

Composing a Cover Letter

A cover letter is a one-page document that expresses interest in a position or rotation, while also highlighting important job-related skills and experiences. Most employers recommend, or even require, a cover letter to be sent in alongside an application and resume or CV. Cover letters are a unique chance to share your personality, as well as to draw an employer's attention to specific areas of your resume or CV. Finally, a cover letter works as a writing sample to share with a future employer.

Formatting

This one-page document is usually formatted as a business communication, which uses its own heading style. In addition, cover letters consist of 3-4 paragraphs. These paragraphs are shorter in length, are written in 12 pt. serif fonts if mailed (sans serif if uploaded), and are single spaced.

A business communication heading consists of these elements: the date, name, and title of the hiring agent, the company, and the company's address. For example,

October 20, 2021

Helen Johnston, Hiring Manager
Sky Ridge Surgical Center
10099 Ridge Gate Pkwy
Conifer Building, Suite 100
Lone Tree, CO 80124

Dear Ms. Johnston,

Content

When writing a cover letter, it is important to know the answers to a few basic questions before beginning to outline and draft. This might take a bit of research but will improve the overall quality of a cover letter.

- What organization am I applying to?
- What are the organization's goals and values?
- What position am I applying to?
- What, or who, makes this opening unique or desirable?
- What skills or experiences can I bring to this position that make me valuable?

Organization

A complete cover letter should have approximately 3-4 paragraphs: an introduction, which explains how you heard about the position; 1-2 middle paragraphs, which explain your qualifications from your resume; and a conclusion, which presents a call to action to your reader.

- First Paragraph
 - Mention the position (number and title) and where you found the position
 - Express your interest in the position
 - Advocate that you are qualified for the position
 - Forecast what you will discuss in the rest of the letter (thesis statement)
- Middle Paragraphs
 - Outline your qualifications and connect them to the company's values and need (topic sentences)
 - Each paragraph should highlight a distinct quality
 - Refer to specific and relevant education, internship, or work experiences
 - Do not simply restate your resume
 - Use examples that include a situation, action, and result (see resources on **TsarC** for help)
 - Express your interest in working for the company
- Conclusion Paragraph
 - Mention any enclosures or attachments
 - Or list enclosures at the bottom of the page
 - Express interest in an interview, if appropriate
 - Offer to provide further information
 - Thank the reader for their consideration

Editing

When your cover letter is done being outlined and drafted, it is important that it is edited thoroughly. To help with this process, proofread:

- Read aloud to identify grammatical errors
- Revise for short, clear, and concise sentences
- Use active voice and strong action verbs
- Have multiple reviewers workshop and critique your cover letter