

# How to Write a Cover Letter



**Summary:** *How to catch the attention of employers!*

## **Writing the Cover Letter**

Once your résumé has been prepared and printed to your satisfaction, the final step before distribution is to write an effective cover letter. Though there may be instances where you deliver your résumé in person, most often you will be attaching it on-line or sending it through the mail. Résumés sent through the mail always need an accompanying letter that briefly introduces you and your résumé. The purpose of the cover letter is to get a potential employer to consider your résumé, just as the purpose of your résumé is to get that same potential employer to call you for an interview.

Like your résumé, your cover letter should be clean, neat, and direct. A cover letter usually includes the following information.

1. Your name and address (unless it already appears on your personal letterhead).
2. The date.
3. The name and address of the person and company to whom you are sending your resume.
4. The salutation (“Dear Mr.” or “Dear Ms.” followed by the person’s last name, or “To Whom it May Concern” if you are answering a blind ad).
5. An opening paragraph explaining why you are writing (in response to an ad, the result of a previous meeting, at the suggestion of someone you both know) and indicating that you are interested in whatever job is being offered.
6. One or two more paragraphs that will tell why you want to work for the company and what qualifications and experiences you can bring to that company.
7. A final paragraph that closes the letter and requests that you be contacted for an interview.
8. The closing (“Sincerely,” or “Yours Truly,” followed by your signature with your name typed under it.)

Your cover letter, including all of the information above, should be no more than one page length. The language used should be polite, business like, and to the point. Do not attempt to tell your life story in the cover letter. The rest of your information is in your résumé. Each and every achievement does not need to be

mentioned twice. If your cover letter is a success, your résumé will be read and all pertinent information reviewed by your prospective employer.

### **Producing the Cover Letter**

Cover letters should always be typed individually, since they are always written to particular individuals and companies. Never use a form letter for your cover letter. Cover letters cannot be copied or reproduced like résumés. Each one should be as personal as possible. Of course, once you have written your first cover letter, you certainly can use similar wording in subsequent letters.

After you have typed your cover letter on quality bond paper, proofread it as thoroughly as you did your résumé. Again, spelling errors are a sure sign of carelessness, and you don't want that to be a part of your first impression for any prospective employer. Handle the letter and résumé carefully to avoid smudges, and then mail both your cover letter and résumé in an appropriate sized envelope. Be sure to keep an accurate record of all résumés you send out and the results of each mailing.

Now your job is complete. You can let your cover letter and résumé do the rest. May you get the interview that could lead to the best job match.