

Types of Writing Cover Letters

A cover or application letter is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the organization you are applying to. It highlights your most important skills, traits, and achievements, refers your reader to your résumé or application material, and requests an interview.

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Give your return address, the date you are writing the letter, and the mailing information of the person you are writing to. Include the name and title of the person you are addressing in the mailing address. To keep your documents uniform, you may consider using the same heading on your cover letter that you use on your résumé.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

Directly state the reason for the letter. Name the position you are applying for and how you learned about the job. Consider foreshadowing what information is to follow by mentioning two or three of the most important job qualifications you meet.

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Identify what you can do for the company. Show how your education, work experience, and other achievements meet the job's minimum requirements, addressing all requirements in the same order as they are listed in the original job description.

Consider writing a second body paragraph to indicate what sets you apart from other applicants – what you offer beyond the basic job requirements.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Refer the employer to your résumé and/or application material. Communicate your desire for an interview and provide contact information. Politely thank the reader.

ENCLOSURES

Indicate that you have enclosed additional documents with the abbreviation, *Enc.*

1978 West 1460 North
Provo, UT 84604

February 18, 2003

Ms. Kellie Solomon
Human Resources Manager
Johannessen Winterwear
3908 Ellenboro Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84001

Dear Kellie Solomon:

Alex James, a manager at your Murray store, mentioned that you need a new manager at your store in Orem. I am interested in applying for this position. My education and work experience would be a benefit to your company.

As a recent UVSC graduate with an Associate Degree in Business Management, I am interested in working for a respected leader in the retail industry such as Johannessen Winterwear. My education has provided me with a broad knowledge base in such diverse areas as human resources, marketing, and retail sales. Additionally, I have managed a small clothing store for three years, which has given me invaluable experience in customer service and merchandising in retail business. My combination of experience and education will contribute to keeping Johannessen a leader in the winterwear business.

Enclosed is my résumé, outlining my education and work experience. Please feel free to contact me at 801-123-4567 or 2jamesan@uvsc.edu for further information. I look forward to meeting with you about the manager position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna James

Anna James

Enc.

HINTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

- Find out to whom the letter should be addressed. Knowing and correctly addressing your audience shows initiative and familiarity with the company.
- Use a standard business letter format like that used in the example. (Keep all paragraphs flush with the left margin).
- Tailor your letter to the specific position. Use the same kind of language found in the job description.
- Be clear and concise. Use active language.
- Use an appropriate, polite, professional tone.
- Establish your strengths based on facts. Be confident but not overly boastful. Do not say things you cannot prove.
- Never be negative. Avoid mentioning bad experiences at previous jobs; doing so may reduce your credibility as a potential employee.
- Vary the length of sentences in the letter to maintain readers' interest and to highlight certain information.
- Avoid overusing *I*, especially in statements such as "I believe that I would benefit your company because..."
- Make sure your writing is free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
- Write several drafts. Ask family members and friends for feedback, or take your letter to the Writing Center or Career and Student Employment office for help.
- Use the same paper as your résumé (quality paper of a neutral color with no heavy texture).
- Consider using a paperclip rather than stapling separate pages.
- Also consider mailing your application materials in a large manila envelope with a printed label.