

Cover Letter Format Basics:

- A cover letter should never be more than one page long. Focus on three to five main skills or qualities. You will have time to share more information during the job interview.
- Proper grammar and punctuation are critical. This is the first impression on the employer, so display your writing and communication skills. Always use spell check, and ask someone else to proofread. Another set of eyes may catch an error that you may have overlooked because you are so close to the information.
- The page margins, and font style/size should match that of your resume. Always type.
- If you mail your cover letter to an employer, do not staple it to your resume. Just place it on top of the resume as you fold the documents to fit into the envelope. Use the same good quality stock paper as your resume. Acceptable colors are white, pale, or ivory.
- Sign your name just above your typed name.
- If you e-mail your resume and cover letter to an employer, the subject line should include the title of the job you are seeking. The best option is to attach your resume in a Microsoft Word document, unless the job posting gives other instructions. If you decide to type the cover letter into the body of the e-mail, place your contact information at the bottom, instead of at the very top of the letter.

NOTES:

Your address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number

Current Date

Name of Hiring Manager/Recruiter
Job Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Mrs. Last name:

The opening Paragraph should be 1-2 sentences in length. Identify the position you are applying for and how you discovered the opening (e.g. in the newspaper, on the company's website, etc.) You may also mention the name of the organization and express the reason for your interest in that particular organization.

The middle paragraph is the body of the letter and tells the employer why you are qualified for the position. This paragraph will change each time you write a cover letter to match the job you are applying for. Choose 2-3 examples that highlight your skills and experience that relate to the target job. Refer to relevant aspects of the job description when identifying your qualifications. This is the longest paragraph and you may break it into two paragraphs if it looks too lengthy.

I recommend that the first sentence of each middle paragraph is strong, and focuses on specific accomplishments, skills, and qualifications necessary for the job. The body of these paragraphs should provide evidence to back up what you just claimed in the opening sentence. Research the company and express why you are a good fit for the company. Cite specific jobs, projects, and experience associated with your qualifications. Use strong examples.

The final paragraph is the closing paragraph. It refers to the enclosed resume, requests a meeting or interview, and tells the reader what will happen next. Advise what you will do to follow up - and do it! Thank the reader for his or her time and for considering you for the position. Include a phone number at which the employer can reach you.

Sincerely,

Your full name

Enclosure: Resume