

Writing a Cover Letter

There are at least three good reasons to write a cover letter:

- Many employers use the cover letter to assess a candidate's writing and communication skills.
- To highlight aspects of your background. Don't repeat information from your resume but instead give concrete examples of your skills and experience and match them to the qualifications of the position or the needs of the employer.
- To stimulate interest in you and your resume and to underscore your interest in the job.

• **FORMAT:** Any appropriate business letter format is acceptable. A standard set-up includes block paragraphs that are single spaced with an extra space between paragraphs. Your resume header should also be on your cover letter and reference list (all on separate pages).

*Tip: The best way to start a cover letter is by taking the job posting you are applying for and highlighting areas that you have skills or experience. Then, you want to write about those job specific skills or experiences in your cover letter.

Where do I start?

- **Do your homework!**
 - Research the employers career website to find out more about the department or topic the position primarily focuses on.
 - Determine some of their current news or defining characteristics: their competitors, customers, innovations, etc.
 - Understand their mission and values as an organization as well as a department. Review their marketing, follow them on social media to learn what's most important to them and how they want to present themselves to external stakeholders.
 - Find a connection with the employer that you can highlight in your cover letter; that could be their mission, a recent report they issued, philanthropic work they do, etc.

*Tip: Each letter should be unique and personal. Make sure at least one other person reads the letter before it gets sent in. Bring your cover letter and the job description to the Career Center for us to review.

Date

Employer's Name
Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State Zip code

Dear Ms. or Mr. _____ :

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Create interest and attract attention! Let your personality, enthusiasm, and interest show! Explain why you are writing the letter. If you are responding to an advertisement, state the name and date of the publication or web site where you found the ad as well as the job title for which you are applying. If someone referred you, tell the reader who referred you and how they are connected to the organization. This is one of the strongest methods to ensure that your resume will be read and increases your chances of an interview dramatically. This paragraph will probably be only two to three sentences long.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: Tell the employer why you think you are qualified for the job. Highlight and expand upon your skills and experiences from your resume that you do not want the reader to overlook. This is a good place to mention any projects or work you are doing currently which is not listed in your resume. Be sure to tell the employer what you can bring to the organization.

THIRD PARAGRAPH: Indicate that you have researched the organization to which you are applying. Connect the organization's expressed needs with the skills and personality traits that you can bring to the job. Don't talk about what the organization can do for you, but what you can do for them. This should connect directly to the second paragraph. Utilize the organization's web site, job description and other information to draw correlations between the organization's needs and your skills, education and/or experience.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: This paragraph has two purposes. First, thank the employer for reviewing your credentials. Second, indicate when you will contact the employer to discuss the possibility of an interview. If you do not have a contact person for the organization, be sure to state when and where you can be reached most easily.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)
Your name typed

Cover Letter Rubric

	Cover letter should get you the interview.	Cover letter could land you an interview. This is an average letter (borderline case.)	Cover letter needs significant improvement and would be discarded during screening
Business format and overall quality of writing ability	This letter uses correct business format with date and addresses at the top, and a signature at the bottom. This letter is clear and concise, and grammatically correct. There are no spelling errors.	This letter uses correct business format with date and addresses at the top, and a signature at the bottom. There are minimal grammar and spelling errors. While its content is decent, this letter does not convince an employer to call.	Business formatting is not used in this letter. There is no address or date at the top. This letter is not signed. There are multiple grammar and spelling errors. The content of this letter does not make sense to the reader.
Section 1: Introduction	This section identifies the position for which you are applying and explains why you are interested in the job. You have described how you heard about the opening. The wording is creative and catches an employer's attention quickly.	This section identifies the position you are seeking. This letter does not describe how you heard about the opening. You vaguely describe why you are interested in this job. This section is bland and might not catch someone's attention fast enough.	This section does not clearly identify what position you are seeking. There is no description of how you heard about the position or why you are interested. This letter definitely will not grab an employer's attention and keep him or her reading.
Section 2: Identification of skills and experiences as related to position	This letter identifies one or two of your strongest qualifications and clearly relates how these skills apply to the job at hand. This letter explains specifically why you are interested in the position and this type of job, company, and/or location.	This letter identifies one of your qualifications, but it is not related to the position at hand. This letter restates what is on your resume with minimal additional information. You explain why you are interested in the position but are too vague.	This letter does not discuss any relevant qualifications. You have not related your skills to the position for which you are applying. This letter does not state why you are interested in the position, company, and/or location.
Section 3: Closing	This letter refers the reader to your resume or any other enclosed documents. This letter thanks the reader for taking time to read this letter. You are assertive as you describe how you will follow up with the employer in a stated time period.	You thank the reader for taking time to read this letter. You do not refer the reader to your resume or application materials. This letter assumes that the employer will contact you to follow up.	This letter does not thank the reader for taking time to review this letter. There is no reference to a resume or other materials. This letter does not mention any plan for follow up.

by Amy Diepenbrock. Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, copyright holder. www.nacweb.org.

SARAH B. KIND

508-999-8658 • sbkind@umassd.edu

April 13, 2020

Ms. Alice Potter
Vice President Human Resources
ABZ Corporation
43 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Ms. Potter:

A classmate of mine, Jamie Reynolds, suggested I contact you regarding internships with ABZ Corporation. Jamie recently spent a semester at your organization as an intern in your Communications and Public Relations department. She had so many positive things to say about her experience with your company I am eager to explore similar internship possibilities.

As you will see from my resume I am a junior at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and I am majoring in Marketing. I am particularly interested in developing media relations within an organization. While working with the orientation program at UMass Dartmouth I had to hone my communication skills verbally and through print by providing families with important information. I often acted as the spokesperson for the University while speaking with families. In addition, I contributed to the orientation social media sites. These experiences, in addition to my academic background, make me a qualified candidate for your internship program.

I am interested in ABZ Corporation for a number of reasons. According to your website, you were recently voted “One of the Top Ten Businesses in Rhode Island” based upon your employee satisfaction. Also, ABZ is dedicated to their community, allowing employees to spend up to 20 hours per year in service during work hours. As a student at UMass Dartmouth I have been part of the Student Volunteer Association and have a passion to service those in need. I spent two Spring Breaks working with Habitat for Humanity in Virginia and Tennessee. I am excited to know that there are organizations that have this same passion and allow for employees to contribute.

I have enclosed a resume for your consideration. Thank you for your interest and your time. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications further. I will contact you the week of April 30th to see if I might arrange an interview. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Sarah B. Kind