

YOUR COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a business letter that accompanies each resume you send to a prospective employer. The cover letter serves as an introduction; it tells an employer who you are and why you are sending them your resume. The cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to bring your data-oriented, factual resume to life and add a personal touch.

Cover Letter Benefits:

Your cover letter provides a storyline and valuable context about your experience and interests. Although some employers do not request cover letters, you should embrace the opportunity to submit one whenever possible because it can persuade an employer in ways a resume alone cannot.

- Tells the story a resume can't: *Articulates why this company, job, career path*
- Convinces reader you can excel in the job: *Connects skills & experience to job needs*
- Distinguishes you from other candidates: *Can express passion for company, how you'll add value, fit with the culture*
- Persuades reader to champion you: *Demonstrates communications skills, amplifies accomplishments, and puts resume in context*

Creating a Cover Letter:

Step 1: Match your skills to the job description

Read through the job description, pulling out:

- Key responsibilities
- Skills (required/preferred)
- Experiences
- Attributes
- Specific, unique language or buzzwords

Step 2: Connect 3-4 job requirements with your skills and experience

Identify where your experiences, skills, and interests match key elements of the job description. For the strongest matches, note specific examples, and where there are no direct matches, identify experiences that demonstrate comparable skills. Select the job's 3-4 most important elements and your strongest stories to include in your cover letter.

Step 3: Create an outline for your cover letter

A cover letter consists of 3 parts – the Hook, the Sell, and the Ask – so create an outline answering the following questions for each section.

1) Opening: The Hook (Keep Them Reading)

- Who are you, why are you writing, which job?
- Attention-grabbing, hard-hitting, entice readers to learn more - what do you know about them from your research?
- Leverage company enthusiasm, research, people you spoke with
- Share qualifications, results, anecdote, connections

2) Body: The Sell (Connect Job Needs with Your Qualifications)

- Layout: Succinct with either 1 longer or 3 shorter bulleted paragraphs (see Cover Letter Guide samples)
- Select 3 job requirements & tie them to your skills, experience, attributes - show them how you did it
- Illustrate accomplishments and lessons learned by quantifying your contributions and value
- Make the case for switching industries or functions - show your transferrable skills

3) Close: The Ask (Request Action)

- Add what you are doing at Yale to position yourself to this employer/industry
- Recap what you can CONTRIBUTE, reiterate your interest
- Your follow-up next steps and/or specific ask (e.g., call interview)
- Thank you and call to action

Step 4: Develop key sentences of your cover letter

Using your outline information, write key sentences for each section of your cover letter.

Hook examples:

- *“I am a first-year MBA student at the Yale School of Management with extensive experience in government, and am writing to apply for the Business Plan Internship.”*
- *“With my deep management consulting experience, passion for healthcare and Yale MBA, I am delighted to apply for the Consultant position.”*

Sell examples:

- *“As a Senior Analyst at ABC Company, I applied rigorous quantitative methods to assess the economic value of dozens of products. Handling multiple cases simultaneously, I successfully managed teams of analysts, never missing a deadline.”*
- *“Prior to Yale, I worked in a range of roles at the XYZ Bank, where I initiated and managed loans for small, medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and start-ups that some commercial banks avoided, but our sophisticated models identified companies with solid value propositions, and which later became successful.”*

Close examples:

- *“I am very interested in learning more about this opportunity and discussing the leadership expertise and results I can bring as your strategy intern.”*
- *“The enclosed resume demonstrates my track record of consistently high achievement, strategic abilities, analytical skills, team leadership, and ability to deliver results. I look forward to discuss next steps around how my skills and experience would benefit your organization.”*

Step 5: Finalize cover letter.

Complete writing your entire cover letter, and review against Cover Letter Checklist.

Formatting Guidelines

- Length: 1-page maximum, be as succinct as possible
- Header: consistent with your resume, professional stationery look, can create your own
- Salutation: formal if have contact info, otherwise omit or Dear Hiring Manager

[YOUR COVER LETTER RESOURCES:](#)

- Cover Letter Template
- Sample Cover Letters



WORKSHEET: Job Description vs. Experience Comparison

<u>Job Description</u> List the key requirements: skills, experiences, attributes	<u>My Skills</u> Do you have a match for this requirement from your own skill set? (Y/N). If not, try identifying comparable skills or experiences.	<u>Details</u> Provide an illustrative example from your education or professional experience



WORKSHEET: Cover Letter Outline

Introduction (The Hook)	
How will you introduce yourself?	
What is the position?	
What contacts have you spoken with? Note if someone has specifically referred you to this position	
What relevant/intriguing information have you learned from your company research?	
Why the company/industry/function?	
What is your unique "hook" that will compel the reader to want to learn more about you?	
Body (The Sell)	
Integrate examples from the skill match grid that tie your qualities/experiences to the requirements of the job.	
Example #1 that ties your skills to the job requirements	
Example #2 that ties your skills to the job requirements	
Example #3 that ties your skills to the job requirements	
Example #4 that ties your skills to the job requirements	
Closing (The Ask)	
Summarize why you are a good fit for the role	
What is your "ask"?	
What next steps do you propose?	
Thank the reader	

WORKSHEET: Cover Letter Draft

Opening (The Hook)	Feedback/ Notes
Body (The Sell)	Feedback/ Notes
Closing (The Ask)	Feedback/ Notes

WORKSHEET: Cover Letter Checklist

GENERAL	Y/N?
Makes a clear statement of what value you will bring to the organization	
Makes it easy for reader to identify what key skills and attributes you have to offer	
Conveys your passion for the company, role, and industry	
Tailors content throughout the letter, not just the introduction	
Provides information beyond what is found in your resume	
EMPLOYER RESEARCH	
Uses specific information garnered from informational interviews, presentations, industry sources and company news to demonstrate your interest and fit with the company	
Mentions by name individuals with whom you've had meaningful conversations	
Indicates specific divisions or departments that interest you, where applicable	
MATCH TO JOB DESCRIPTION	
Draws distinct connections between the job requirements and your skills, experiences, and attributes	
Uses specific examples and quantified (or qualified) results to demonstrate competencies	
Addresses most/many of the requirements listed in the job description	
Clearly translates prior experiences to demonstrate preparedness for the desired role	
FORMAT	
One page	
Uses an 11 or 12 pt font	
Uses margins at least 1" all around	
Uses proper business formatting and spacing	
Includes your phone number and email	
Incorporates sufficient white space	
Includes specific recipient salutation and contact information (avoid generic greeting if possible, but use "Dear Hiring Manager" if no alternative)	
WATCHOUTS	
Uses the same reasons for interest in the company as are used in letters to other companies (or uses an overly generic reasons)	
Same skills/experiences used in every letter (not tailored to specific job requirements)	
Written from the "me" perspective – focuses on what the opportunity will do for you and doesn't tell the employer what value you bring to their organization	
Restates what is written in your resume	
Includes spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, wrong company name or other mistakes	
Recycles a CDO "Best Practice" sample letter; cover letters must all be your own original work	
Is boring – lacks the relevance or level of interest to make the reader want to learn more	