

Helpful Hints For Writing Cover Letters

- Each letter should be an original.
- Address the employer by title and last name. Research names in the library or call the company.
- The goal of your opening is to capture the employer's attention. You may want to refer to a mutual contact who referred you for the position or present a reason (e.g., qualities and skills) that the employer should consider you the "right fit" for the organization. Remember: an employer may receive hundreds of cover letters. You need to create enough interest in your opening that the employer feels compelled to continue reading.
- Make your cover letter concise. A cover letter should be one page.
- The body of your cover letter should highlight your experiences and accomplishments. Focus on the needs of the employer to whom you are writing. You want to convey that hiring you will mean improved services, innovative ideas, greater efficiency, or increased productivity.
- Your cover letter should ask for something—most often an interview. State how you plan to follow up with the employer.
- Your closing should briefly summarize the body of the letter. Leave the reader with an important thought to remember you by.
- Check and recheck your cover letter for errors. Look closely for mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Have someone else proofread and critique your cover letter.
- Select quality bond paper for your final copy. The paper you select should coordinate with the paper you use for your résumé.
- Use a high quality printer and black type.
- Fold and mail your cover letter and your résumé in a matching envelope or mail them flat in a 9" x 12" white or manila envelope.

Cover Letter Resources Career Center, Lucina 220

Adams Cover Letter Almanac
Cover Letter Magic
Cover Letters That Knock 'Em Dead

Websites

Quintessential Careers: Sample Cover Letters
http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_samples.html

If you need adaptations or accommodations for any of our educational programs or publications because of a disability, please contact
Career Center

Lucina Hall 220 Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana 47306 (765) 285-5634
www.bsui.edu/careers/
careercenter@bsui.edu

Cover Letter Guide

Your Present Address
City, State ZIP Code
Date

Person's Name*
Title
Employer Name
Street Address
City, State ZIP Code

Include an introductory cover letter with each résumé you send to employers. Each letter must be originally typed and signed.

*** Make every effort to get a specific name. If you absolutely cannot, address your letter to the right department, making sure you know the current name of the department—for example, Human Resources vs. Personnel.**

Dear (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.):§

(First Paragraph) Indicate the reason for writing, the specific position for which you are applying, and, if there is a position open, the source from which you learned of the job and the date it was posted. If you are inquiring about jobs in general and no opening was advertised, indicate your interest in career opportunities in your field.

(Second Paragraph) Mention why you are interested in the position or organization and its products or services. Relate your academic or work background to the position for which you are applying—how are you qualified for the position? Point out your practical work experience, specific achievements, and unique qualifications. Mention information other than what is on your résumé.

(Final Paragraph) Refer the reader to your enclosed résumé, which summarizes your qualifications, training, and experience. You may also mention how an employer can obtain your references or credentials. Refer to your interest in a personal interview and indicate your eagerness to meet personally to learn more about the position. You may suggest several dates or indicate your flexibility as to the time and place. Include your phone number. If the vacancy notice included the employer's phone number, indicate that you will call within seven to ten days to find out if an interview can be arranged. **If you indicate you will call, follow through!** Thank the employer for taking the time to read your letter and résumé.

Sincerely,

(Your written signature)

Your typed name

Enclosure (refers to enclosed résumé)

§ If you are unable to get a name or do not even have the employer name (as with a blind ad), do not use "Dear Sir/Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern." "Dear Employer" or "Director of (fill in department)" are examples of appropriate salutations in these cases.