

KEYS TO COVER LETTERS

Many times an employer's first contact with you - a prospective employee - is your cover letter. It introduces yourself and gives a summary of your experiences. Your letter creates an immediate impression for the employer. Therefore, it must be clear, creative, and concise.



Parts of a Cover Letter:

There are 5 Parts to a Cover Letter:

1. **Header:** The header is the top part of the document that has your name and contact information. For branding consistency use the same header on your cover letter, resume, and reference page.
2. **Salutation:** Whenever possible in your greeting, address the letter to a specific person. Include their name and title and start your letter with "Dear _____," (example: Dear Dr. Jimenez or Dear Ms. Kwan)
3. **Introduction:** State why you are writing. Include the name of the position for which you are applying and how you heard of the opening. Mention by name any person you know who has a connection with the organization. To catch their attention, you also may begin with a summary of your assets that would qualify you for the position. Explain why you are particularly interested in the organization, location, or type of work.
4. **Statement of Qualifiers:** Elaborate on your main qualifications, such as educational background, related work experience, profession involvement, and leadership roles that relate to the position for which you are applying. Provide evidence and convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well in the position. **Don't forget to refer the reader to your resume.**
5. **Invitation to Meet:** Be assertive and request the next step in the employment process, such as asking for an interview or suggesting a time to meet. Make it easy for the person to contact you by listing phone numbers and times when you can be reached. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

TIPS

- Include a cover letter with every resume that you send unless a prospective employer specifically states otherwise.
- Use the same header on your resume (name and contact information) as your cover letter.
- Keep your letter to one page and be concise. Get to the point and do not use unnecessary words.
- Address as many of the qualifications that the position requires as you can in your letter - what they are and proof that you meet them.
- Anticipate questions the reader may have and answer them.
- Don't use a form letter. Tailor your letter to each position for which you are applying. Use the same paper for both your cover letter and resume.
- Use the same language as the job announcement.
- Always address your letter to a specific individual with correct title and business address. Call the company (human resources or department you are interested in) and get a name if you don't have one.
- Always sign your letter either digitally or by hand.
- Be positive in content, tone, word choice, and expectations. Use an active rather than passive voice.
- Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.
- Make sure there are no errors.