

# COVER LETTERS

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**A typed cover letter or email typically accompanies your resume. A cover letter is never a form letter.**

- your letter should be neat, easy to read, organized according to the job description, and interesting
- address the letter to an individual or “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear (Company) Representative,” not “To whom it may concern.” Know the correct salutation (Dear Mr. /Ms. / Dr. - not Mrs. or Miss as those are generally outdated salutations.)
- the letter must be concise and grab the attention of the reader; the reader may lose interest if they have to read through irrelevant information
- the letter outlines purpose, shows how you are qualified for the job, and directs the reader to your resume; it does not include everything from the resume
- your letter is prepared in business format, error free, elegantly designed, and is consistent with your resume style (fonts, header, etc.)
- each letter should be tailored to the specific organization and job description; discuss how your skills match organizational needs; include relevant keywords
- your cover letter is an example of your writing, organizational, and attention to detail skills

## **Edit and Proofread Your Letter!**

Have someone else read it! Check for misspellings, omissions or improper grammar. Reread for content, clarity and relevance to the job description. Connect your experiences and/or skills to the particular position. If organizational skills come first in the job description or ad, demonstrate your organizational capabilities first; if technology skills come next, address your proficiencies. If something is required or preferred, and you lack those skills, be aware that those skills are in high priority (and apply anyway). Reread again - is it an interesting letter? Would you want to read your letter?

**There are many different types and styles of letters. Remember, this is YOUR letter! Here is one sample:**

Your mailing address  
Your phone number

Correct date

Correctly spelled name and title  
Organization  
Complete address

Dear Person's Name: (Mr./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_)

**Opening paragraph:** The opening paragraph should spark the interest of the employer. State why you are writing and why you are interested in this organization (and refer to any research you have done on the organization to elaborate your interest). State the source of your information (drop a name, mention a personal connection to the organization, location of advertisement, etc.). This paragraph hooks the reader by highlighting specific skills or experiences.

**Body paragraph(s):** Present skills and achievements that meet the organization’s needs. Briefly state your accomplishments, highlighting what you can do for the organization. Discuss skills, personal attributes and unique qualifications. Personalize and target your descriptions to the company, organization, or school district. Two to three skill areas should be sufficient.

**Closing paragraph:** Refer the reader to your resume for a more detailed description of your experience and background. Note other items that may be included (completed application, writing sample, etc.). This paragraph should also communicate, “Thank you, how you can be reached, and here’s what you plan to do next.” Briefly reiterate why you are a good match. State that you look forward to discussing your qualifications with them. Also let them know that you will be happy to supply any additional items they may need.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Chris Q. Public (Your name typed)