

CREATING A COVER LETTER

Are cover letters necessary?

The increasing popularity of e-mailed, Web-based, and faxed resumes have people wondering if cover letters remain a relevant tool in today's job search. Generally, a cover letter should accompany *each* resume. The cover letter allows you to demonstrate your ability to write and offers the first statement of why you should be hired.

What is the best way to email a cover letter?

If an employer requests that you send your cover letter and resume via e-mail, cut and paste both into the body of your e-mail message (N.B., this will eliminate formatting). In addition, attach your cover letter and resume to the email (use either Microsoft Word or Adobe document format). This will ensure that, should your email attachments not be viewable for any reason, the employer can still view your documents in the email body.

Whenever possible, cite a specific person. It may take research to learn the contact's name, correct spelling and title.

If uncertain whether "Mrs." or "Miss" is preferred, use "Ms." Instead.

Tailor your letter to the position description and the employer's needs. Focus on strengths that define you as a candidate.

Remember to sign your name here.

YOUR NAME
Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
E-mail Address

Date

Full Name
Formal Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms./Mr. Name:

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State that you are applying for a specific position and how you learned of the position, using a contact name when possible. Personalize the letter by saying why you want to work for this organization.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S): Succinctly outline the qualifications that make you a strong candidate. Relate your qualifications to the needs of the current job opening. Specific examples can demonstrate your skills and experiences.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Discuss your next action step. Repeat your interest in the position and indicate when you will contact the employer to follow up. Thank the employer for reviewing your resume.

Sincerely,

Your Name (Typed)

Use the same heading that you use for your resume.

Use a colon here.

Conduct a spell check and review your cover letter carefully for errors.

A cover letter should almost always run less than a page in length. (Only the most extremely technical positions may require more.)

Choose quality paper that matches your resume.

Adapted from San Diego State University Career Services
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