

Cover Letters for Beginners

A cover letter introduces you to employers and tells why you are interested in the position. This is an opportunity to highlight accomplishments, convey interest and give the employer a sample of your writing ability.

The cover letter in its simplest form can be broken into 3 sections.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

- Generally block format
- Opening paragraph
- 2-3 paragraphs focusing on skills or positions
- Closing paragraph

Paragraph #1 – The Introduction

- Specify by title the position you are applying for and where you learned about it
 - “I am applying for ----position that appeared in-----on ----date.”
- Demonstrate some knowledge about the company
- Use the language of the ad to craft your sentences
- Highlight your credentials not your degree

Get the reader’s attention and interest

Paragraphs # 2 and 3 – Work Experience

- Focus each paragraph on one job or a specific skills set
- Connect your experiences to the job requirements in the advertisement
- Highlight promotions, achievements and results, use quantitative information when possible

Paragraph #4 – Conclusion

- Reiterate your good points
- If you ask for an interview, make clear that you will follow up within a specific time
- Provide specific contact information
- Conclude respectfully

COVER LETTER CHECK LIST

- Use a quality resume paper for cover letter, resume and references
- Correct contact information
- Correct Date
- Correct contact person’s information, Mr. /Ms. Recruiter, Title, Department, Company name, Street Address, City, State, ZIP
- Cover letter does not exceed one page
- Grammar and Spelling are correct
- I have used “I” sparingly
- I have not exaggerated my experiences
- My cover letter is 3-4 paragraphs
- If requested, I have include a salary history or requirements
- I have shown the employer that I have knowledge of the company
- I have not included irrelevant information such as marital status, hobbies

Your Contact Information

→ Leave a space

Date

→ Leave a space

Recruiter and Company Contact information

→ Leave a space

Dear Mr./Ms. -----

→ Leave a space

Body of Letter

Paragraph #1

- Stated the position I am applying for
- How I found the position
- Why I am interested in the position

Paragraph 2&3 – Body of Cover letter

- My experience or skills are connected to specific duties or skills in the job description
- I talk about strengths/experiences not found in the resume
- I have used specific examples relevant to the position
- I have discussed results when appropriate
- I have highlighted promotions and achievements when appropriate

Closing

- I have included specific contact information
- I have reiterated how I am a good fit for the position
- If I have said that, I am contacting the employer, I have given them a specific time frame
- I have ended the letter on a positive note thanking them for their consideration and time