



Professional Cover Letter

A cover letter or application letter is a persuasive document that is designed to market your skills, experience, abilities, and knowledge. This is an opportunity to flesh out your résumé, but you should not repeat your résumé in the cover letter.

- 1. Purpose:** The cover letter should accomplish the following tasks:
 - A. Demonstrate to the reader how your skills will help his/her company or organization.
 - B. Explain the job you are applying for and why you are a good fit for that job.
 - C. Persuade the reader that you are the best person for the job by highlighting the applicable experiences from your résumé.
 - D. Request an interview.

- 2. Preparation:**
 - A. Match your résumé and your cover letter to the job advertisement.
 - B. Analyze the ad and make sure that you cover all of the components, skills, and experiences listed.
 - C. Research the company so you will know its mission and its vision. While you will not explicitly reference the mission statement or the vision statement, you will show the reader that you are a good fit by describing your own philosophy in the same terms.

- 3. Organization:**
 - A. Introduction: The introduction should do the following:
 - I. Provide your name, education, date of graduation, and the position for which you are applying.
 - II. Provide the name of an existing employee, faculty member, etc. who referred you to the opening.
 - III. Explain why you are interested in the job and what you can do for the company.
 - B. Body: The body paragraphs are where you provide examples of how you are qualified.
 - I. Each paragraph of the body should have one topic sentence that relates your experience or qualifications to the position, and the entire paragraph should focus on that topic sentence.
 - II. You should have a work experience paragraph that relates your work experience to the position.
 - III. You should have a paragraph that is devoted to your educational experiences, but only if they are relevant to the job.
 - IV. You should have a paragraph that provides your skills and relates them to the job. In this paragraph, you can discuss your work ethic, your interpersonal skills, and your ability to lead. Be specific and provide examples.
 - C. Closing: The final paragraph is where you ask for an interview, show gratitude, and provide the opportunity for the reader to ask for more information.
 - I. Ask for a time that you could meet with the reader.
 - II. Provide times when you are available.



- III. Offer to provide further information.
 - IV. Mention your letters of recommendation.
 - V. Show your gratitude to the reader for taking the time to review your résumé and your cover letter.
4. **Final Information:** You will make your first impression through your cover letter. Remember the following:
- A. Use a professional style of writing, and avoid figurative language such as slang, colloquialisms, and clichés.
 - B. Follow the formatting of a business letter (**Refer to the Formatting the Business Letter resource**).
 - C. Write, revise, rewrite, edit, and proofread your cover letter.
 - D. Remember, the cover letter is more about what you can do for the company than what the company can do for you.
 - E. Be truthful.