



COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE



Career Development Center

Introduction Into Professional Cover Letter Writing

A well-written and tailored cover letter can help you get an interview. Your resume is a list of your accomplishments and experiences and the cover letter allows you to introduce yourself and tell the story of why you are the best candidate for this particular job. According to a 2020 survey conducted by ResumeGo.com, 87% of hiring managers read cover letters. Typically, your resume is reviewed first and if they are interested in you, they will read your cover letter. If the letter is compelling, well-written, and tailored to the job position you are applying for, it can increase your chance of being offered an interview.

How to approach writing one:

- 1. Answer the "Why" Questions.** Why do you want to work for this particular company and why should they hire you?
- 2. Tell a Story.** Grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph so they will be compelled to keep reading. Use brief stories in your second or third paragraph to describe your accomplishments in past experiences that directly showcase skills needed in the position you are applying for. Use some of the keywords that are in the job posting in your cover letter.
- 3. Show Personality.** Help employers get to know you through the cover letter. This will be conveyed through your unique style and choices for content. Stay professional, but write in your own voice.
- 4. Demonstrate Writing Ability.** Showcase your ability to effectively communicate through writing. A well-written cover letter shows your ability to express ideas clearly and to develop a persuasive argument. A poorly written letter can prevent you from getting an interview even if your resume peaks interest.

Steps to writing one:

- 1. Research.** Research the company and consider their mission, values, products/services, as well as why you think you would be a good fit based on the information you find. Use the job description to guide what to highlight in the cover letter. Review your resume and think about the experiences you've had that you can expand on which will highlight the skills they are looking for. Know the company, know the position, and know why you are the right candidate for the role.
- 2. Create Interest.** Set a positive tone at the start of the letter, explain why you're interested in the company and 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 letter. It's your chance to tell the reader why they should be interested in you. Create interest by describing accomplishments (using keywords from the job posting) and how you expect to contribute to the needs of the organization.
- 4. Finish Strong.** Reiterate your interest in the position and thank the reader for their valuable time and consideration. Include a call to action (your desire for an interview) and your contact information.
- 5. Final Step.** Send your draft to the [Career Development Center](#) for a review and then make final edits. Once you have finalized your letter, save a copy as a PDF (make sure to check the formatting) and submit the PDF electronically with the other required materials to the employer.

Tip: Consider writing out all your thoughts and ideas first and then condense and edit it down to what is necessary and compelling. Your letter shouldn't be longer than a page for most positions.

Cover Letter Outline

[Use the **same heading style** for your name and contact information that you used on your resume. This looks professional and indicates the two documents are paired together.]

Date

[Hiring Manager's Name]
Hiring Manager's Title
Company Name
Company 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. Briefly highlight why you are a good candidate for the position in this last sentence (that will make the employer keep reading).

Second (and Third) Paragraph. Explain how your academic background and work history make you a qualified candidate. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume. Use the cover letter to highlight and expand on past experiences that directly relate to the position's requirements. Use a brief story that showcases a specific quality or skill from your past experience that serves as proof of your qualifications and entices the employer to invite you to interview. Mention why you want to work for this company specifically. Perhaps indicate how your values and philosophy correlates with the company's mission and goals, if appropriate.

Final Paragraph. In the closing paragraph, reiterate your enthusiasm for the position, indicate your desire for a personal interview, and state your phone number and email address where you can be reached. Finally, close your letter with gratitude for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature] - save document as a PDF and create an electronic signature

Your Typed Name

Cover Letter Example

WILLIAM WUNDT

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/WUNDTPSYCH

William@gmail.com

Murfreesboro, TN

615-123-4567

January 25, 2023

Maria Rodriguez
Human Resources Manager
ABC Company
1234 Team Street
Manhattan, TN 98765

Dear Ms. Rodriguez:


I am excited to submit my application for a management internship with ABC Company. I first heard of this position from one of my psychology professors at Middle Tennessee State University. As a dedicated leader with a background in language and a deep understanding of the importance of giving back, I am an ideal candidate for your team as you continue to stress the importance of diversity and ethics.

There is a huge need for managers to become well-versed in different languages and cultures and ABC Company has been a leader in this endeavor. I understand and acknowledge this need wholeheartedly, which is why I decided to become fluent in Spanish, study Psychology, and have always strived to incorporate other cultures into my life. It is my goal to grow my leadership skills through experiential learning to become a people-driven and inclusive manager in the future one day. It would be an honor to develop these skills in a professional setting under the guidance of your team.

I have had the great privilege to serve in several positions where I was able to lead and counsel others. During my junior year, I served as an Orientation Team Leader where I facilitated groups of 25 or more freshmen around MTSU's campus. This past summer, I worked with Habitat for Humanity to coordinate my peers into teams to build homes for orphans in Mexico. This experience helped me learn delegation skills, the importance of good communication, and the benefits of collaborative effort toward a common goal. I believe leaders are people who not only delegate and organize, but who serve and give back to their communities. This is a tenet that ABC Company has exhibited over the years by donating to charitable causes. I would love to be part of an organization that not only leads in good ethics, but also gives back to the community.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to interview for the internship position where I can answer any questions and discuss my qualifications. I can be reached at 615-978-6314 or William@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,



William Wundt