

Cover Letter 101

1: ALWAYS write a cover letter, unless otherwise stated.

2: FORMAT: This is a business letter. Keep it short and to the point. Use resume paper for the hard copy.

3: HEADING: Use the same heading as you have on your resume.

4: ADDRESS IT to someone whenever possible. Find a name and address on the company website if it is not on the job posting.

- Spell their name correctly. Use a formal full-name greeting with professional titles such as “Mr.,” “Ms.” or “Dr.” whenever applicable.
- Use a generic greeting if you don’t know the name of the person you are addressing.
 - Possible options: Dear Human Resource Manager, Hiring Manager, Recruiting Manager, or Talent Acquisition Coordinator
- Do not assume their gender and preferred title. Remain gender neutral if you have their name and are unsure of how to address them. Include both first and last name in your greeting or research the person to find more information.

5: TARGET your cover letter! The purpose of a cover letter is to elaborate upon your strengths by directly relating what you have to offer in that position to this company or organization.

- Do not repeat your resume.
- Do not copy sample cover letters verbatim.
- Highlight accomplishments, measurable results, qualitative skills such as communication, attention to detail, team-player, leadership, time management, etc. Support with examples.

6: JOB POSTING: Save a copy of the job or internship description to assist with the focus of your letter.

- Underline or highlight the skills and qualifications that you have.
- Consider any additional knowledge you have about the position/company/industry which may also be helpful in targeting your comments.
 - Position states: Must have exceptional time management skills.
 - Cover letter: (skill/strength + supporting example)
 - Weak example – I have exceptional time management skills.
 - Strong example – My ability to manage my time well has allowed me to maintain a strong academic record while participating in both internships and activities.

7: SELL YOURSELF! Keep the focus on what you will add to their company, not how this employer will help your career.

- Avoid: Your company has such a strong reputation and it would be a great opportunity for me to work for you.
- Better: During my internship with company Y, I developed the analytical skills that would strengthen my contribution to your department.

8: NO SPELLING OR TYPING ERRORS