



CONSTRUCTING THE COVER LETTER

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RESUME & COVER LETTER RESOURCE

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is an introductory letter usually included with your application package (i.e., resume, portfolio), that is customized for each role you apply to. While a cover letter may not always be requested, it is recommended you submit one as part of your job application. The cover letter conveys your interest and relevant experiences for a role to a potential employer. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate your written communication skills and expand on the experiences you shared on your resume.

Drafting your cover letter will take time and reflection, it is recommended that you begin early.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SECTIONS OF A COVER LETTER?

Contact & Format Information

- Use the same header used in your resume to ensure consistency across your application.
- For electronic submissions, the organization's address line is not required.
- Address the hiring manager by using their full name – do not assume pronouns unless these have been shared. If their name is not available on the job description, but their title is listed, you can use LinkedIn or the organization's public directory to locate their name. If you can't find the hiring manager's name, broader alternatives such as 'Dear Hiring Manager' or 'To the Hiring Committee' can be used instead.
- Name your cover letter file with your full name or initials, job title, and job reference ID if one is provided.

Introduction Paragraph

- The purpose of the letter (including job title, job reference ID and organization) should be mentioned in the first sentence. If you have been referred to the role, you can typically name this here as well.
- Introduce yourself – share what encouraged you to apply to the position. Consider: What relevant experiences and skills would you want the hiring manager to know about you? What experiences on your resume would you like to expand upon? How do your values, skills, and interests align with the job and organization?
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization – identify key information relating to their organizational or departmental values or initiatives that you are personally interested in, and share how this aligns it with your qualifications and experiences.



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Body Paragraph

Body paragraphs within the cover letter expand upon the experiences you highlighted in the resume and are generally 2 – 3 paragraphs that follow the introductory paragraph. You can use two types of body paragraphs in a cover letter to highlight and expand on the experiences you shared in the resume. The first is a skills-based paragraph highlighting a particular skill (e.g., project management, data analytics) you have developed over time because of your various experiences. The second is an experience-based paragraph that highlights a specific experience you had that demonstrates a range of relevant skills for the position.

Selecting which paragraph style to use will depend on your preference and experiences. Reflect on your experiences and determine what would best demonstrate your relevant skills for the job, ensuring that you are specific in how and where you acquired or applied that skill.

A few suggestions to keep in mind as you are writing your cover letter include:

- Start with a key learning outcome or skill that you developed through an experience relevant to the job. For example, "Through my role as a Senior Peer Mentor I have led and supported programs and initiatives that support students' well-being and build a sense of community within the college."
- Provide specific details about what you accomplished in each relevant experience, particularly those that demonstrate the requested skills. For example, "In my role as a Senior Peer Mentor, I directly managed a team of six mentors and 20 mentees. I made sure to cultivate a supportive environment through my actions, including revitalizing the onboarding processes for mentors."
- Intentionally research the organization to learn information that can help highlight the relevancy and transferability of your skills and experiences. For example, "Given X's launch of a new mentorship program for historically underrepresented students, I am well-positioned to support given my skills in X and Y, and/or my experience in Z."
- You can use bullet points instead of paragraphs to bring attention to key skills. However, do not reuse the same statements in your resume.

[Writing Effective Cover Letter Body Paragraphs](#) has more activities on creating your body paragraph.

Closing Paragraph

- Reiterate your interest in the position and emphasize key skills and experiences.
- Communicate that you are available to discuss your candidacy further.
- Thank the hiring manager for their time and consideration.