

Cover Letter Checklist

Use this list as a tool when creating and revising your cover letter, before sending it to an employer.

Opening Paragraph (Introduction; only 2-3 sentences are needed)

First Sentence

- Explain why you are writing, e.g., as a response to a job posting, or as a speculative letter to see if a position may become available

Next 1-2 Sentences

- Specify how you learned about the position, e.g., “through your job posting online”
- Give a brief basic explanation of who you are: education, major, work experience
 - And/or briefly mention what attracts you to that role and/or that organization

Middle Section (Qualifications and Suitability)

Show that you have done background research on the company and the position

- Include key words from that company’s website self-description/mission statement

Demonstrate your suitability for the role/company

- Elaborate on your resume; the letter should complement your resume, not repeat it
- Use this formula: **S.E.B.** = **Skill (or Quality)** + specific **Example** from past experience (optional: + **Benefit** for employer)
- E.g.: “I am confident in my ability to communicate effectively and to make presentations in Spanish; because of this, in my current sales role, I have been able to secure new Spanish-speaking clients.”
- Describe your relevant abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, and qualifications
- Describe your personal qualities: are you motivated, dependable, and enthusiastic?
- Do you match the company’s image, values, and goals? Will you get along well with clients and co-workers?

Closing Paragraph

- Thank the reader for their time and consideration
- Include a phrase such as: “I would be happy to discuss further questions,” “Please don’t hesitate to contact me for more information,” or “I look forward to hearing from you”
- Include information about how they can contact you

Overall

- Re-read the letter for the overall feel and tone; is the letter interesting to read?
 - Does it show some personality and how you would stand out from other applicants?
- Is the letter short and to the point? (It should not be longer than one page)
- Is it tailored to this particular job/organization? (It should not just repeat your resume)
- Did you answer both: Why is the job suited to you? **AND** Why are you suited to the job?
- Remember to take the time to proofread for typos and errors

When you send it

- If you’re attaching it to an email, save and send it as a PDF, not a Word document
- Don’t forget to include/attach your Resume (also as a PDF, not a Word document)
- Keep a copy for your records

See reverse side for a Formatting Checklist and Cover Letter Template



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Formatting Checklist

- Use formal “Business Letter Format”
 - On the top left, include your address, phone #, and a professional email address
 - Then include the date (on the top left, under your contact information)
 - Below that, include the recipient’s correct title (Ms. or Dr., etc.) with their first name/initial and last name, their job title, and their correct address
- Begin the letter with a personalized greeting, e.g., Dear Mr. Rivera,
 - Avoid “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom it May Concern” if possible
 - If you don’t know the recipient’s name, use a phrase like “Dear Hiring Manager,” or “Dear Human Resources Team,”
- At the end of the letter, use a formal sign off, e.g., “Sincerely,” then leave a space for a signature, then type your name below that space
- To indicate a resume is attached, optionally write “Enclosure: Resume” at the bottom
- Use a basic font (san-serif fonts are recommended), such as Arial or Calibri, size 12
- Don’t use any long paragraphs; the letter should only be one page long

Cover Letter Template

Your address
Your phone number
Your email
Date
Name of person you are contacting about position
Person’s title
Company name
Company address
Company phone number
Dear _____,
Text (body of letter)
Sincerely,
Type Your Full Name
Your Current Position (optional)
Enclosure: Resume