

## Cover Letter Accompanying a Resume or Application

NEVER, EVER  
PHOTOCOPY  
YOUR LETTER!

Current Date

Your Street Address

Your City, State, and Zip Code

(It is also acceptable to have this as a header on your document)

Name of Person

Title or Position

Name of Company

Street Address

City, State and Zip Code

ADDRESS YOUR  
LETTER TO A  
SPECIFIC PERSON  
WHenever  
POSSIBLE

Dear (Use a formal greeting, i.e. "Mr. Jones" or "Ms. Smith"):

**FIRST PARAGRAPH** - Tell why you are writing, name the position for which you are applying, and tell how you heard of the opening. For example, you may begin with a name introduction (if someone your reader knows suggested the position, mention the name).

**SECOND PARAGRAPH** - State why you are interested in working for this employer, and specify your interest in this type of work. If you have had experience, be sure to point out what particular achievements you have accomplished and their importance to this type of work. Point out areas of unique "fit" between your skills and the company and position. This is likely to be the longest paragraph of your letter. You should not simply restate what's on your resume, but help your reader to understand your motivation for wanting the position.

**THIRD PARAGRAPH** - After you have created a desire to know more about you, it is time to close the letter by asking for a course of action. Your request should be specific and positive and ask for action. Suggest a day or week when you will be available for an interview, or offer some similar incentive for an immediate and favorable reply. (Keep in mind that you should follow up with a phone call a few days after you have sent your resume and cover letter.)

MARGINS SHOULD  
BE EVEN AND THE  
LETTER SHOULD BE  
CENTERED FROM  
TOP TO BOTTOM

ALWAYS SIGN  
YOUR LETTER

Sincerely,

*Your Original Signature*

Your Name (Typewritten)

IF A RESUME OR  
OTHER ENCLOSURE  
IS SENT ALSO,  
NOTE IT IN THE  
LETTER

Enclosure

NOTE: IF SENDING  
YOUR LETTER VIA  
EMAIL:

The email header takes the place of the addresses and date shown above. Use a professional subject line. The text of the letter would be the same. Your signature would simply be typewritten. The word "enclosure" would be eliminated because your resume would be an attachment.

# Key Points to Remember about Your Cover Letter

1. Your cover letter is PERSONAL, but NOT UNPROFESSIONAL. It gives insight into you, your motivations, and your personality. It helps employers know you and determine if you would be a good fit with their organization.
2. Follow standard business letter format when presenting your cover letter on paper. Make sure your name and contact information are on the cover letter. You may use your resume "heading" as a stationery for your cover letter if you desire.
3. Address your cover letter to a real person when possible. It may take some effort to find out who that person is, but if you can, the employer will be impressed with your initiative. Donald Asher, a nationally known career expert, says that in his opinion it's better to address a cover letter to the wrong person than to "Dear Personnel Manager."
4. A cover letter should never appear to be a form letter. Employers do not want to feel that you sent the same cover letter to every employer. They want a sense that you know their organization and want the specific job they are offering, not just any job anywhere.
5. Tailor your cover letter for every organization. Your key points may be relatively unchanged, but do enough research that you say something specific and unique in each letter. Do your homework! Don't send your cover letter until you have spent at least ten minutes browsing the company's website.
6. Remember that you can introduce new information in the cover letter. In fact, some information is better said in the cover letter. Things like your motivations, passion, and enthusiasm for the company or job are hard to convey in a resume, yet they are important to an employer when considering whether or not to interview you.
7. On the flip side, remember that a resume and cover letter are often separated once they reach the employer, so don't put important skills or qualifications ONLY in your cover letter.
8. Make sure that you do not simply restate what's on your resume. Instead, draw conclusions from what your resume shows and point out areas of unique "fit" between you and your background and the company and position.
9. Every time you contact a company, send a new cover letter. For example, when you send in the application, send a cover letter. When you provide requested portfolio items, send a new cover letter. Each letter can build on the information in the initial cover letter. It is your goal to stand out from the other candidates. This is one way to do that.
10. Make sure your cover letter bears an original signature if it is submitted on paper.

(Sample Cover Letter)

John K. Smith  
5555 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.  
St. Paul, MN 55555  
555.421.6589  
jksmith@students.nwc.edu

Human Resources  
ABC Company  
555 7<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Suite 5000  
Minneapolis, MN 55412

Dear Mr. Jones:

I would like to express my interest in an entry-level analyst position with Company. Throughout my job search and conversations with investment advisors I have come to respect the professionalism that characterizes your firm and its employees. I am confident that the Company team's values and objectives would highly complement my own strengths and enthusiasm. I would like to be considered for your Investment Banking Analyst Program, or a similar position that requires refined analytical and communication skills.

I was impressed to learn of Company's recent acquisition of Hambrecht Group, a tactic which I see as indicative of Company's commitment to achieving growth and success in the future. Innovative and exciting approaches such as this, coupled with Company's highly regarded Analyst Program, convinced me that Company is the ideal environment to begin my business career. Evidence of my leadership and analytical skills can be seen in my responsibilities as analyst intern at Company, and my commitment to my academics. My educational background in government and business, combined with my internship experiences, has been excellent preparation for a career with Company.

Please review the enclosed resume and references and consider my application for your Investment Banking Analyst program. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and explore the company environment, as well as possible job opportunities at Company. I will call your office next week to discuss these possibilities. I look forward to exchanging ideas with you concerning a career at Company and the positive contributions I would offer as a member of your organization.

Sincerely,

*(signature)*

John K. Smith