

# Cover Letters



## AT A GLANCE...

- A cover letter helps you highlight your qualifications for and interest in a job
- Don't just repeat what's in your resume; give employers more details
- We've given an example of how to organize each paragraph of your cover letter

## WHY COVER LETTERS?

A cover letter is a great tool to help you **demonstrate your interest** in the company or **how you fit the position**. Use your own voice to highlight your qualifications and make your application stand out.

## HEADER AND FIRST PARAGRAPH

Use the same letterhead that you used on your resume, including your name and contact information. The date and contact address block come next.

When addressing the contact, write "Dear (contact's name):" Avoid addressing your

letter, "To Whom it May Concern." If you can't find a specific name, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear HR Department."

To catch the attention of your audience, **start off with a hook**: a sentence that could make a specific claim as to what benefit(s) you could add to the company and its ideals. Next, to make a positive impression, you need to be **persuasive, personal, and appreciative**. Begin to provide evidence of your fit for this particular job. You can start by drawing connections between yourself and the company or the people who work there. Specific claims about the value you will add to this organization can demonstrate why you want to work specifically for this company, not just any company.

Dear Mr. Johnson:

As a marketing major, I am interested in helping Clearlink by driving more consumers to websites and increasing the success of online marketing. Dr. William Downing (this is the place to name drop, if you have it) at Brigham Young University recommended I apply. Based on the qualifications you have listed and my previous experience, I feel I could add significant value in your marketing department specifically working with SEO.

## BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Body Paragraph(s): Identify your **1-2 strongest qualifications** as they relate to the specific job. Elaborate on applicable work, education, or service accomplishments. Include skill and result-oriented success statements, using data

or numbers where possible. Think from an employer's point of view and **be as specific as possible** about why they should hire you. Talk about what you can do for the company can do for you and why these qualifications would be beneficial to them and their mission.

Last summer, I fine-tuned my SEO skills while working with the online marketing of a local start-up company. During my time with the organization, we had a 200% increase in web hits, which led to an increase of 80% sales. I have worked with many search engines and websites, including Apache and Flax and am confident that I will quickly learn how to efficiently gain more online exposure for Clearlink. My verbal and written skills are equally dependable, which I understand are essential for this type of position.

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## CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Refer the reader to qualifications on your tailored resume. **Ask for action**, suggesting when you are available. You might also consider requesting an interview and telling

the employer when you will follow up to arrange it. A positive request is harder to ignore than a vague hope. **But, be respectful** of their busy schedules so you do not come across as demanding.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. I hope to be selected for an interview for this position so I might share in person my enthusiasm about your company and the ways in which I feel I can contribute to your continued success. If you have any questions before then, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten signature)

Marie Peterson  
Enclosure/Attachment

## SIGNATURE BLOCK

If you are printing your cover letter, a hand-written signature is a nice touch. If you choose to hand-sign your letter, be sure to

leave enough space between "Sincerely," and your typed name. Type "Enclosure" after your name if the letter will be mailed or hand delivered with an insert, and "Attachment" if it will be emailed.