How to Write a Cover Letter

A cover letter is a formal letter included with your resume. It’s like a handshake that introduces you to the employer and shows your interest in the job. It gives information about you that a resume can’t, like explaining why your unique set of skills and personal strengths make you the right person for the job. A cover letter can also show employers your ability to communicate, your personality, and your attention to detail. You should always send a cover letter UNLESS the job posting says not to.

**Important Points to Remember**

A cover letter should:

- Contain 3 paragraphs
- Express excitement for the job
- Show some knowledge of the company you are applying to (what interests you)
- Show how your skills and personal strengths match what the employer needs
- Reflect your everyday language (and be professional/respectful)
- Thank the employer
- Use correct spelling and grammar

Tips for cover letter formatting:

- 1” wide margins
- Contact information heading from your resume
- Use a professional, readable font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri) that is the same as your resume font
- Paragraphs should be less than ½ the page, entire cover letter 1 page only

In an **electronic application**, you need to either attach your cover letter OR make your email the cover letter. If you want to make the email your cover letter, start with the greeting and limit to 1-2 paragraphs about the position you’re applying for, why you’re interested, and how your skills are a great match. Mention that your resume is attached.
Names/Addresses/Date

The contact information section from your resume goes at the top of the cover letter. Then align the date, employer’s name and position (if available), and company name and address to the left of the page. A job posting ID or reference number goes after the company’s address. (see sample at end).

Greeting: Address Your Cover Letter to a Person or Job Title

Start your greeting with “To” or “Dear”. Use appropriate titles such as Mr., Ms., Dr., if the name is given (e.g. Dear Mr. Brown, Dear Ms. Jensen). If you are unsure about whether the person is a man or woman, write the employer’s full name (e.g. Dear Alex Jones). If no name is given in the job posting, try searching the company website or calling to find out who will be reviewing the applications.

Otherwise, use a job title (Dear Hiring Manager, Hiring Director, Company Name Representative) or a generic title of the most likely reviewer (Dear Salon Owner, Dear Chef). If it’s a large business with a human resources department, you can say Dear Human Resources. Avoid the phrases “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam”.

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- State what job position you are applying for
- State how you found out about the position (e.g. website, LinkedIn, personal contact)
- Say what interests you about the company
- Briefly say why you are a good match for the position (optional)

Paragraph 2: Body

- Highlight 2 to 3 of your most important skills, experience, education and achievements that make you a great fit for the position
- Give a one sentence example of using your skills and/or personal characteristics
- Tell the employer how you can benefit the company

Paragraph 3: Closing

- If the job posting asks about particular availability, willingness to relocate, work at multiple locations, having your own car – make sure to address these
- Express your interest in an interview and tell the employer how to contact you
- Thank the employer for their consideration or time
A cover letter should be written in your own words and show your unique personality. However, some standard language and phrases appear frequently in cover letters. Here are some ideas to help you write your own cover letter.

**Suggestions for Paragraph 1—Introduction**

- I was excited to see your posting for **job title** at **name of company**.
- I am eager (excited) to apply for the **job title** position at **name of company**.
- I am writing to express my interest in the **job title** position at **name of company**.
- I am applying for the position of **job title** which I found on **website**.
- I am writing in response to the posting on **website** for a **job title**.
- My experience in **skill sets** make me well suited for **job title**.
- I am certain that my **skill sets** would contribute to the success of your organization.

**Suggestions for Paragraph 2—Body**

- As an experienced **job title** with **number** years of experience, I can offer **skill sets**.
- I believe my **skill sets** match what you are looking for.
- I am confident that my **skills sets** would make me an excellent person for this position.
- The key strengths that I possess for this position include **skill sets**.
- My qualifications for this position include **skill sets**.
- Further qualifications I can offer are **skill sets**.

**Suggestions for Paragraph 3—Closing**

- I would welcome an opportunity to meet and discuss how I could contribute to **company name**.
- I am excited to meet with you and talk about this opportunity in more detail.
- I would be happy to meet with you at your earliest convenience.
- I would love the opportunity meet for an interview.
- If you require additional information, please reach me at **telephone/e-mail**.
- You can reach me by phone or email as listed above.
- As mentioned in your job posting, I am available ________.
- I appreciate your time in reviewing my resume and I look forward to hearing from you.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.
June 9, 2017

Mark’s Moving Company
607 Youngman Road
Ottawa, Ontario N1G 7K4

Re: Job Posting 22532

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to apply for the full-time receptionist position which I found on Workopolis. After reading about Mark’s Moving Company’s reputation for customer satisfaction and professionalism, I am excited to contribute to a team who values the same things I do.

From my recent training as an office assistant at Vancouver Community College, I bring strong organizational skills, attention to detail and current software expertise that will help your office operations run smoothly. My previous jobs in hospitality have given me the tools to resolve customer complaints calmly and to the customer’s satisfaction. I enjoy working with people and it shows in the way customers respond positively to my friendly, respectful style of service. Finally, I’m a hard worker who takes initiative and is always looking for the next task that needs doing.

I am confident that I’m the right match for this position. I look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity. Currently I am available to work up to 25 hours a week during weekdays. Please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Perez