Cover Letter Writing Tips

A cover letter is a one-page document accompanying a resume when applying for a job. It's a way to introduce yourself to a potential employer, highlight your qualifications, and explain why you're a good fit for the role. Your cover letter is your opportunity to set yourself apart from other applicants.

<u>**Formatting**</u>

A cover letter is typically a three- to four-paragraph letter to employers explaining your interest in the job, the organization, and your fitness for the role.

- Your contact information
    - Name: Your full name should be the focal point of your cover letter's header, so use a large font size and bold text
    - Phone number
    - Email address: Use a professional email address such as your.name@gmail.com
    - Online profile (optional): Include a link to your personal website or LinkedIn profile
- Date of Letter
- Company's contact information
    - Hiring manager's name (if known)
    - Company name
    - Company address
- Opening salutation
- Write a compelling introduction in the first paragraph
- Elaborate on your accomplishments in the body paragraph
    - Skills, work experience, and accomplishments
- Close with a call to action in the final paragraph
    - Emphasize how you'd contribute to the organization and why you are the best-qualified candidate
    - Thank the hiring manager for their time and consideration
    - Finish with a call to action that prompts the hiring manager to invite you in for an interview
- End with a closing sign-off

*Adapted from Dr. Stephanie White's JCLA Developing Your Resume & Cover Letter Presentation for the Fall 2021 Administrative Hiring Workshop Series.

Content

- This letter should highlight your skills, experience, and achievements concerning the position you seek. Unlike your resume, cover letters allow you to go into more detail about your career and reinforce why you are qualified for the position. The cover letter will enable you to explain why you're a good fit for the role and company.
- A well-written cover letter should set you apart from other applicants.

Pre-Work

- To avoid a generic cover letter, you should conduct in-depth research on the organization, and the role for which you are applying, before writing your cover letter.

Editing

- You should proofread your resume multiple times.
  - Check your tenses -- current job should be present tense; previous jobs are past tense
  - Check your grammar and spelling
  - If you use acronyms, be sure to write them out first and then put the abbreviation in parentheses the first time you use it in your resume
  - Solicit feedback from a critical friend before you submit your resume
  - Read your writing out loud to help identify edits needed
  - Be consistent with your punctuation throughout your resume

> **Pro Tip:**
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> **After you draft your letter, walk away from it for a day and then come back to it. Sometimes a break from writing will give you a fresh perspective when editing.**