

Cover Letters

An effective cover letter inspires the employer to read your resume. The cover letter should show that you are familiar with the organization and should emphasize how your experience meets the employer's needs. Communication skills, attention to detail, enthusiasm, and style are all demonstrated through a well-written letter. A cover letter should not re-state what you list on your resume but rather should show how your skills make you a good match for the position.

- **Do your research first.** You will be better able to write an effective cover letter after you have researched the company and determined why you want to work there.
- **Type each cover letter individually** and address it directly to the appropriate person using his/her title. If no name is given, call the company and get the name of the Director of Human Resources or the Hiring Manager.
- Use action-oriented words similar to those in your resume to emphasize accomplishments.
Be sure to include some of the specific skills the employer listed in the position description.
- Avoid starting many sentences with “I” or “My” as this can be misinterpreted as self-centeredness.

FORMAT & EXAMPLES

First paragraph: Tell the employer why you are writing.

Please consider me as a candidate for the Assistant Editor position advertised in the April 14th edition of The Boston Globe.

Through the Clark Recruiter database at Clark University’s Career Services Office, I learned of the marketing internship and I would like to apply for the position. Upon reviewing your website I became particularly interested in X’s *focus on...* **OR** *mission of providing services to...*

By utilizing the resources at Clark University’s Career Services Office, I learned that XYZ Company has an opening for an entry level Software Consultant. I believe my experience and training make me a good match for this position.

Professor John Smith at Clark University recommended that I contact you regarding potential job opportunities within your Marketing Department.

Please accept my resume in application for the position of entry-level financial analyst. I can offer X Company strong communication, time management, and problem solving skills as well as experience in research and sales.

It was with great interest that I read the announcement for a Research Assistant on your company website. This position fits well with my academic and professional (or internship) experience.

I am applying for an internship with X company to build on my academic foundation with hands-on experience in ...

Second and third paragraph: Explain why it is reasonable that you are pursuing the opportunity by relating pertinent information about your background. Two paragraphs may be needed if you have extensive relevant experience to highlight. Tie your experiences directly to the job description and the qualifications of the position or the focus of the company.

Currently I am completing my B.A. in psychology at Clark University. My academic coursework includes a concentration in Women's Studies as well as several Computer Science courses. As my resumé indicates, I have completed internships in both the human services field and in business. I am confident that I possess the interpersonal, organizational, and technical skills required of this position.

As a full-time student I effectively balanced my coursework, a part-time work-study job, and the duties of a Resident Assistant. I have the proven ability to juggle multiple tasks, manage my time, and maintain enthusiasm for any project I take on.

Through my experience with several research projects and my Senior Honor's Thesis, I can offer strong research skills...

The liberal arts degree I have earned at Clark University has allowed me to develop strong written and oral communication skills, the ability to work as part of a team, and effective problem solving capabilities.

As an undergraduate, I am interested in working for your organization to gain practical experience and additional knowledge *pertaining to my field of study*. **OR...** *to use my education in a professional environment*.

Fourth paragraph: Tell the employer that you plan to call to confirm that he/she has received your letter, you would be happy to provide any additional information, and that you are looking forward to speaking with him/her in person.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications for this position.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss opportunities at ...

I will call you next week to discuss setting up an interview.

If you require any additional information, please contact me at...

Thank you for considering me for this position.

Thank you for your consideration.

COVER LETTER LAYOUT

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Date of Writing

Specific Name (Mr. John Doe)
Specific Title (Director, Human Resources)
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____: (*never use "To Whom it May Concern"; "Sir or Madam"*)

Opening Paragraph: Tell why you are writing, naming the position, field, or general area of work you are requesting. Mention how you learned of the opening or the organization. This would include naming any connections you may have within the organization. One sentence may be used to explain why you are interested in this company/organization. What makes it special? What attraction does it hold for you?

Middle Paragraph(s): Talk about your qualifications. Do not directly repeat information from your resumé and do not list jobs. Focus instead on the **skills** you have developed from the experiences listed on your resume. Cite the work experience, educational preparation, activities and skills that qualify you for the position and would make you an asset to this organization. Indicate why you should be considered as a candidate, focusing upon how your skills can fulfill the needs of the organization. Mention specific results or achievements. You should directly tie your experiences to the qualifications described in the posting. This is the key paragraph(s) that differentiates you from the next candidate. *Do not mention how you think the company can assist you in meeting your own career goals.* They want to know what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.

Closing Paragraph: Close by making a specific request. Usually this means a request to discuss your qualifications further in person. State when you will be available and how you can be reached (phone number and email address). Indicate that you will follow-up with a phone call to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or talk on the phone. You can also point out that additional information concerning your background will gladly be furnished upon request.

Sincerely,

(4 blank lines for your handwritten signature)

Your Typed Name – First and Last