

# HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Cover letters—used for both job and internship applications—are a great way to demonstrate your connection to the position you are seeking. Show how your past experience, education, and skills directly relate to the **job or internship posting and demonstrate how you fit within the organization.**

- Highlight relevant skills, experiences, and accomplishments
- Demonstrate your fit to the organization and position
- Persuade reader to interview you

## SECTIONS

- **Introduction:** Get their attention, summarize your qualifications, connect to the reader
  - Include the position title
  - Where you learned of it
  - Summarize your **relevant** qualifications, strengths, or achievements
  - Share why you fit with the organization
- **Body paragraphs:** Provide proof that you are a fit!
  - Using the job posting, share specific examples of when you've excelled at the required knowledge, skills, or abilities. The STAR model creates a nice framework:
    - ★ **Situation**   ★ **Task**   ★ **Action**   ★ **Result**
  - Include 2 or 3 specific examples: Draw example from previous jobs, class projects, student involvement, or any experiences where you've used the skills needed. Have you been successful at personal investing? Coached a sporting team? Taught or tutored? Those all can contain solid example stories!
- **Closing:** Summary and Call to Action
  - Restate your interest and fit with the position and organization
  - Include your call to action: “ask” for the interview
  - Convey gratitude and enthusiasm

## FORMATTING TIPS

- Use header from resume
- Under your heading, include date, employer name, title, company name address
- Set margins to 1.0 (0.5 at the top if using resume header)
- Clean, legible, professional font (no Comic Sans or Olde English) in 10-12 pt size
- Single spaced, add one space between paragraphs
- File name ex: FullName\_Application.docx
- **Salutation:** Keep it professional (Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Mx) Use first and last name if unsure of gender preference. DO NOT use “To Whom It May Concern”
- Closing: Use professional sign off: Sincerely, Kind Regards, etc.
- 4 line returns between closing and name; add digital signature (take a photo or use paint program) or typeface representing your signature.

## Why do I need a Cover Letter?

- 87% of recruiters read them
- 65% of recruiters agreed it influenced decision to interview or hire
- Show fit to company AND role
- Include extra information: referral, relocation or explain a gap
- Match qualifications to job in a narrative format

# COVER LETTER: QUICK GUIDE



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## HEADING

- Include date + one line return
- Employer name (if known), title, company name, mailing address+ one line return

## TOP HEADER

- Match your resume header for continuity
- Include your name & contact information
- Use an easy-to-read font

### Ima Student

999 S. Monaco Circle, Englewood, CO 80112 | [Ima.Student@university.edu](mailto:Ima.Student@university.edu) | (999) 555-1234

January 10, 20XX

Jill Delaney  
Chesapeake Media Group  
Regional Sales Manager  
499 East Pennsylvania Avenue  
Denver, CO 81209

Dear Jill Delaney:

After speaking with Jocelyn Smith at the Colorado State University College of Business Job & Internship Expo last week, I am excited to submit my application for the Account Associate Intern position. The high level of service that Chesapeake provides its clients through historical and economic resources and relocation guides, matches my own commitment to strong client relations. This commitment, combined with strong public speaking skills and initiative, makes me an excellent fit for this position.

My key accomplishments include:

**Client Relations:** During a previous Sales Support Internship at Wilson Direct Marketing, I successfully responded to an urgent client need, the client requested changes to their marketing campaign. Within a three-hour window, I prioritized this request, quickly brainstormed strategic solutions, and worked with the client via phone and email to make changes and exceed product delivery expectations. I welcome the opportunity to bring this same level of initiative to Chesapeake Media Group.

**Public Speaking:** During my academic career, I have been asked to speak in front of classes in group projects, present to student organizations, and to university leadership as a member of the student senate. I understand the need to tailor messaging and offer clear information to strengthen my position and the audience's understanding.

**Initiative:** During a group project, one of our members was unable to fulfill his portion due to a family emergency. I took the initiative to gather the drafts he had submitted, contacted the other team members to distribute the remaining work, and worked through the night to compile our final presentation. The presentation was a success, and the entire team was proud of our ability to collaborate and support each other.

With these experiences, I can contribute to your outstanding record of client service and work to maintain your ranking in the top 5 percent in the nation for publishing revenue. My combined skills in client service and public speaking are certain to add value to the Chesapeake Media Group team. Please contact me at [Ima.Student@university.edu](mailto:Ima.Student@university.edu) or (999) 555-1234 to arrange an interview. Thank you for considering me as a candidate for the Intern position.

Kind Regards,

Ima J. Obseker

Tip: Use a paint program or a photo to upload your signature!

## SALUTATION

- Keep it professional (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Mx) Use first and last name if unsure of gender preference
- Avoid using "To Whom It May Concern"
- Options: Dear Hiring Manager, Human Resources, or department name

## INTRO: Get Attention

Info to Include:

- Title of position
- Interest or connection
- Summarize **relevant** qualifications & achievements
- Your fit with the organization

## BODY: Prove Yourself

- Use the job posting and share specific examples of relevant skills
- Include 2 or 3 specific examples (show vs. tell)

## CLOSE: Call-to-Action

- Restate your interest and fit with the position & organization
- Include your call to action: "ask" for the interview
- Convey gratitude and enthusiasm

## CLOSING

- Use professional sign off: Sincerely, Kind Regards
- 4 line returns between closing and name; add digital signature

## FORMATTING TIPS

- Single spaced, add one space between paragraphs
- File name ex: FullName\_Application.pdf
- Spell check and proof read
- Margins 0.8 to 1.0
- Legible font: 10-12 pt size (No Comic Sans/Script)