
- Specialized studies in the history, culture and politics of China.
- Substantial Chinese language training, including two terms of study in Mainland China.
- Graduate coursework in Chinese politics, corruption and good governance, economic policy analysis, and statistical methods.
- Tested into 4th year advanced Chinese for next year

Additional details of my education and work experience are included on the attached resume. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to learn more about the position. You can reach me by phone at 412-555-9621 or by e-mail at ben.fuller@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Benjamin A. Fuller

Benjamin Fuller

Benjamin Fuller

3526 Bates Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

(412) 555-9621
ben.fuller@gmail.com

Ms. Judy Wright
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
242 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2010

Dear Ms. Wright:

It was a pleasure to meet with you yesterday. I am extremely interested in being a part of the mission of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and I see myself as being an excellent fit for the summer internship.

I expect to excel in all areas of the internship, especially in utilizing my knowledge of and experience in Chinese language and culture to assist your organization.

Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to the possibility of working with you and the CCEC this summer.

Sincerely,

Benjamin A. Fuller

Benjamin Fuller