

Cover Letter Introduction

What Is a Cover Letter?

1. A three paragraph letter that states the job for which you are applying, your qualifications, and your request for an interview.
2. An introduction for your resume´.
3. Your first contact with many prospective employers.
4. A reflection of you, your personality, and creativity.

When Is a Cover Letter Helpful?

Use a cover letter when:

1. An employer you wish to contact lives in another city and you are mailing, emailing, or faxing your resume´ to that employer.
2. You are answering an advertised help-wanted ad.
3. Any time you use a resume´.

Be brief. The cover letter should be only one page long.

Be Factual, Accurate, and Specific. Give relevant, truthful facts and measurable results or achievements. Be specific and give examples.

Be Positive and Sell Yourself. Put strongest statements at the top. Stress accomplishments.

Be Clear and Logical. Say what you mean, use simple terms rather than complex expressions, and avoid minor details.

Be Neat and Attractive:

- Don't let it look too crowded
- Use underlining, capital letters, or different type styles for emphasis
- Use a high quality printer for your final copy
- Margins should be approximately one-inch on each side
- keep the page balanced on all margins: top and bottom equal to each other, left and right equal to each other
- Single space within sections and double space between sections

Use high-quality bond paper. 8 ½" x 11," white or light-colored paper is best.

Make an excellent first impression. An employer may spend only 30 seconds or less scanning your resume. Put the most important facts first.

Write, Re-Write, and Polish. Have someone else proofread for mistakes. Ask at least two other people to give you their opinions about whether this resume sells you.

Cover Letter Guidelines

What to Include:

- *Heading:* include your full name, address, and the date. Skip three lines before the Inside Address.
- *Inside address:* Include the name or title of the person, the company name, and the full address of the company. Skip one line before the Salutation. Try to address the letter to a particular individual if possible. Use a phone book, internet search, or other way to find the name of the specific person to whom you should address your cover letter. Skip one line before the salutation.
- *Salutation:* Always begin with “Dear” followed by either the person’s name (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, then last name) or job title. Use a colon instead of a comma after you greet the person. Skip one line before you go to paragraph one of the letter.
- *Purpose:* State the purpose of your letter and the position for which you are applying. If possible, also list where you heard about the job opening (it let’s the company know their advertising is working). Skip one line before going to paragraph two.
- *Qualifications:* State those qualifications that make you well-suited for the job. Always try to have at least three but no more than five qualifications. Do your best to be as specific as possible. Avoid such qualifications as “I work well with others,” “I am a team player,” “I enjoy challenges,” etc. If at all possible, list qualifications that are measurable such as “I type 65 words per minute,” “I have strong skills with Microsoft Office,” “I have experience working with electronic fuel injection systems,” etc. Skip one line before continuing to paragraph three.
- *Interview:* Politely request an interview and provide a contact number or email address. Skip one line before the closing.
- *Closing:* End with a polite closing. The standard closing in business letters is “Sincerely,”. Remember there is a comma after the closing. Skip three lines before typing your name.
- *Name:* Type your full name as you did in you heading above.
- *Signature:* Write your signature between the closing and your typed name. Remember that your signature must match your typed name.

Notes:

- Use the same font and font size as you used on your resume’. Times New Roman or Courier is recommended. Size 12 is best. Do not go bigger than 12 or smaller than 10.
- Use the same high-quality paper as you used on your resume’.
- Remember that the parts of the cover letter are single-spaced except where you were directed above to skip lines.
- Top/bottom and left/right margins must be equal.
- The cover letter goes on top of the resume’. Do not fold or use an envelope unless mailing them (and even then you should use a large manila envelope so you do not have to fold them).

Cover Letter Assignment

Standard:

WA2.5: Write job applications and resumes.

Objective:

Students will write a cover letter in an appropriate format that is neat, complete, and error-free.

Assignment Instructions and Grading Criteria:

Using the previous guidelines for setting up cover letters, create a cover letter for yourself. This cover letter will be graded according to the following guidelines:

- Error-free, including both grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors.
- Format—easy to read, clear, concise, and neat.
- Include all parts of a standard business letter: heading, interior address, salutation, body, closing, typed and signed name.
- Font choice: Times New Roman or Courier/ Courier New (must match resume').
- Font size: 12 or 10 (must match resume')
- Black ink only
- One page only.
- Single-space except between different sections as noted in guidelines.
- High quality paper that matches your resume' paper.

Roberto M. Gonzales
3351 El Segundo Lane
Riverside, CA 92505
August 25, 2013

Lakeesha Washington
North Visalia Toyota
89245 N. Weston Ave.
Visalia, CA 94882

Dear Ms. Washington:

I am interested in the electronic technician position advertised in the *Visalia Tribune* on May 23, 2011.

I am well-prepared for a career in the field of automotive electronics. I am Toyota Certified in speedometers, odometers, and computer systems. Also, I have experience working with California Smog computers and have trained with airbag systems as well as electronic fuel injection systems. I graduated near the top of my classes in all these areas.

I look forward to a personal interview where we can discuss these qualifications as well as the others on my enclosed resume'. I may be reached any time by cell phone at (645) 289-3491.

Sincerely,

[Signature goes here]

Roberto M. Gonzales