

# HOW TO COMPOSE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER



Career Services

## WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A GOOD COVER LETTER?

A cover letter usually has a length of a single page. It starts with an intro paragraph, has a body paragraph, and ends with a concluding paragraph. The introduction is all about you and why you are applying for a specific position in the company. You may also mention any references from within that company.

The body or middle paragraph talks about what you are capable of achieving. What skills and qualifications of yours could be fulfilling for the post you are applying, and why you are interested in the position. The concluding paragraph brings the whole statement to a closure where you can request for a meeting or interview or any further action.

You can inquire about the next steps in the hiring process. Cover letters allow you to represent your skills and tell the employer that you deserve a particular job post. A good cover letter will help an employer hire the perfect candidate with the decent qualification that his company requires.

The cover letter is an opportunity to highlight your skills and abilities. Do this by potentially selecting skills and accomplishments that the offered position requires. Your cover letter must be addressed to a high-ranking contact within the company, a department head for instance. Address him directly by mentioning his/her position title and name on the envelope and letter.

When can you send a cover letter along with a resume? You should send the letter every time you apply for a job offer unless the ad specifically tells you to send the resume only.

## WHY GENERATE A COVER LETTER? CONTENT OF THE LETTER

### OUTLINE OF THE COVER LETTER

Sometimes your well-drafted resume fails to win an interview as the employer may miss your skills and qualification because of certain factors. A cover letter can be the guide for your employer as to how your qualifications and experience can help his company.

Cover letter speaks of your experience and knowledge in a relevant field and clarifies any vague parts of your resume. It also tells of your organization's skill and that you can communicate and reflect your personality appropriately.

#### **Address the Employer/Company:**

It should be addressed to a higher officer within the company, if not the employer. You can get the contact information by researching or contacting the company.

#### **Address the Position:**

Mention the offered position, state your knowledge regarding it, and why you are interested in it and the company. You must bring your qualification in the spotlight and answer the following questions:

- Why are you interested in working with this company?
- How do you fit into this company?
- Are you qualified enough for this particular position?
- Address your assets.

**Take Account of:**

- Positive information backing up the hiring.
- Information regarding your goals, interests, strengths, and accomplishments.
- Illustrations of performance and output.
- In what ways are you beneficial for the employers?

**Exclude:**

- Information not relevant to the position.
- Negative or inappropriately discussing your previous employer.
- Salary inquiry or salary history.
- Personal information like religious preference, children, marital status, etc.
- The letter should be written in your own words so that it sounds natural rather than copied.
- Your writing should convey a persuasive, objective, and clear message and should not be rather narrative.
- Write in paragraph form with information in a formal manner.
- Check for spelling typos and grammatical mistakes.
- Use 8 1/2" by 11", paper of high quality, matching your resume.

**FORMAT OF COVER LETTER**

Contact's Name

Contact's Title

Company Name

Company Address

City, State Zip Code

Mr. or Ms. Contact:

The first paragraph has to be catchy to grab your reader's attention. Mention your purpose of writing the letter, position you are applying for, and how you came to know of it. Also, suggest what aroused your interest in the company.

The body paragraph should be all about your interest and desire to work with the company. Provide your work and qualification background. Talk about your strengths and what you know of the company and how you can assist. Don't forget to mention what value you hold for the employer.

If you are a fresh graduate, then state what makes you a potential candidate. Talk about your qualification background, your achievements, and clearly make your point. Do not leave any loose ends to your statement and mention your attached resume and qualification. State all the essential aspects of your resume keeping it concise and to the point.

The concluding paragraph must ask for an action. You should talk about wanting an interview or personal meeting. You can suggest dates or request flexible timings. It is always good to mention your phone number for a direct and straightforward approach. Show that you are open to suggestions and offers. It is always better to request straightforwardly rather than merely state hope.

Sincerely,

Sign your name here

Print Your Name

Your Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Your Phone Number

Your Email Address

Enclosure

Date of Letter

## COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

Mr. Harry M. Lee  
HR Manager  
HAL Corporation  
55 Washington Avenue  
New York, New York 10081

Mr. Mark,

It is to my utter pleasure that I am attaching my resume for the post of software developer position that I came across on Jobs4U. I have recently completed my bachelor's in software engineering from West Virginia University and feel ready to step in the working world. My internships and academic qualification have honed my skills further and I feel confident enough to apply for this post.

My software engineering major has taught me myriads of computing languages, including Perl, Java, C++ and HTML. My major project was developing a high-end website while I worked with some experienced front end developers. I managed to create the website in minimum time with my coding and problem solving skills. After that, I did an internship with XYZ IT Company for 3 months. There I shadowed experienced software engineers and learned about code procedures for the company's database system. My skills helped raise the company's productivity by 30%.

My interpersonal and technical skills have strengthened over time as I have worked on academic projects and internships. I have proved as a reliable team member and will continue to do so for your company as well. I am prone to take challenging projects and have a good grip on analytics.

I cannot wait to work with you and grab this opportunity. I want to meet you to discuss the details and how I can best serve your company. Please let me know the appropriate time and venue; I am open to suggestions. Thank you so much for considering my application. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Chris Johnson

1234 15th Street  
Troy, Los Angeles 32980  
(512) 371-0980  
ChrisJo25@live.com  
January 20, 2020  
www.careerservices.txstate.edu  
LBJ Student Center Suite 5-7.1 • 512.245.2645 • [CareerServices@wvuniv.edu](mailto:CareerServices@wvuniv.edu)

## THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMPOSING A COVER LETTER

### USEFUL ACTION VERBS

- What is the potential employer looking for in an employee?

Consider the experiences, knowledge, and skills that the job requires.

- What are your aims?

Are you rooting to get hired? Aiming to score an interview? Or merely looking for a meet-up to discuss your career in the industry? Be clear about your intentions.

- What qualities you have to offer to this job and the employer?

You have to mention at least 2 accomplishments that can help benefit the company and mention your qualities.

- Why are you interested in working with this particular company?

How much do you know about the company? What do you know about its goals, mission, philosophy, services, or products? Do they provoke your interest, values, and background?

**Management Skills**

- Adapted
- Delegated
- Oversaw

**Communication Skills**

- Addressed
- Explained
- Resolved

**Technical Skills**

- Administered
- Maintained
- Utilized

**Teaching Skills**

- Advised
- Coordinated
- Facilitated

**Financial Skills**

- Allocated
- Appraised
- Reduced

**Creative Skills**

- Created
- Invented
- Integrated

**Helping Skills**

- Advocated
- Resolved
- Supported

**Organizational Skills**

- Distributed
- Implemented
- Executed

**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTER**

1. Customize your letter to the extent where it meets the expectations of the employer.
2. Target the requirements of the potential employer rather than what you expect of them.
3. Converse about goals related to career.
4. Do not talk negatively about your life or previous employer.
5. Do not beat about the bush; save time by quickly getting to the point.
6. State your claim with examples.
7. The letter should be no longer than a single page unless you are required to submit longer.
8. Let others review it before you send it to your potential employer.
9. Keep copies of your letters, emails, or fax at hand.
10. Check for any typos or grammatical errors in your resume and cover letter.
11. Use impactful and relevant phrases and jargon.
12. Demonstrate your passion, pride, and enthusiasm for the profession.
13. Do not be casual and keep a formal tone.

14. State information that is pertinent to the job.
15. Get your letter critiqued by career services or go for library resources.



**Career**Services

**[careerservices.dewv.edu](https://careerservices.dewv.edu)**

**Liberal Arts Building 210 • 304.637.1220 • [CareerServices@dewv.edu](mailto:CareerServices@dewv.edu)**