

WRITING A COVER LETTER

PURPOSE

A cover letter is your personal introduction that accompanies your professional resume. It provides more information to a potential employer. Each cover letter is unique and tailored to the job for which you are applying. Use this one-page letter to market your strengths and prove that you are a good fit for a position.

HEADER

- Include your name and address, as well as the intended employer's name and address.
- Include the date.
- Address the letter to a specific person. Avoid "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir/Madam". This might require a phone call to HR. If you cannot find a name, begin your letter without a salutation.

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- Introduce yourself and identify the position for which you are applying.
- Mention how you learned about this company and/or position. Include names of referral if applicable.
- Explain why you are interested and reflect your knowledge of the company and position.
- Do your research before writing!

BODY OF LETTER

- The body should be no longer than 1 or 2 paragraphs.
- Identify how your experiences, strengths and skills meet the needs outlined in the position description.
- Back up your statements with specific examples, using precise and active language - help the reader step into your shoes.
- Do not simply repeat your resume. Your cover letter serves to draw out themes from your resume.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Express your enthusiasm regarding an interview for the position.
- Initiate follow-up. Mention that you will call, specifying a time frame (7-10 days). If appropriate, note that you will be visiting the area and offer to schedule an office visit. Share your phone number and email address.
- Thank the reader for his or her time and consideration. Use a proper closing notation two lines below the last paragraph (such as "sincerely" or "gratefully").
- Leave 4 lines between the closing notation and your typed name.
- Sign the letter legibly in blue or black ink if you are mailing a hard copy.
- Note "Enclosure" two lines below the typed name if including additional materials, i.e. a resume.

OVERALL APPEARANCE

- **PROOFREAD!!!** Be sure that your letter is free from any typographical, spelling or grammar errors.
- Your letter should exhibit your written communication skills.
- Check your layout. Is it attractive? Did you use adequate margins and white space? Is it centered top to bottom?
- Review your fonts. Is the style appropriate and easy to read? Does the letter match your resume in fonts and layout style?
- Make sure your cover letter sparks enough interest to prompt the employer to read your resume.