

THE COVER LETTER

The Purpose of a Cover Letter

- ❖ First chance to make a good impression; first document screened
- ❖ Direct attention to those aspects of the resume likely to push the right buttons
- ❖ Well-researched cover letter allows you to demonstrate, in ways impossible via resume, knowledge about the company etc.

What it is...

- ❖ A way to sell yourself- personal advertising tool
- ❖ An opportunity to showcase writing ability
- ❖ Aligned with a particular target job
- ❖ So intriguing that the reader makes room in busy schedule to meet you

What it isn't...

- ❖ Bland / Indifferent
- ❖ Littered with frozen, dry facts
- ❖ Passive in style (i.e., be, has, been, I think)
- ❖ Rambling with no focus
- ❖ Redundant / Repetitious

Writing Tips for Cover Letters

- ❖ Address to specific person
- ❖ (opening paragraph) Grab the reader's attention
- ❖ Keep sentences relatively short- a crisp short sentence followed by 1-2 longer ones varies the pace
- ❖ Avoid copying sample letters. Use them only as tool kits.
- ❖ Not a rehashing of your resume: highlights it and gives it a sense of focus
- ❖ Revision: Ruthlessly eliminate awkwardness, word repetitions, changes of tense
- ❖ Use I statements but avoid repetition of words
- ❖ Get right to the point: state purpose and why you are a qualified candidate.

Provide evidence for your Claims

- ❖ Be specific not vague
- ❖ Provide evidence to back up claims
- ❖ A single paragraph should never discuss more than one major topic

Objective Statements

- ❖ What position are you applying for?
- ❖ What can you contribute?
- ❖ What are your career goals?
- ❖ What are your qualifications?

Powerful Phrases: Opening Lines

- ❖ I am particularly qualified for your position and would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you to explore how I can enhance your organization.
- ❖ I understand from my research that your organization is in search of individuals with (skills) and (qualifications); don't you love finding the perfect match?
- ❖ As we discussed earlier, my extensive professional experience can benefit any employer. However, (organizations name) is of special interest to me because...

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Dear Mr. / Mrs./Dr/Contact's Last Name

Opening:

- ❖ State purpose of letter
- ❖ Capture attention, show how you would fit with their company
- ❖ Mention source of lead (newspaper /friend etc.)
- ❖ Name position you are seeking
- ❖ Introduce yourself to the reader

Body of Letter:

- ❖ Focus on key information to sell yourself as the ideal candidate
- ❖ Present skills and abilities in a way that shows your strengths
- ❖ Back up the skills and abilities you have identified with proof
- ❖ Identify what you can do for the company

Closing:

- ❖ Close strongly, restate how you would match company needs
- ❖ Ask employer to consider your resume
- ❖ Express your appreciation

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosure: Resume