



Cover Letter Formula

Your Current Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date of Writing

Ms. Pat Smith, Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Smith: (use person's first name if you don't know gender, e.g. "Dear Pat Smith:")

1st Paragraph (Who are you and why are you writing?)

- Introduce yourself.
- Identify position or type of work for which you are applying and how you learned of the position.
- Specify why you are interested in working for the organization. (Be specific)
- Refer to any contact you have had with the organization, providing names of people with whom you have spoken.

2nd Paragraph (Why are you qualified? How will you add value?)

- Tell your story and demonstrate your understanding of the position and organization. Make connections between your experiences and the competencies the organization is seeking.
- Specify your functional skills and personal qualities and give concise evidence of both (Concrete examples help demonstrate how your experience has prepared you to fulfill the requirements of the position and illustrate transferable skills.)
- Make sure to communicate how you will add value.

3rd Paragraph (What next?)

- Provide a 1-2 line summary or closing statement.
- Include an "action statement" (e.g., I will follow up in the next week...; I look forward to meeting with you to discuss...)
- If space permits include your telephone number and/or email address. You should also include any special contact instructions if necessary (e.g., I will be out of the country the month of December and can best be reached...)
- End with a polite statement such as "Thank you for your consideration."

Sincerely,

Your handwritten signature

Type Your Name

Enclosure

A cover letter is your letter of introduction and one of your main marketing tools. Employers will want a letter targeted to them so they can learn more about you, as well as your knowledge and interest in the position. In addition to the suggestions presented in the “Cover Letter Formula”, below are some additional tips and hints.

- A cover letter is never more than one page
- The letter should always be in a proper business letter format. See the [Career Guide](#) for samples.
- Think of your cover letter as a movie preview. Its purpose is to introduce yourself and provide highlights of what is to come in the big picture—your resume. Your resume is where you will provide more detail.
- Don’t just write word-for-word what you have on your resume. This is your opportunity to present and highlight information in a different way.
- Do your very best to find a contact name. You can use resources such as Hoover’s, Bloomberg, LinkedIn, organization websites, etc. It will show you went the extra mile. If you absolutely cannot find a contact, you can use a generic greeting such as “Dear Hiring Professional” or “Dear Internship Coordinator”.
- Interest is one of the key factors employers look for in a candidate. Make sure you clearly specify what your interest is in the position and organization. Don’t be generic; go below the surface and do some research. The more specific you are the better. Answer the questions “Why do I want to do this work?” and “Why do I want to work for this organization?”
- Don’t say you’re not qualified. Never apologize, always sell! Keep your letter positive and market what you bring to the table and how you will add value.
- This is a professional business letter. This is not the place to include really personal information or demonstrate your sense of humor. This is a sample of how you may correspond with a client, so keep the tone and content professional. Even if you have met the person, do not address it with “Hey”, “Hello” or with just their first name.
- Make sure to proofread! This is a writing sample and will demonstrate your communication skills and attention to detail. If you are using the organization’s name in the letter, particularly if it is used more than once, make sure it is the correct name! Have your letters critiqued at your career office.
- Always be honest and truthful.