

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

HEADING (centered above the line, same as resume, including name and contact info)

Today's date

Addressee's name
Addressee's position
Organization name
Mailing address
City, state and zip

Dear [insert name with appropriate title: Ms., Mrs., Mr., Dr., Hiring Manager or Hiring Team if unknown]:

1st Paragraph: This first paragraph is critical to get you noticed. Immediately mention which position you are applying for and why you are passionate about working for this organization and/ in this role/ on this issue. This is short, usually 2-4 sentences. Start your letter with a statement that establishes a personal connection with the employer contact if possible.

Ex: "I was thrilled to learn that xyz organization was hiring for the [insert job title] position. I have been a long-time member of your organization and I am passionate about [insert name of conservation issue related to the position]."

Ex: "I recently met [insert staff member name] at the xyz conference and s/he encouraged me to apply for xyz position."

Tip: Show your passion for the organization, their work, their approach or mission, the region. Do this briefly and specifically.

Tip: Include a brief explanation of how this position fits in with your long-term career interests. Employers prefer candidates with strong career-related interests who will hopefully plan to work with them for a while.

Body Paragraphs: This is the "why I am qualified" paragraph(s). The mid-section of your letter should include roughly 2-3 concise paragraphs that provide detailed examples of your experience and accomplishments in 2-3 skill areas that are critical to the job/internship. Do not reiterate your resume word-for-word. Strong examples are important!

Ex: "I would be thrilled to apply my strong people skills to this role. I have a proven ability to develop effective relationships with key players from diverse backgrounds. While working at National Wildlife Federation, I developed a broad-based coalition in support of clean water regulations with diverse rural and urban groups including farmers, state environmental organizations, hunters, and city officials which ultimately led to the successful passage of this legislation."

Tip: Always show how you will apply your skills and experiences to the success of the company/ organization.

Closing Paragraph: Your last paragraph should initiate an action by explaining what you will do next (e.g., call the employer or instigate the reader to contact you to set up an interview). Close by thanking the reader for his/her time and consideration and reiterating your enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

Your handwritten or electronic signature

Your name (typed)



Additional Tips To Make Your Letter Professional

- ✓ Research the company and the specifics about the position so you can tailor your letter to the needs of the organization.
- ✓ Address the letter to a specific person when possible. Call the company and ask for the name (including spelling) and title (Dr. Ms. Mr. Mrs. & job title) of the hiring manager.
- ✓ Avoid using too many sentences that start with “I” and/or writing in the passive voice (ex. “This experience enabled me to...” or “Through my internship, I was responsible for...”). Instead, make yourself the subject of each sentence and use active descriptions (ex. “In this internship, I demonstrated sound judgment and problem-solving skills on a daily basis.”)
- ✓ **Do not** use contractions (I’d, didn’t, don’t, it’s).
- ✓ Spelling, grammar, formatting, and/or punctuation mistakes are out of the question! Proofread carefully.
- ✓ Keep your letter concise and focused. Generally cover letters are no longer than one page. This is not the time to tell your entire life’s story!

Remember: Your cover letter should answer the question, “*Why should I hire you?*” It should grab the employer’s attention and point out why you, above all other applicants, should be contacted for a personal interview.

