

TIPS FOR WRITING A COVER LETTER

Salutation: Address the letter to a specific person when possible.

Tone should be professional and confident.

Formatting: Match it to your resume. Use standard margins and fonts (no smaller than 10 pts). Justify to the left and don't start more than two inches from the top. Make it easy to read.

Don't repeat: Your name (it is already on the letter). Your resume (they have it). Yourself (keep the letter succinct and on topic. Don't fluff with repetitive words or phrases.)

Length: 3-4 paragraphs

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself and explain why you are writing. Tell the employer why you are interested and qualified. If someone referred you, say so here.

Paragraph 2 / 3: Tell your story. Explain why you are qualified. Focus more on what you will contribute to this position than on what you have done in past experiences. Make it easy for the hiring manager to see how you are prepared by explicitly connecting your own skills, experiences and knowledge to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the job description. *Avoid repeating what is already written on your resume.*

Final Paragraph: Summarize why you are uniquely qualified and interested in the position. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration. Clearly state your plan for following up.

Stay Focused. Make sure each sentence tells the reader something that will help convince him/her you should be considered for the position. Don't include superfluous information.

Avoid jargon and cliches: This is your chance to make yourself stand out from the competition as knowledgeable and qualified but also relatable. Don't waste space on phrases that are difficult to understand or could describe anyone.

Stay Future and Action oriented: Make it easy for the hiring manager to see how you are a good fit for the position and can deliver on the key priorities outlined in the job description. Use examples from previous experiences as evidence of how you can perform in the future.

Be Yourself: This is your chance to shine. Find ways to let your personality and passions show. Use stories. Don't be overly formal if that's not your style. Let the atmosphere of the organization drive your writing.

Stay Positive: Don't apologize for the skills or experiences you don't have. Focus on strengths and transferable skills.

Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.

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