

## Cover Letters

### Why do we write a cover letter?

- Gains employers attention as it is directed towards a specific person
- Strengths and qualifications for a specific job

### Tips for writing an effective cover letter

1. Target your employers needs.
2. Keep it to one page.
3. Proofread for spelling and grammar.
4. Ensure you have told the employer what job you are applying for.
5. Address the letter to a real person not “to whom it may concern”.
6. Use regular font style and size.
7. Include specific examples as much as possible.
8. Explain what you can offer the company.
9. Avoid faxing or email unless specifically asked to do so.
10. State that your resume is included as well.

# Content

---

## The First Paragraph

- States WHY you are writing
  - Responding to an advertised opening
  - Inquiring about a possible opening
- States WHY you are applying to or are interested in this employer
  - Company's particular training program
  - Company's product or service, as differentiated from other like products or services
  - Demonstrate your company research
  - Geographic location, if emphasized in the position description – but not as the sole reason for applying to this employer
- May reference your enclosed resume
- Make mention of your contact/referral if you have one

## The Second Paragraph

- States WHAT qualifications you bring to the position
- Highlights two or three key experiences and/or academic achievements that directly relate to the qualifications the employer is seeking
- Illustrates brevity -- a valuable attribute! -- wording is direct and to the point, not fluffy
- Proves through experiences and activities that you have some of the key skills for the position – hard-working; career commitment; communication, problem solving, analytical skills
- Is NOT a repetition of the wording on your resume
- May close with a summary sentence of your qualifications and a confident statement that you can make a contribution to the firm/company/organization

## The Third Paragraph

- States WHAT you WANT – an interview and/or an opportunity to further discuss your qualifications and any employment opportunities the employer may have
  - May reference your enclosed resume
  - Indicates flexibility as to time and place
- Exceptions:
- You are abroad – indicate extent of your flexibility – resources you may have available such as teleconferencing, phone interviewing, meeting a local representative of the company, etc.
  - You are going to be in the area during a certain time period and would like to arrange an interview during that time – indicate flexibility to the employer's schedule within that period.
- Thanks the person and indicates that you look forward to talking with or meeting with him/her
  - Can state you will call the contact person on a certain date or during a certain week to discuss scheduling a time to meet or an interview (depends on the approach of your cover letter)

## Follow-Up

- Calling the employer is acceptable, as long as it is gracious and courteous.
- You can always call to check if your application materials were received and if any other materials would assist the employer in arriving at a positive decision regarding your application.

## More Tips

- When sending a resume via email, you may follow the cover letter format to write a message in the email to introduce your attached resume.
- Use the term “Enclosure” or “Enclosures” after your closing if you are sending your documents in hard copy form. This term is not necessary when sending documents via email. (See page 4 for an example.)
- A cover letter is a reflection of your writing skills – take time and care to proofread your document. A cover letter should not be a repetition of the wording on your resume.

## Power Phrases

---

Consider using adaptations of these key phrases in your letters responding to advertisements:

*I am confident that I can make a contribution to your company/organization.*

*ABC's use of advanced digital recording technology is of particular interest to me.*

*Your company's management trainee program is particularly unique in its rotational plan and accompanying classroom instruction.*

*I look forward to talking with you and will call your office during the week of September 7<sup>th</sup> to see if we might arrange a convenient time to meet.*

*With my educational background, bilingual skills, and business intern experience, I am confident I can make a contribution to your international trade department.*

*I would like the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you in an interview scheduled at your convenience.*

*Please accept the enclosed resume in application for an Assistant Editor position with News Time.*

*As a long-time resident of San Diego, I plan to return to the area to develop my career in journalism.*

*I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.*

*As Assistant Manager, I negotiated schedules, benefits, and compensation packages for twenty non-exempt employees.*

**Your Name**  
Home address  
City, Province, Postal code  
Telephone  
e-mail address

Date

Contact name  
Job title  
Company name  
Address

Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Employer:

(Be sure to determine the formal designation (Ms./Mrs./Mr.) of the person you are contacting. If you're not sure, call the organization to confirm.)

### **Paragraph 1 – Introduction**

Use this paragraph to introduce yourself and to get the attention of the employer. Be professional and polite in language and tone. Let them know about your interest in their organization, and explain why you would like to be part of it.

### **Paragraph 2 and 3 – Description**

This is the main body of your letter, which is usually one or two paragraphs long. Explain your qualifications and why you would be a great fit for the organization. Don't just repeat the content of your résumé; give specific examples and explain how your individual skills would contribute to the workplace. This part of the letter is meant to convince the employer that you would be a valuable addition to the team.

### **Paragraph 4 – Closing**

It's important to end your letter in a courteous way. End with an action statement, informing the employer about when you plan to contact him or her to follow up on your application. Provide your personal contact information and an appropriate time to call, in case the employer would like to reach you before you contact him or her. Reinforce your desire to be part of the organization.

Yours truly,

*(sign your name)*

*Your name*

1313 Smalltown Lane  
Yourtown, TN 37701  
October 1, 2011

Peter Jones  
Assistant Manager  
Happy Time Daycare  
774 Mytown Drive  
Yourtown, TN 37701

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the Daycare Assistant position that was advertised in our local newspaper, The Yourtown Journal. I have much experience working with young children and think I would be a good addition to your daycare facility.

I have been a childcare provider for three years, having cared for children ages 4 through 12. My experience includes short-term and long-term positions. By this, I mean that I have babysat for children for one evening or day, and I even cared for a family of four children for three months during the summer.

I hope that you will consider me for this position. You may contact me by phone at (555) 555-5555 or by email at [jane.smith@myemail.com](mailto:jane.smith@myemail.com). I look forward to speaking with you to discuss my experience and how I can be a good addition to Happy Time Daycare.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

1111 Main Street  
Anytown, IA 50701  
October 1, 2011

Susan Johnson  
Director  
Humane Society  
548 First Avenue  
Pleasantville, IA 50701

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I would like to apply for the Pet Assistant position advertised by you. I saw the position listed on the Hotjobs.com website. My experience as an Assistant at A.J.'s Petshop has reinforced my feelings that a career with animals is in my future, and I know I can bring many skills from this experience to the Humane Society.

Having worked at A.J.'s Petshop for over a year, I have learned a lot about the skills needed to care for animals. In my job, I am responsible for bathing and grooming the animals our store serves. Doing this, I have learned how to work with a variety of animals and their different personalities. I also work with our customers by helping them find the products they need in the store. This has taught me good "people skills" too.

I would like to meet with you to discuss my experiences and share with you how much I would enjoy working at the Humane Society. You may contact me at (555) 555-5555 or by email at [jas@funmail.com](mailto:jas@funmail.com).

Yours truly,

John Andrew Smith