



MarymountManhattan

What is a Cover Letter?

The cover letter allows you to expand and elaborate on information contained in your resume. It is a summary of your highlighted experiences that also includes your overall objective. An effective cover letter is specifically tailored for the position to which you are applying. You should always include a cover letter when applying for a job, whether you apply by email or in person.

Cover Letter Checklist- Check mark as you go!

- You've used an appropriate, business format for your letter.
- Your cover letter is no more than one page in length.
- You have researched and gone over the job description for the position you are applying.
- The first paragraph states the title of the position for which you are applying, along with a brief description of why you are interested in the position.
- The second paragraph refers the reader to the resume by highlighting examples of specific experiences that relate directly to the qualifications and job responsibilities of the position. (Make sure you're not regurgitating your resume here!)
- You have used the language the employer uses in the job description in your writing.
- The final paragraph thanks the reader for considering your application, and indicates your interest in discussing the position in an interview setting.
- Your cover letter is not just listing experiences that are already on the resume.
- Your contact information is included on the cover letter.
- You have addressed the letter to a specific hiring manager using "Dear Mr./Mrs."
- Your cover letter is free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- You've had at least one other person read over your cover letter.

Cover Letter Tips

- Your cover letter must be focused and specific to the position for which you are applying!
- Research the organization, and get to know the job description/posting very well.
- Appearance counts! Make sure margins are even, and try to balance the letter on the page.
- Use the same font and text size in your cover letter as in your resume.
- Always address the recipient by his /her title and last name (Mr. Smith/Mrs. Smith) even if the individual is an acquaintance or someone you know very well.
- Vary your sentence structure- do not start every sentence with "I."
- Pay attention to the qualifications sought in the job posting/description and highlight the ones you have in your cover letter.
- Be absolutely certain that your cover letter has zero typos, misspellings or grammatical errors-- the cover letter is your very FIRST impression to the employer!
- Keep a copy of each letter you send. This serves as a record of your contacts for each position!

**Sample Cover Letter*

Your Name
Address
Phone Number
Email Address

Date:

Ms./Mr./Dr. and First and Last Name
Their position/title

Company Name
Address
City, State, Zip-code

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. Last Name:
(Never use Mrs. unless you know for a fact she is married)

The first paragraph of your cover letter should get the reader's attention, stimulate interest, and be appropriate for the job you are seeking. You should make your goal clear to readers. You must mention what position you are interested in or applying for. It is also appropriate to mention where you learned of the job opening.

For the body paragraph, or second paragraph, focus on your two or three strongest qualifications for the position you are applying for. Even only one strong qualification is enough to discuss in a cover letter. Remember, your letter as a whole should not exceed one typed page! **Don't just paraphrase what can be found in your resume.** Be sure to illustrate what you personally bring to the position with specific details, and you should demonstrate how your experiences will benefit the employer.

In the final paragraph, you should thank the reader for taking the time to read and consider your application. Reiterate your interest in the position, and why you are a fit for the position. Let them know that you are excited about the opportunity to further discuss your resume and the job description.

Remember to write "Sincerely" or a similar closing, and then type your full name.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name