

how to write a COVER LETTER *that scores you an* INTERVIEW

2 CONNECT THE DOTS.

The body of your cover letter should include a paragraph or two that explains—in a concise and specific way—**how your experiences, skills, and/or goals match the organization’s needs and goals.**

Choose one or two specific examples from your experience to back up your claim that you are a good fit for this position. This is not the place to restate everything in your resume; instead, concentrate on making the case that you are a great candidate for this *particular* job.

Remember, every cover letter you send out should be tailored to the position and organization for which you are applying! Research the organization’s website and know what their goals are.

1 INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

A cover letter serves as your **introduction** to the hiring manager or selection committee. Think of it like a handshake—in your cover letter, your objective is to introduce yourself and start to convince the reader that you are a good fit for this particular position.

Your first paragraph should answer the questions: **who are you, and why are you applying for this position?**

If you have a personal contact at the company or organization who informed you of the open position, this is also the place to mention that person’s name.

3 SIGN OFF AND SHAPE IT UP.

In your final paragraph, restate your interest in learning more about this position, and provide **contact information** where you can be reached for an interview or further discussion.

Before sending, check the **formatting** of your letter. Cover letters are a type of business letter, and business letters follow specific rules in regard to indenting and modes of address. You should also make sure your cover letter is no longer than one page.



Your Name
Your Address

The date on which you submit your cover letter

(Dr./Mr./Ms.) First & Last Name of person who will be reviewing your application
Person's job title
Name of organization
Organization's address

Dear (Dr./Mr./Ms.) First Name Last Name:

Don't know their name?

You can write "Dear Hiring Manager:" or "To Whom It May Concern:" instead.

It is best if you can start with a sentence that expresses your interest and enthusiasm for the organization and/or the position for which you are applying. Then mention some strengths or experiences you have that make you a great candidate for this position. If someone recommended you or suggested you apply for this position, and/or there are specific reasons why you are excited about this organization, do not be shy—state this. This opening paragraph is a perfect place to mention something that has impressed you about this organization (e.g., something you read on their website or in a recent news article). This shows that you have done your research.

The middle paragraph (or two) should focus on the skills and experiences you have that are most relevant to the job for which you are applying. (Hint: it is a good idea to use some of the words and phrases that appear in the job posting/position description.) Be specific—describe how you have applied your skills previously and what you accomplished/contributed in your previous experiences. Next, state how you look forward to using these skills and strengths to help this organization. Keep each paragraph between 4 and 8 lines to prevent the reader from becoming overwhelmed. Make sure not to repeat your resume—expand on your experiences and skills.

In your last paragraph, write about what you would like to happen next (i.e. an interview or opportunity to talk about this position further). Provide information for how you can be reached, whether it is by email, phone number, or both (include this information in this sentence). Unless the job posting specifically states not to, you can write that you plan to follow up in a week or two via phone or email. Thank them for their time and consideration. Make sure that your cover letter is no longer than a page.

Sincerely,

Your name signed here in black ink (if turning in hard copy)

Your name typed here

Submitting digitally? Don't worry about signing your name. If submitting via email, you may consider using the body of the email as the place for your cover letter.