

COVER LETTER

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter, or letter of application, is a letter you submit to an employer with your resume and employment application. In a cover letter, you need to:

- Explain how you learned of the position;
- Briefly describe your education and/or experience;
- Explain why you are a good candidate for the position; and
- Ask for a personal interview.

What is the purpose of a cover letter?

A cover letter is a quick introduction of yourself and your top qualities. It allows you to sell yourself to a prospective employer. It also gives employers a chance to see how well you express yourself in writing and how much effort you are willing to make to get the job.

Can I use the same cover letter for more than one job?

You will have to modify portions of your cover letter each time you submit it to a new employer, but there is a good chance that much of it will remain the same.

How long is a cover letter?

A cover letter should never exceed one page.

Should my cover letter be in any particular format?

Like your resume, your cover letter must be pleasing to the eye to be effective. It must be free of errors and well written. Also, be sure to follow the formatting instructions for each job posting. Certain sites require .txt or .doc instead of a PDF.

How do I create an effective cover letter?

Later in this packet, you will find a sample cover letter. Here are some general tips:

- Use a standard font on 8.5 x 11, high quality, white paper. Be sure to use one inch margins.
- Keep your letter short and to the point. Include only important information.
- Focus on strengths, not weaknesses.
- Call the company and ask for the proper spelling of the name of person to whom the letter will be sent.
- Proofread carefully. Ask two other individuals, including an English teacher, to proofread your cover letter too.
- If you are responding to a newspaper advertisement, mail your response within three days of its listing in the newspaper.

Cover Letter Format

Use the cover letter format below as a guide for your own cover letter. Pay close attention to the number of spaces between sections and paragraphs.

*Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Date*

4 Line Spaces

*Contact's Name and Title
Employer's Street Address
Employer's City, State Zip Code*

2 Line Spaces

Contact's Name:

1 Line Space

In the first paragraph, tell why you are writing the letter. Also, give the specific name of the position for which you are applying and explain how you became aware of the opening.

1 Line Space

In the second paragraph, briefly describe your education and experience. Explain why you would be a good candidate for this position. Sell yourself!

1 Line Space

In the third and final paragraph, tell the prospective employer what you have enclosed with the cover letter. Close the letter by thanking the contact for his or her consideration and asking for an interview. Express your desire to hear from the employer soon. Include your phone number so they can call you if they are interested in scheduling an interview.

1 Line Space

Sincerely,

4 Line Spaces *(Sign your name in blue or black ink here)*

Your name typed

2 Line Spaces

Enclosure (Typing this word lets the employer know that other materials, such as a resume and employment application, are also enclosed in the envelope.)

Sample Cover Letter

41442 Dover Lane
Corunna, MI 48817
September 22, 2016

Ms. Julie Atkins
Kennedy Accounting Services
17000 South Main Street
Owosso, MI 48867

Dear Ms. Atkins:

I am writing this letter in response to your posting in the *Owosso Argus Press* for an office assistant. I think you will find that my qualifications match your requirements for this job very closely.

From May to August of 2016, I worked as a clerical assistant for Shiawassee Development Center. My duties there included answering phones, relaying messages, and maintaining files. I have also successfully completed courses in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and accounting. As a result, I have the basic understanding of business accounting processes that you listed as a desired qualification in your job posting.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. Please feel free to contact me at any time at 989.556.3434 to schedule an interview. I am looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryrose Sigro

Maryrose Sigro

Enclosure

Sample Envelope

Be sure to send your cover letter and other enclosures in an envelope that is addressed properly. The name and address of the person sending a letter is placed in the upper, left corner of the envelope. The name and address of the recipient is placed in the center of the envelope. Use the sample envelope below as a guide when preparing your own envelope.

Maryrose Sigro
41442 Dover Lane
Corunna, MI 48817

Ms. Julie Atkins
Kennedy Accounting Services
17000 South Main Street
Owosso, MI 48867

Cover Letter Checklist

Use the checklist below to ensure that your cover letter is complete, accurate, and effective.

Heading

Your address is complete/correct
Date is current
Employer's address is complete/correct

Greeting

Contact's name is spelled correctly
Greeting is followed by a colon

First Paragraph

Explains the purpose of the letter
Names the position
Explains how you learned of the position

Second Paragraph

Describes your education and experience
Focuses on why you are a good candidate

Third Paragraph

Tells what you have enclosed
Thanks the employer
Asks for an interview
Includes your phone number

Closing

Letter is signed in blue or black ink
Enclosure notation is added

Overall Quality of Letter

Proper spacing between sections/lines
Paper is 8.5 x 11, high quality, white
Easy to understand
Short and to the point
Neat in appearance
Free of errors