

Cover Letter Writing Guide

To some employers, the cover letter is a more important gauge of an applicant's qualifications than the résumé. Letters are scrutinized for grammar, communication skills, and relevance. Every résumé should be accompanied by a well-written cover letter, whether it was requested by the employer or not.

Cover letters should include:

RETURN ADDRESS

Always include your return address and e-mail address (especially if you are sending electronically).

CONTACT INFO

Include any additional contact information that could be useful.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER ADDRESS

Like most formal letters, include your potential employers address in the header.

DATE

Always date your letter.

SALUTATION

Include the salutation specific to the recipient, if known.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

Include where you saw the ad and express your interest in the position.

SECONDARY PARAGRAPH(S)

Provide a brief summary of your skills, accomplishments, experience, and education that are specifically applicable to the job for which you are applying.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

Always include at least one sentence to request a response from your potential employer (at their earliest convenience).

CLOSING & SIGNATURE

In your closing, it is a good idea to thank the reader for taking the time to review your resume.

TIP: If possible, mail or e-mail cover letters to the attention of a specific individual within the company, rather than to Human Resources. If applying to a job via e-mail, include the cover letter in the body of the e-mail or as an attachment and attach your résumé.