

Suggested Cover Letter Layout

Your Address
City, State Zip

Date (month/date/year)

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Person
Position or Job Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name of Addressee:

Always try to address your cover letter to a specific person. Do not use “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam”. Those are outdated and inappropriate to use. If you cannot find a specific contact, use “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Human Resources Manager.”

First Paragraph: This is your introduction...your opportunity to catch the reader’s attention. Tell the reader why you are writing (i.e., regarding the position in which you are interested; if appropriate, indicate how you learned of the position and/or organization). Make a general statement about being a good candidate for the job and why you’re interested. You may want to make reference to your education here or in a following paragraph.

Second Paragraph: Explain why you have targeted this particular organization: in so doing, demonstrate your knowledge of its products, services, operations, etc. (This means you must research the potential employer.) Stress what you have to offer – how you will add value – not what you want from the employer. Identify 3-4 of your key qualifications for the position based on the position and what the employer is seeking. This may include paid or unpaid experience, relevant coursework, special projects, or other activities where you gained related experience or used skills/developed skills that are applicable to the position you’re applying for. Be careful that you are not restating everything that is on your resume. Focus on your key selling points, and how this position matches up with your career goals. Also, try to use specific examples, as opposed to vague statements. Demonstrate your understanding of the duties of the position in which you are interested, and state how your unique qualifications fit the position. (Because you don’t want your paragraphs to be too long, you may want to add a third paragraph to address some of this information.)

Third (or Fourth) Paragraph: Strong closing! Reiterate your interest in the position and why they should consider you by summarizing your key qualifications. Request an interview, and/or tell the reader that you will contact him/her soon in order to see if you can schedule a mutually convenient appointment. If the employer is some distance away, indicate when you would be available for an interview. (For example, if you will be traveling to the employer’s location during an academic holiday, indicate the days you will be in that area.) Include contact information and indicate the best way to reach you (e-mail, home phone, work phone, etc.). Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Sign your name, if being sent by mail. If being sent as an attachment via e-mail, delete these lines for your signature.)

Type your name

Enclosures: Resume, References, etc.

(Note: If you’re sending your documents via e-mail, use the phrase “Attachments” instead of “Enclosures.”)