



Cover Letter Writing Guide

How to Carefully Craft a Cover Letter

What is a cover letter and what does it include?

Another name for a cover letter is an application letter. Typically, it consists of 3-4 paragraphs that serve as a sort of memo to the company or employer. These paragraphs demonstrate why you are interested in the position you are applying for, as well as why you are qualified to perform it. A cover letter is separate from your resume, and it is submitted with your resume. It is classified as a one-page document that is standalone and showcases your relevant experience, accomplishments, and professional highlights.

A cover letter is different from your resume in that you have the room to focus on and give more detail concerning your interests, career, achievements, and qualifications.

A well-composed cover letter has the power to differentiate your application from others and help you get an interview with the company. It is important to not send a generalized cover letter, but rather one that is customized and tailored to the company and role you are applying for. For this, independent research concerning the company and job position will be required.

Proper Formatting of a Cover Letter

To properly format a cover letter, it should be handled as a business letter. The formatting will be similar and will have the sections listed below:

- Header containing the date and contact information
- Salutation or greeting
- Opening paragraph
- Middle paragraph(s)
- Closing paragraph
- Letter ending and signature

Cover letters should be one-page documents. Use a font that is both straightforward and professional. Examples of this include Arial, Helvetica, or Times New Roman, and is typically between 10-12 points in size. Make sure everything is left-aligned and use single-spacing. One-inch margins are preferred.

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The Cover Letter Writing Process

In accordance with a typical business letter header, some portions of personal information, as well as information related to the role you are applying for, should be positioned at the very top of the cover letter. This will include information such as your contact information, the date of your application, as well as the contact information of the person you are sending your cover letter to. Another option is to center your personal information at the top of the page. This will make it similar to how it appears on your resume.

When conducting research, it is important to try and locate the name of the person that will receive and review your documents. Then, you can address them directly utilizing a business greeting that is common, including “Dear” or a simple “Hello.” If their gender pronouns cannot be found, try a greeting that is gender neutral. This can be done by using their name or title.

The opening paragraph of the cover letter should incorporate the job title and position you are applying for, as well as where you encountered the job listing or posting. Make clear what interested you in that role and specific company. This will let the company know that you are applying out of true interest and that you have completed necessary research on the position and company. Be sure to briefly focus on and declare what your relevant experience, skills, and qualifications are. It is this first portion of the cover letter that makes a unique impression on the company. Therefore, making a direct yet brief petition can go a long way.

The second paragraph of the cover letter will provide a succinct overview that takes into account your background and its correlation to the company and position you are applying for. This is the portion of the cover letter that will list and emphasize skills, attributes, achievements, and anything else that makes you a prime candidate. Try to emphasize 1-2 of these so as not to bog down your reader. In addition, this will make those specific things stand out greater.

As previously mentioned, utilize keywords in your cover letter as related to the job listing, posting, or description. These should be positioned in the body of the cover letter itself. Limit the information provided to 1-2 current and relevant professional experiences.

The next paragraph of your cover letter should emphasize an additional yet relevant achievement or skillset. Avoid repeating information given in your resume, and instead work on fleshing out particular instances that demonstrate your capability to fill the role in a seamless manner. Make sure these are relevant to the job listing and description.

In the event that you are wishing to get into a new career field, take this time to explain how your skills and experience are still relatable to the new position.

The final paragraph of the cover letter should provide a brief summary of why you are applying and what makes you the perfect candidate for the position. Let the person or company know you look forward to their response and will be on the lookout for their reply and any next steps that come with it. Simply insert your signature at the bottom of the cover letter.