

Who Needs a Cover Letter?

Every resume you send out needs to be accompanied by a cover letter, even if the cover letter was not specifically requested. For most jobs, writing a good cover letter triples your chances of being selected to interview. Its purpose is to introduce your resume, express your personality and enthusiasm for the position, and provide support for your candidacy that is not otherwise covered in your resume. Your letter should be directed to a specific person within the employing organization, preferably the individual who is making the hiring decision for the position you are seeking.

What makes a Good Cover Letter?

- Use the same font and high quality paper as your resume.
- Use 1 inch margins all the way around.
- Proofread your letter for grammar and spelling errors! It is a reflection of you! Have someone else proof it too!
- Be brief and concise; the cover letter should be approximately one page in length.
- Expand on your resume, rather than repeat the resume's content.
- Individualize and target each cover letter to the position you seek; recruiters can spot a mass produced or generic letter and will consider it unprofessional.
- Be sure to market yourself. Explain what you can offer the company; not what the company can do for you.
- Make sure to include a cover letter with your resume, whether it is mailed, emailed, or faxed!
- Remember to sign the cover letter.
- Three standard ways to close your cover letter:
 1. *Active Approach* - Indicate to the employer that you will be calling within a certain period of time (usually 7 days) to arrange a convenient time for an interview. Use tact; otherwise this approach may appear presumptuous.
 2. *Reserved Approach* - Express your desire for the employer to contact you. Feel free to contact the employer after a week to express your continued interest in the organization, and to see where they are in the review process.
 3. *Out-of-Town Approach* - Mention that you will be in the area during a certain time period and will call to arrange an interview before/after you arrive. You may request a specific time and date for an interview or indicate your availability at any time during a given period.
- When emailing your cover letter and resume to an employer, your email text is your cover letter. There is no need to type your address or the employer's address on that cover letter. Just begin the email with Dear "Name of Employer":

Attach your word processed resume to this email. Some employers may not open attached documents. To ensure your resume gets looked at, you can also create a left justified version of your resume (with no columns or fancy formatting) and paste the text of this resume below where you type your name in the emailed cover letter.

Components of a Cover Letter

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

Date

Contact Person's Name
Contact Person's Position
Company Name
Company Address (Don't forget this.)
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. or Ms. Jones, (Avoid Dear Sir/Madam)

First paragraph

Tell why you are writing; name the position, field, or general career area about which you are asking. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization. Generally, cover letters fall into two categories:

Letter of Application (applying for a specific advertised job opening) Example: When I read your ad in the Daily News for a civil engineer, I almost believed you had written it for me. I have three year's experience, etc.

Letter of Inquiry (expressing interest in an organization, but you are not certain if there are current job openings) Example: I am a computer science graduate with extensive training in networks and graphics. I believe my experience and dedication to hard work and problem-solving will provide an immediate benefit to your company.

Second paragraph

Outline the skills (technical and social), experience, training and achievements that are relevant to the selection criteria or the job description. These skills may have been gained through your education/course, your work experience and your extra curricula activities.

Third paragraph

Tell them why you are the best fit for the company and how your skills will meet their needs. (Tip: you could summarize the 3 best things about you that make you most competitive for the job and how these things will allow you to make an impact/get results in the role.)

Closing (Fourth paragraph)

Thank them for considering your application, tell them that you have attached a copy of your resume, and when you would be available for an interview. Provide your contact details (Phone / Fax / Email)

Sincerely,

Your signature
Print name

Sources:

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/careertools>

<http://www.soyouwanna.com/site/syws/coverletter/coverletter.html>

<http://resume.monster.com/archives/coverletter/>

<http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/cletters.php>

<http://www.bestcoverletters.com/>