

THE HUNTER COLLEGE READING/WRITING CENTER

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Writing a Cover Letter

When applying for a job and sending out your resume, it's a good idea to include a cover letter. The letter, in the basic format of a business letter, should basically introduce you to your prospective employer, mention the job you are applying for and briefly highlight your qualifications for the job.

THE PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

Salutation. With your salutation (greeting), be accurate. Make sure that you spell your addressee's name correctly. Also, if you do not know the name of your addressee, it's best to avoid words like "Madam" and "Sir," since the former is a word that very few women care to be addressed as and the latter will come across as sexist if your addressee turns out to be a woman. The best way to get around this potential problem is to address your addressee by that person's job title (e.g., Dear Personnel Manager).

Heading. This is your address. Put your street address on one line, and on the line below that put your city, state and zip code. Skip a line and then type the date of the letter. You may also include a telephone number or email address below your mailing address if you wish, or you can include that contact information within the body of your letter.

Inside Address. This is the name and address of the person you are writing to. The first line should be the person's name, followed on the next line by that person's department (if applicable), then the company name on the following line, then the street address on the next line, and then the city, state and zip code on the last line.

Body Paragraphs. These are the main part of your letter.

Opening paragraph. In a brief opening paragraph, state your purpose for writing the letter. If you are applying for a particular position, be sure to mention it. If not, state your interest in working for the company and include some idea of the kind of work you might be interested in, e.g.: accounts department, communication, sales.

Middle paragraph(s). In your middle paragraph(s), you generally want to put essential information first and make your points clearly and directly. Let the employer know about the skills and talents you have by describing your background and any experience you may have that relate specifically to the job you are interested in. This will immediately let your prospective employer know of your qualifications. If you are a recent graduate, you should mention your area of study and any relevant coursework you have done.

Final paragraph. In your final paragraph, mention when you would be available for an interview, information on how to contact you. You may also thank your addressee for his/her time and consideration.


Closing. For your closing, "Sincerely," "Sincerely yours," "Very truly yours," and "Respectfully yours" are generally appropriate.

Signature. To allow enough space for your signature, put your typed name four lines down from your closing.

Identification. This line contains your typed title (Mr., Ms. Dr. etc.) and your name.

Enclosure(s). Since you will be enclosing your resume, type *Encl:* and list “resume” and any other items that you may be including with the cover letter.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

HEADING	5161 Richmond St. Los Angeles, CA 90210 June 26, 2001
INSIDE ADDRESS	Franklin B. Hart Consolidated Companies, Inc. 4470 Sepulveda Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90245
SALUTATION	Dear Mr. Hart:
BODY: OPENING	Violet Newstead, one of my classmates at UCLA, referred me to you and told me that your company is seeking executive administrative assistants. I am interested in applying to be one.
MIDDLE	Because the job involves organizational and communication skills, I feel especially qualified for the position. During my time at UCLA, I majored in business communication and worked in the Financial Aid office. Before I came to UCLA, I worked for two years as the bookkeeper of a small flower shop in Beverly Hills, which gave me practical experience in finance, record-keeping, and sales.
FINAL	I am available for an interview any time from 9 to 5 through the week with a day’s notice. My telephone number is 555-8162.
CLOSING	Sincerely,
SIGNATURE	
IDENTIFICATION	Doralee Rhodes
ENCLOSURE(S)	Encl: Resume