

COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE



Career Development Center

Introduction to Professional Cover Letter Writing

Why write a cover letter? While it is true cover letters are less common today, including one in your application can make you stand out from other applicants. According to Careerlaunchpad.edu 61% of online applications require cover letters, 74% of recruiters prefer cover letters, and 77% of recruiters give preference to applicants with cover letters. So you should be able to compose an effective cover letter that explains two key points. The cover letter is a formal way to explain why you are interested in the company/ position and most importantly why the company should be interested in you.

What can the cover letter do for you?

1. **Answer the “Why” question.** A cover letter is an opportunity to describe why you are a good fit for that particular company and why the company should be interested in you. Your resume is an outline of your credentials and experiences mostly written in bullet points. A well written cover letter is an opportunity to go into more depth than your resume, highlight specific experiences, and develop a compelling argument of why you are right for this job.
2. **Tell a Story.** Use the basics of effective story telling to help craft your cover letter. Good stories are interesting and tend to have a beginning, middle and end. Capture the reader’s interest with something unique in the first paragraph about why the company should be interested in you. In your middle two paragraphs think of ways to show how you fit the organization and what your unique qualities might be. Describe the future and what you might expect to contribute and accomplish. Finally, talk about the next steps and express appreciation.
3. **Show Your Personality.** Help employers get to know you through the cover letter. This will be conveyed through your unique style and choices for content.
4. **Show Your Writing Ability.** Demonstrate your ability to effectively communicate in writing. This is a valuable skills across industries and work environments.

Cover Letter Steps:

1. **Research.** If you’re being asked to submit a cover letter as part of a formal job application then your first step is to do some research. Make sure you have a copy of the job description or posting and use it as a guide for choosing stories you can highlight from your past experience that are directly related to what the company is looking for. Research the company and read their mission, values, products/services, and consider why you think you would be a good match! . Make sure your resume is up to date and print a hard copy to highlight accomplishments accomplishments that you can expand in the cover letter to build your persuasive argument. Know the company, know the position, and know why you fit!
2. **Create Interest.** Introduce yourself and explain why you’re in the company, position and give a compelling reason for the reader to be interested in you.
3. **State Your Case.** The middle two paragraphs are the heart of the cover letter. It’s your chance to tell the reader why they should be interested in you through describing accomplishments and how you expect to contribute to the needs of the organization. Here is where you can use those stories!
4. **Finish Strong.** Always thank the reader for their valuable time and consideration and remind them of your initiative by describing how you will be following up with them.
5. **Final Step.** Send your draft to the Career Development Center for a review and then make final edits. Save a copy as a PDF and submit the PDF electronically along with your resume and any other materials required. Always follow company instructions on application submissions.

Cover Letter Outline

[Use the same heading style for your name and contact information that you used on your resume for your cover letter. This will let the employer know the documents are paired together.]

Date

[Hiring Manager's Name]

[Hiring Manager's Title]

Employer

Mailing Address

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name]:

First Paragraph. In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate from which source (career center, news media, friend, professor, etc.) you learned of the opening. Try to add something that creates interest for the employer to continue reading. Consider including how your values and philosophy correlate with the company's mission and goals or state that your past experiences with [what they are looking for] make you an excellent candidate for the position. .

Second (and Third) Paragraph. Explain how your academic background and work history makes you a qualified candidate. Try not to directly repeat the same information that is on your resume, however, you can expand on certain experiences from your resume that are related to the work the position you are applying for requires. Tell a brief story connecting how you've successfully demonstrated skills related to the position. You also want to include why you are interested in this particular company. Use the cover letter to show your personality while remaining professional.

Final Paragraph. In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. State your phone number in the letter if that is where you can be most easily reached. Close your letter with a statement or question which will encourage a response. For example, "I would welcome the opportunity to interview in person whereby we can discuss my qualifications in greater detail." End by expressing your gratitude to the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Your Typed Name

Cover Letter Example

WILLIAM WUNDT

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/WUNDTPSYCH

William@gmail.com

Murfreesboro, TN

615 - 978 - 6314

January 25, 2022

Jennifer Sullivan
Human Resources Manager
ABC Company
1234 Team Street
Manhattan, TN 98765

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for a management internship with ABC Company. I heard of this opportunity from one of my management professors Dr. Stacy Jones at Middle Tennessee State University. As a senior studying Psychology and Spanish, I am confident that my proficiency in these areas, along with my leadership experience, will make me an asset to your team.

I have long since admired ABC Company's commitment to diversity and ethics. Barriers keeping countries isolated in the past are being broken down and it is critical that those in leadership roles are well-versed in multiple languages and multi-culturally competent. ABC Company is on the forefront of this mission and I am inspired by the company's pledge to honor these values. I have a similar passion for incorporating other cultures into my life. In fact, I decided to study psychology and focus on becoming fluent in Spanish in order to more effectively communicate and understand those around me. I believe, as is stated in ABC Company's philosophies, that the most influential managers are those that understand the people they are leading.

In the past, I have served in several positions where I have been able to lead and counsel others. As an Orientation Team Leader I led groups of 25 freshmen around MTSU's campus and advised them as they became acclimated to the university. One of my most memorable leadership experiences was serving with Habitat for Humanity where I was able to motivate and manage a team of my peers as we built homes for orphaned children in Mexico. Leaders are people who not only delegate and organize, but also serve and give back to their community. ABC Company is actively engaged in philanthropic efforts and I would enjoy being a part of an organization that fully integrates ethical conduct and charitable giving into their mission.

In closing, I am thrilled about the possibility of being involved with ABC Company and would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss my qualifications further. I can be reached via phone at 888.888.8888. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Warmest regards,



William Wundt