

Cover Letter Basics

Every resume should have a unique, personalized cover letter attached. While your resume provides your general qualifications and background information, your cover letter showcases specific skills and interest in the position for which you are applying.

The cover letter allows you to introduce yourself, show how your skills and experience will benefit the company, highlight information addressing the needs and interest of the organization, as well as convince the employer to grant you an interview.

Keep in mind that the letter you write also gives employers a chance to observe your spelling, grammar, attention to detail, and the overall quality of your written communication. Be sure to proof read your letter over and over for typing errors, misspelled words, etc.

Getting Started

- Typed in a business-letter format and printed on quality paper matching your resume.
- Although all the cover letters you send may be similar, each one should be tailored to the position and organization to which it is being sent.
- Address your letter to the appropriate individual with name, title, organization, and address all spelled correctly. Use “Dear Human Resource Manager” only as a last resort. Ideally, try to identify the actual hiring manager and address your letter to him/her.
- Focus on the needs of the employer, not just your own. Mention what you can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you.
- Highlight your skills and abilities - go beyond simply restating what’s already on your resume.
- The best cover letters are short and to the point. Generally they contain 3 paragraphs:

FIRST PARAGRAPH: *Who You Are and What You Want*

Briefly introduce yourself, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of job you are applying for, and how you learned about the opening.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: *Why Are You a Good Candidate*

In one or two brief paragraphs, describe highlights of greatest interest to the employer. Focus on skills, activities, accomplishments, education, and past experiences. Mention specific/relevant knowledge you may have (i.e. computer applications, foreign languages, special training, etc.) Be sure to show how your background matches the job duties and responsibilities required for the position.

THIRD PARAGRAPH: *Closing – Next Step*

In closing, indicate your desire for a personal interview and that you will follow up on your letter. Express your willingness to provide additional information and be sure to thank the employer for their time and consideration.

- Always sign your cover letters and use only blue or black ink.
- Proofread to correct all spelling, grammatical, and typing errors. Both the cover letter and the resume must be mistake free! Contact the Student Career & Employment Office to schedule a quick “cover letter critique”. To make an appointment call 281-425-6572.

Student Career & Employment Office

Moler Hall, Room 107 ★ Phone: 281.425.6572 ★ Email: hirearebel@lee.edu ★ Web: www.lee.edu/hirearebel

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

August 1, 20xx

Ms. Jill Smith
Office Manager
ABC Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 123
Baytown, Texas 77522

Re: Administrative Assistant Position (Job # 54321)

Dear Ms. Smith.

I am sending the enclosed resume in response to the Administrative Assistant position advertised in the Sunday, August, 1, 20xx, issue of the Houston Chronicle. In December 20xx, I will be graduating with an Associate Degree in Professional Office Technology. I am interested in applying my education and work experience to a position such as this one.

According to the advertisement, your position requires a candidate who possesses excellent communication skills and word processing abilities. These are skills I developed throughout my academic and work experiences. As an Intern for the City of Baytown, I composed correspondence, researched and compiled client files, and analyzed information for the use of my employer. In addition, I have excellent word processing, spreadsheets, filing, bookkeeping, and appointment scheduling skills.

I am confident that my education, skills, and professionalism will benefit ABC Company, Inc. I would like to request a few minutes of your time to discuss my qualifications. Please call me at (000) 000-0000. I will be available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jessica Jobless

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