

The Cover Letter

When applying for an internship or job, it is important to send a cover letter, especially in today's competitive economy. Sometimes referred to as a Letter of Application or Letter of Intent, a cover letter is an opportunity to highlight your skills according to the employer's needs and to describe the positive qualities you possess. Employers also look at your cover letter as an example of your writing skills.

There are three basic components of a cover letter:

Introduction - Describe why you have chosen this employer.

- What position are you applying for?
- How did you find out about the position?
- Why are you interested in this specific company?

Body - Highlight how your skills meet the employer's needs. Give examples.

- Look at the internship or job posting. What skills does the employer want?
- Sell yourself. Highlight your skills and explain how you have demonstrated these skills in work, volunteer, or classroom experiences.

Closing - Next steps.

- Reiterate your interest in the position and company.
- Indicate that you would like to meet the employer.
- Thank the employer and list your contact information.

Email Versus Hard Copy of the Cover Letters

Carefully read how the employer wants you to apply and follow directions! However, most employers want you to apply online.

- Large companies will use Applicant Tracking Systems, so you may need to upload a resume and cover letter, as well as complete their required fields. If there is only one field to post a resume, you may copy and paste your cover letter to the bottom of your resume and upload it as one document.
- Small to medium-sized companies may want you to email documents directly to a human resource professional or hiring manager. You may do this in various ways, depending upon your preference.
 1. The email is your cover letter, and you attach a copy of your resume.
 2. You have two attachments; one is your cover letter and the other is your resume. You would need a brief introduction in your email, such as "Attached is a cover letter and resume for the name of the position."
 3. Email a brief introduction and attach the cover letter and resume as one document.

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Salutations

When writing a cover letter, a colon should go after the salutation because it is a more formal correspondence.

Formal correspondence should start with Dear Mr. or Ms. Lastname:

- If you know someone is a doctor or attorney, it may be Dear Dr. Lastname: or Dear Attorney Lastname:
- If possible, obtain a direct person's name. If you cannot, then Dear Hiring Manager: is acceptable.
- If it is a gender-neutral name, you may state Dear First name Last name:

Quick Tips

- Cover letters should not exceed one page.
- Use the same font as your resume.
- Please PROOFREAD!
- Only include salary requirements if requested.
- Research salaries on websites like www.salary.com or www.payscale.com to get comparable salaries and include a range, i.e., \$70,000 - \$80,000 (This is just an example. Salaries vary between positions and industries).

Sample Cover Letter 1

Dear Mr. Kinney:

I am writing to apply for the Underwriter position that is posted on the Traveler's website. As a senior graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Post University, I am interested in starting my career at an established company with an excellent reputation for providing superior customer service. Your promise to "...take care of our customers, our communities, and each other" is impressive. I would like to join your team.

My professional background and educational training have prepared me to be a valuable asset to Travelers. I completed an internship in banking that has allowed me to develop the ability to analyze data, resolve issues, and effectively communicate with diverse populations. Due to my coursework, I have a solid foundation in accounting, finance, and business operations which would be valuable to apply to underwriting.

Currently, I work at Thomaston Savings Bank as a Customer Service Representative. I started as a Teller but was promoted to a Customer Service Representative position six months ago due to my attention to detail, excellent customer service, and keen interest in learning about various products and services for consumers. Supervisors have complimented me on my ability to work well independently and in a team environment and to learn quickly. I have also developed strong time management and organizational skills since I consistently work 30+ hours while attending school full-time and maintaining a 3.5 GPA.

I would be happy to further discuss my qualifications for the position during an interview. Please contact me should you need additional information at (555) 555-5555 or by email at firstname.lastname@gmail.com. Thank you for taking the time to review my application and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Your Name

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Sample Cover Letter 2

To: abjones@norwalkpublic.gov

Subject: Your name – Post University Career Fair

Dear Mr. Jones:

It was a pleasure to speak with you at the Post University Career Fair on April 9th. Your enthusiasm for working in the Norwalk Public School system, as well as hearing about their exciting initiatives, makes me eager to apply. Per your request, I applied online, as well as following up with a personal email.

As we discussed, I worked in a pre-K classroom at Regan Elementary School, as part of my student teaching experience. I learned a great deal including the importance of classroom management techniques, providing age-appropriate supervision and discipline, and effectively communicating with parents about their children's learning and behavior. I enjoy planning and implementing engaging lesson plans while taking into account each child's cognitive development. In addition, we discussed the similarities between the Waterbury Public School system and Norwalk's regarding student and parent demographics in an urban community. I have a deep respect for cultural awareness and strive to learn as much as I can about the students' cultures to meet their needs, as well as to provide a fun and safe learning environment for all children.

Thank you again for speaking with me at the career fair and encouraging me to apply for the kindergarten teaching position. Attached is a copy of my resume for your review. I look forward to discussing how my skills and enthusiasm for teaching meet the Norwalk Public School system's needs

Yours truly,

Your Name