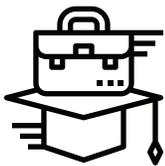


# HOW TO CREATE YOUR COVER LETTER

## WHY?

To introduce yourself. You want to be more than a resume, so begin by telling your story clearly, quickly, and compellingly.

## BEFORE YOU START



### Think about why you're applying to this job.

Your reason for applying to a position is a significant indicator of how you'll succeed in the position. Try to link your reason for applying to the company's reason for hiring.



### Think about the specific job you're applying to.

Read and reread the job description. Research the company online. List out key words and phrases from both and use them when discussing your own qualifications. Consider how your experience suits you for this particular job.



### Think about the person who will be reading your cover letter.

Remember that it's a real person who will be reading your cover letter. They do not owe you anything, and it's their job to find great candidates. Make it easy for them to get excited about you.



### Think about your cover letter as a storytelling document.

Your cover letter summarizes your story and connects it to this position, so make sure your story tells why your life up to this point makes this job the perfect next step for you.

## SECTIONS

- **Header:** Both yours and the employer's contact information followed by the date.
  - Your information includes first and last name, address, phone, and email.
- **Salutation:** Address either the hiring manager or the head of the department you're applying to and be sure to use their title (Mr./Mrs./Dr.). If you absolutely can't find that info, use 'to whom it may concern' and begin your introduction.
- **Introduction:** Tell them the job you're applying for, where you heard about it, and quickly summarize why you're qualified.
  - This is your first chance to interest them, so avoid bland phrases, like "My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am applying for \_\_\_\_\_."
- **Body:** Explain why you're interested in the position and why you're the best candidate by mentioning specific qualifications related to the job description.
  - Don't just regurgitate points from your resume. This is your opportunity to give specific examples that show your qualifications in action and to include important qualifications that you weren't able to include in your resume.
- **Closing:** Restate why you are the best fit for this position, and say that you'd like the opportunity to interview or discuss it further. Explain how you'll follow up, and thank them for consideration.
  - Make sure that your last sentences are high energy and positive. Leave them on a high note.
- **Signature:** Use a complimentary close (Best, Regards, Respectfully, Sincerely, Thank you, etc.). Handwrite your signature, and then type your name.

## TIPS

- Keep it around one-half a page.
- Keep your formatting simple and professional. Most companies appreciate black and white with font between 10- and 12-point.
- Avoid spelling and grammar errors. Proofread. Proofread. PROOFREAD.
- Don't regurgitate your resume. Use your cover letter as an opportunity to introduce yourself and get the interviewer excited about you.
- Be confident. Do not slink behind humility. If you are skilled, competent, and the best fit for the job, show them why.
- Don't draw attention to skills you don't have. Leave out anything like this: "Despite my lack of experience in \_\_\_\_\_."
- Don't be too formal. Be professional but not stuffy. Get the interviewer excited not bored.
- Use numbers. You don't want to use the same numbers you use to quantify your achievements in your resume, but do quantify ways that you've contributed to your companies' success numerically.
- If sending electronically, save as a PDF with a simple, clear title. PDFs stay formatted more easily. Save it as something like, "First Name\_Last Name\_Cover\_Letter.pdf."

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**Schedule a cover letter review appointment with the advisor for vocation and career development. Email [careeradvising@sbts.edu](mailto:careeradvising@sbts.edu) to set up a time to review your cover letter one-on-one.**