



COVER LETTER INFORMATION

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LINKS & RESOURCES FOR JOB SEARCH

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a professional letter sent to an employee of an organization - usually, the person overseeing the hiring process - used to express interest in a job opportunity at that organization. While a cover letter is not mandatory (unless otherwise stated), it is highly recommended that candidates submit one as part of their job application. It's important to note that a cover letter is not a replica of the resume; it details key content from the resume to craft a story explaining your interest in and suitability for the job.

HOW DO I WRITE ONE?

Contact Information

- Use the same header as is used in your resume to ensure consistency across your application
- List the name and position of your addressee, as well as their organization and address
- If you can't find the name, 'Hiring Manager' can be used instead
- Include a subject line that summarizes what the letter is written in regard to e.g. 'Re: X Position'

Introduction Paragraph

- The purpose of the letter (incl. job title and organization) should be mentioned in the first sentence
- Introduce yourself - you may be a student primarily, but what is the first thing you want the reader to know about you beyond that? Do you have related experience? How about specific skills?
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization - identify key information relating to their company values or initiatives that you are personally interested in and align it with how you are the right fit.



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Body Paragraph(s) - outline the following in 2-3 paragraphs

- Start with a key learning outcome or skill developed through an experience relevant to the job
- Provide specific details about what you accomplished in each relevant experience, particularly those that demonstrate requested skills e.g. 'In my role as a Senior Peer Mentor, I directly managed a team of six mentors and 20 mentees while cultivating an engaging environment that encouraged productivity.'
- Present any industry knowledge relevant to the organization by specifying how and where you acquired or applied that knowledge
- Focus on how you can benefit the company instead of focusing on how the company can benefit you
- You can use bullet points instead of paragraphs to make key skills stand out

Closing Paragraph

- Reiterate your interest in the position, and establish your confidence as the suitable candidate
- Thank the reader and company for their time and consideration, inviting them to interview you
- Provide follow-up information, and communicate an intention to follow-up if you like

WHAT IS IT USEFUL FOR?

When most people think of a cover letter, they assume that it is used in response to an advertised job position. While this is true in most cases (see: solicited cover letter), candidates also have the option to write to a recruiter to inquire about an unadvertised job position (see: unsolicited cover letter). Though not required, both types are recommended to help a candidate stand out amongst other applicants.

Solicited Cover Letter

A solicited cover letter is specifically tailored to the job that is announced by the organization. As such, the job is explicitly mentioned within the first paragraph to introduce your candidacy for the position. The following body paragraphs should demonstrate your ability to perform skills highlighted in the job posting.

For example, a requirement of 1-2 years in administration with organizational skills should prompt you to write a paragraph that showcases this qualification. This type of cover letter works well when you are applying for similar jobs across multiple organizations, as the required skills should recur in each posting.



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Unsolicited Cover Letter

An unsolicited cover letter is written to inquire about available positions within an organization and communicate interest in an employment opportunity. Though the goal is similar to a solicited cover letter - to incite the reader's interest in your resume - this type of cover letter is not tailored, as you want to appear as multifaceted as possible. In response, the reader may respond with an offer to interview for a position that they believe best suits your qualifications. The skills that you highlight in this cover letter should match the values that are celebrated within the organization. Your body paragraphs should be centered around key accomplishments - especially if they're relevant to the industry the organization belongs to.

GENERAL ADVICE

- It can be a lot of work to write a cover letter. For part-time jobs, feel free to write one using generic language and keywords. For internships and full-time opportunities, it's more effective to tailor the cover letter as much as possible.
- Conduct meaningful research. If a company is "industry-leading", they likely don't need additional validation from every candidate. Prove that you're genuinely aware of the company by mentioning recent initiatives that you can find through their press releases, or a blog post written by the addressee.
- Match the tone of your writing to the company. You should always be professional but take note of the language used in the job posting and align yourself with that brand.
- Use the same formatting (font, size, colours) as is used in your resume to ensure consistency.
- Feel free to communicate your intention to follow up and provide a timeline e.g. 2 weeks.