Cover Letter Tips & Template

Your cover letter allows you to emphasize both why you are a good fit for the position, and why the position appeals to you. Employers want to know what drew you to their organization.

Content:

Your expertise & qualifications:

- Seriously consider this question: Why are you a good fit for this position?
- This is an opportunity to elaborate on skills or experience listed on your resume. Pick a few key qualifications or examples of experience and expand on how these make you well suited for the position.

Knowledge of the organization & position:

- Tailor your cover letter to each position you apply for; don't rely on a generic letter.
- Incorporate key words from the job description (Do this on your resume too!)
- Demonstrate that you have knowledge of the organization and position (doing a little extra research on their website is a great idea) and remember to explain what attracts you to that organization.
- Highlight how your values or interests align with the organization's mission statement.

Format:

- Keep it to one page.
- Use a business letter format
    - Put your address, phone number, and email in the top left of the page, or in a header. Use a professional email address.
    - You might want to use the same header that you used on your resume.
- Address your letter to a specific person whenever possible. Otherwise, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Recruiting Representative"
    - Don't use: "Dear Sir/Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern"

Keep in mind: It is important to write a different letter for each job you apply to. No employer wants to read a generic cover letter.

Flip over to see 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 _____,

This paragraph should be short, 2-3 sentences. You can begin by introducing your professional self (your current job or current academic program) and the position you are interested in **OR** begin with a phrase such as *"I was excited to learn about the position of __ at __."* If you have a contact who works at the organization, you can use the phrase *"X encouraged me to apply."* Close this paragraph with a sentence that highlights 2-3 main reasons you are a good fit for the position, as a preview of the rest of your cover letter.

In the middle 1-3 paragraphs elaborate on the 2-3 reasons you mentioned. Rather than giving a comprehensive overview of your work history, which is already on your resume, elaborate on a few personal qualities or a specific past accomplishment in detail. When describing past experience you can use language such as *"As a __, I had the opportunity to _"* or *"Throughout my __ years of __, I __."* You should also connect your past experiences to the position you are applying for (how your past experience is transferable to this role).

In the last paragraph you should thank the person for their time and consideration, and mention that you look forward to hearing from them. This last paragraph is pretty formulaic, and it's totally acceptable to use generic phrases such as *"thank you for your time and consideration,"* *"I look forward to hearing from you,"* or *"I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about this position."*

Sincerely,
(Leave room here to sign)

Type Your Full Name

Enclosure: Resume (optional, if it fits)