

## **Tips for Writing a Great Cover Letter**

- Address your letter to a specific person in the company.
- Spell, punctuate, and paragraph correctly.
- Write in your own words in conversational language.
- Follow rules of layout and format of a standard business letter.  
Type on good quality paper.
- Write the letter toward what you can offer employers, not what you think they should be offering you.
- Describe your skills as they relate to the job.
- Avoid using the word “I” too often.
- Be brief, concise, and to the point.
- Close with a direct request for some sort of action (ie. Interview or appointment).
- Hand sign, rather than type your signature.

## Sample Cover Letter Outline

Your Name  
Your Present Address  
City, Province, Postal Code

Date

Hiring Persons Name  
Title  
Company  
Street Address  
City, Province, Postal Code

Dear Mr./ Ms. (hiring person's full name):

**1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph** State the position you are applying for and how you heard about the opening. Immediately explain why your background makes you the best candidate for the position you are applying for. Keep the first paragraph short and hard hitting.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph** Clearly illustrate what you have to offer and why the employer should be interested in you. Mention one or two of your qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the organization and relate them to the employer's needs. Tell why you are interested in the employer, location or type of work.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph** Mention that you plan to take the initiative in making the next contact with the employer whenever possible.

Sincerely,

(Your hand written signature)  
Type your name

## Checklist For Evaluating Cover Letters

**Directions:** Please answer the questions listed below by checking either “Yes” or “No” as you assess the effectiveness of the content and presentation of your cover letter.

### (1) GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Is the letter a tailored original rather than an attempt to make one generic letter fit every employer?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you use the name of the specific person who will read the letter and respond to it?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does the cover letter state your interest in the particular position or in the company?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does your letter show that you have thought about how you can meet the employer’s needs?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you include your telephone number in the heading so that it is easy for the employer to know how to contact you?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you keep a copy of the cover letter for your Work Search Portfolio?

### (2) OVERALL APPEARANCE AND LAYOUT:

- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Is the cover letter easy to read?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Did you use a quality paper and envelope which match the paper you used for your resume?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does the cover letter appear professional and businesslike?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does your letter project the image that you are trying to create?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Is it free of typographical and grammatical errors?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Have you been brief and to the point? Has extraneous information been eliminated?
- Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ At a glance, do key ideas and words pop out to support the conclusions you want the reader to come to?

**(3) INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:**

- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does the cover letter reveal your knowledge of the field by using appropriate phrasing?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does it cite job titles, job functions or skills, or a combination of these?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does the stated objective address the specific needs of the employer who will read it?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Are your interests stated in a specific and focused way, while at the same time showing that you have a flexible repertoire of skills and abilities?

**(4) SKILLS STATEMENT:**

- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does the cover letter highlight your skills and abilities by matching them to major responsibilities of the job?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does your letter point out specific aspects of your experience which directly relate to the employer's needs?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does the skill summary favorably display your unique qualifications and differentiate you from other candidates?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Are the skills or qualifications presented in terminology appropriate to the targeted employer?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Is there a statement which offers the reader an indication of your personality and approach to performing the job?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Did you list sample responsibilities and duties performed in previous jobs, and were your accomplishments presented with an eye to the interests of employers in the area of your interest?

**(5) CLOSING STATEMENT:**

- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does the closing statement directly connect to your stated objective in the introductory paragraph?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does your summary statement favorably differentiate you from other likely candidates?
- Yes\_\_ No\_\_ Does your closing statement specify how you will follow-up with the employer?

**OTHER COMMENTS:**