

PURPOSE OF THE COVER LETTER

1. Used when applying for specific known vacancies or to inquire about possible openings.
2. A business letter that introduces your resume.
3. Explains the reason for sending your resume, and contains additional information not found in the resume.
4. Adds a professional touch to your entire job search.

PREPARING THE COVER LETTER

1. Print out neatly on lightly colored 8 ½ x 11 bond resume paper. For the most professional look, use the same paper for your resume. Keep it clean and error free. Review it for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
2. Prepare each cover letter individually. Generic cover letters (i.e. "your company") are easily detected and less effective.
3. Address the letter to a specific person in the organization by name if at all possible, even if you have to make a brief long distance call to determine the individual's name and the correct spelling.
4. Use action words (as in the resume) to describe your skills, qualifications, and relevant experience to the job description.
5. Refer to relevant information on your resume, but do not simply repeat the data word for word.
6. Indicate your basic knowledge of the organization, its needs (the requirements of the position you would like to fill), and how your qualifications can meet those needs.
7. Read it aloud before you send it. Get the opinion of friends, a faculty member, or a professional in the field. Does it arouse interest, or is it boring?

GUIDELINES FOR THE COVER LETTER

Your Present Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number

Date of Letter

Contact's Name
Contact's Title
Contact's Employer
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr., Ms., Dr.: (Avoid using "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam" or first names)

First Paragraph: Capture the attention of the reader and provide him or her with a compelling reason to read on. Indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening (career center, JobLink, news media, friend, instructor, employment service, etc.). Express your knowledge about and enthusiasm for this particular organization, its products, or its services. Make it interesting and original. "I am writing to apply for. . ." is not very interesting.

Middle Paragraph(s): Indicate what you can do for the employer. This is your opportunity to convince the employer that you can make a unique contribution to the organization. Highlight your skills, experience, knowledge, personal qualities, academic background, and accomplishments most relevant to the job description. Link these positive features to ways you can benefit the employer. Always use specific examples to support claims you make about yourself. Link your strengths and examples to the employer's needs and to the stated job requirements. Try not to repeat the same information found in your resume. If necessary, this can be two paragraphs.

Final Paragraph: Conclude by restating your candidacy for the position, or express your interest in working for the organization (if you did not do so in the first paragraph). Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application form that summarizes your qualifications, training, and experience. In closing, indicate your desire for a personal interview and repeat your contact information (i.e. phone number and email address). Finally, close your letter with a statement or question that will encourage a response or state you will call on a certain date to ensure the application materials were received.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Type Your Name

Enclosure(s) (This refers to the resume, application, and/or additional materials, which are enclosed)