

Cover Letter

Guide

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The Basics of a Cover Letter

Cover letters are a way for you to introduce yourself and your achievements as related to a specific position and employer. They act as a complement to your résumé, where you can specify and expand on your skills and accomplishments as they relate to a specific role and organization. In your cover letter you can share what value you bring to the company.

The most important quality of your cover letter is that it is targeted to both the specific employer and role, by doing some research and referencing the job description.

What Your Cover Letter Should Demonstrate

- Your reason for writing to this specific organization, and why you are applying to this position based on your skill set.
- Your knowledge about the company and/or the industry, and this particular position.
- Why you are a good candidate through the use of concrete examples.

Listed below are guiding questions meant to help you flesh out each paragraph and its contents.

First Paragraph [The Introduction]

- Introduce yourself
- What do you know about the company that has motivated you to apply?

Second & Third Paragraph [The Body]

- Why are you interested in this specific job posting?
- What specific experiences, skills, and/or achievements do you have that relate to the position?

Final Paragraph [Conclusion]

- Thank the employer for their time.
- Make reference to wanting to continue the conversation during an interview.

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Things to Keep in Mind

- Make each cover letter unique by researching the employer and creating a personal connection.
- You are more likely to write a cover letter in the body of an email.
- Always look to answer the question, “Why should I hire you?”
- Proofread your cover letter carefully for any spelling or grammatical errors.

Cover Letter Worksheet

Cover letters should be built around a job description, but if you don't have one, base the letter on the skills that are required for the role. Following is an exercise that will help you define your skills as related to the job.

Based on your knowledge of the field, focus on soft skills and use the P-A-R-formula to define your skills.

First Paragraph	
Where did you find this position advertised?	
Why are you interested in this specific job posting?	
What do you know about the company?	
Second / Third Paragraph	
What specific experience, skills, and/or achievements do you have that relate to the position you're applying to?	
Final Paragraph	
What are your final thoughts? How can employers contact you? (This paragraph should only be 1-2 sentences.)	

Sample Cover Letter– Entry Level Role

Subject:_____ (Include the position you are applying for in the subject line)

Dear_____: (If you cannot find a name, use “Dear Hiring Manager”)

First Paragraph:

Introduce yourself including when you graduated, what you studied and potentially where you are working now. Provide a couple of the organization’s defining traits that made them stand out to you as the reason for applying.

Second Paragraph:

Highlight a specific example from your previous positions. Elaborate on your experience, abilities, or skills that may apply to this job. Detail your accomplishments and the contributions you made. Then connect it back to what the company needs based on the job description and how you can fill that need. You may go more in depth about something on your résumé, or describe your approach as it relates to their workplace culture. Avoid laundry lists of skills while being brief and to the point.

Final Paragraph:

Thank the reader for their time and express how you want to hear back from them regarding an interview.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Sample Cover Letter– Seeking First Internship

Subject:_____ (Include the position you are applying for in the subject line)

Dear [Hiring Professional],

I am writing to apply for the [Internship Title] position at_____ [company]. I am currently a student at [Pratt], studying [Major]. I am interested in interning at [Organization Name] because of [Discuss Personal Connection With the Employer's Brand Based on Research].

I am now seeking to expand my skills through hands-on experience out in the field. My main goal is to gain a better understanding of the industry, because I plan to pursue [Future Career Goals]. I hope to learn more about [Desired Skill Area] while at this internship. A large aspect of my studies are dedicated to [Skill #1], [Skill #2] and [Skill #3]. I've developed these skills through my time as [Provide Specific Examples and Context. Reference the Job Description and Focus on the Qualifications Requested].

I have attached my résumé and portfolio, [Portfolio Link]. I look forward to meeting you in person for an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Name]

Sample Cover Letter– Recent Graduate

Subject: _____ (Include the position you are applying for in the subject line)

{Name, Phone #, Email, Website}

Dear [Hiring Professional],

I am writing to apply for [Name of Position] posted by [Company Name]. I am a recent graduate of [School Name], where I studied [Major]. I am interested in working at [Employer] because of [Share Personal Connection While Demonstrating Why You Fit at Company].

While interning at [Previous Internship Company Name], I learned [Skill #1], [Skill #2] and [Skill #3]. That experience taught me [Provide Specific Examples and Context]. As a [Major] student at [School Name], a large component of my studies was dedicated to [Skill #1], [Skill #2] and [Skill #3].

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I have attached my résumé and here is a link to my portfolio: [Portfolio Link]. I look forward to meeting in person for an interview.

Sincerely,
[Name]

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