



Figure 1 The Writing Center and Academic Resource Center logo

COVER LETTER

A *cover letter* is a short, formally written letter that compliments a resume in order to introduce and demonstrate personal qualifications for an advertised position.

A cover letter could make the difference between your resume being read or ignored, so it is very important to not only include one, but also write your best one. It is a way to attract the employer to the most significant and beneficial features of your resume, while adding your personal touch.

You are introducing yourself formally to your desired employer through your best assets of professional experience. When finished, you will send this letter as a typed hard copy or a digital copy by email. Whichever way you choose to send it, remember to customize each cover letter to fit each position you apply for.

Types: **There are three basic forms.**

The Application Letter. This letter responds to a known posting, where the employer is seeking you.

The Prospecting Letter. This letter inquiries about possible positions, so you are seeking a position from the employer.

The Networking Letter. This letter requests information and assistance in your job search, so you are seeking information from the employer.

Whichever you choose to write, remember never to 'blanket' email, or send the same email to every prospective employer. It is better to customize your letters, increasing your chances of getting noticed.

Effective cover letters explain your reasons for interest in that specific organization and relate your skills or experiences. They also reflect your knowledge about the position and interest in it as well. This will most likely require research into the company or position before you start writing.



Format:

There is one basic way to write all cover letters.

Step One:

You have found your dream job! Now you are ready to customize your experience to fit this job. But first, research into the company and position you desire. □

Step Two:

Once you know more specifically about what position you want, you need to know to whom you are writing. Check the company's website and search for a name, email and or phone number. *While it is best to find a person, if you cannot find one, then you can use the term, 'Dear Hiring Manager'. □

Step Three:

Pick which cover letter you want to write. This will depend on whether the employer is looking for this position, or you are looking. □

Step Four:

Follow the cover letter format. [See Attached handout.] This is a generic form that you can change depending on which of the three cover letters you write. □

Step Five:

Proofread your letter and check for errors. The following checklist will help you. □

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555 Third Street
De Pere, Wisconsin 54115
(818) 555-5555
anitajob@snc.edu

Date

Employer's Name
Title
Company
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____

Address to a specific person if possible. Call for a name if not listed. Use Mr. or Ms.. If name is unavailable, use a title. Ex: Dear Human Resources

First Paragraph:

- State the reason you are writing the letter (you are applying for or inquiring about a position)
- Grab the attention of your audience
- Provide the source of referral, if any
- Include your interest in the position
- Flatter your audience by including information about the job or company found through research

Second Paragraph:

- Demonstrate why you are qualified for the job
- Emphasize what you can contribute to the organization
- Give concrete examples of your skills and experience – prove it!
- Highlight information found on the resume, but do not simply repeat your entire resume

Final Paragraph:

- Reiterate your interest in the position
- State your appreciation of the employer's consideration
- Include your intentions for follow-up
- Phone number/e-mail and best way to contact you

Sincerely,

Your Name (First and last name typed)

(Submitted electronically)

Include this statement if you submit your cover letter via e-mail or another electronic method.

Enclosure (Indicates something more than the letter is included in the envelope. Do not include this if you are e-mailing your resume/cover letter.)

Anita Job
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July 19, 2010

Dr. Christopher Jenkins
Director of Personnel
Appleton Local School District
123 Ridge Road
Appleton, NC 27613

Dear Dr. Jenkins:

It is with great interest that I submit my resume for the seventh grade mathematics position. I was notified of this opening by Ms. Mary Smith at Lakewood Elementary school, with whom I did my methods field experience work. The growth of your district and numerous awards for academic achievement are remarkable. I feel that my unique background makes me an ideal candidate for the seventh grade position.

I have had very successful teaching experiences in secondary mathematics and have had the opportunity to work with multiple teaching strategies. Students in my class have consistently improved their math scores significantly. Enthusiasm in the classroom and dedication to education make me a viable candidate for the position. I have also been a curriculum chair for and involved in faculty professional development activities. I believe that I would be a valuable asset to your school district.

I am very interested in hearing from you and would appreciate an opportunity to speak with you in more detail through an interview. I can be reached at (724)

987-6543 or at anitajob@yahoo.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Anita Job

Don't be a Cover Letter Victim!

Errors like these can confuse and irritate your prospective employer.

Grammar or spelling mistakes. Since spell-check is included in most word-document softwares, there is no reason not to use it. Also, do not depend on them wholly; make sure to read your work aloud or have a friend check it.

Sending a Generic Letter. Remember to customize each letter to that employer. Make sure to mention the specific job title within the first sentence. Consider the ideal characteristics as listed in the job posting, and clearly explain how your skills make you the best candidate.

Getting the facts wrong. Many people write to the wrong person or wrong company. This happens when you are writing many letters at one time. Make sure to check your salutation and date before you send it out.

Using an outdated greeting. 'Dear Sir or Madam' is a bit old-fashioned. If you do not have a name, use neutral terms like 'Dear Human Resources Manager' instead.

Cover letter is too short. This shows little interest in the position. You also miss a chance to convince them of your candidacy.

Cover letter is too long. On the other end, do not make your letter too lengthy, making it tiresome on the reader or boring them. Do not include information they do not need to know. Aim for 3-5 paragraphs no longer than 6 lines each.

Not providing concrete examples. Back up your statements with roles where you used that strength. For example, in place of saying, "I possess strong analytic skills" try saying "enabling my strong analytic skills I was able to process accounts and save the company \$100,000 per year."

This handout is based on the following online text:

Doyle, Allison. *Cover letters; how to write a Cover Letter*. About.com Guide. Web. 10 January 2013.