

Cover Letter Format and Purpose

Your Present Address
City, State Zip Code *(This is the formal business letter format used for cover letters)*

Date of Letter *(Note there are two blank lines between each section of this heading)*

Individual's Name
Job Title *(Include Ms. /Mr. /Dr.; if unknown use Human Resources)*

Employer Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code *(Call employers for correct spelling of name, title, etc., if necessary)
(Employer address, city, state, zip are optional for online applications, but at least use the employer name)*

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. Last Name: *(If unknown, use Dear Hiring Representative,)*

Introductory paragraph addresses three questions:

- How did you hear of the position?
- Why do you want to work for that specific company/organization?
 - (Stay away from general answers or aspects focused on you- be specific)
- What knowledge, skills, abilities, or achievements (KSAs) qualify you for that position?
 - Usually the last sentence (Think of this as a thesis statement)
 - Mention 2-3 and then focus on them in the body of the letter

Detail paragraph(s) provide(s) your strongest connection/example of how your experience relates to the position:

- Discuss KSAs in the order they are listed in the introductory paragraph
- Provide evidence of the KSAs listed in introductory paragraph from related work or academic experience
- Use concrete examples, active voice, and action verbs; vary sentence structure and length
- Explain how you can benefit that company and what value you can add, not what they can do for you

- If you have two strong ideas to present, break this into two shorter paragraphs
- Shorter items are more likely to be read; longer ones get skimmed or even skipped altogether
- Be brief (A cover letter is shorter than a full single page)

Closing paragraph:

- Thank them for the opportunity and indicate your interest in an interview
- Provide contact information and best overall times to call

Sincerely,

Type your name