



## Cover Letter Development

Each time one mails, faxes, or emails a résumé, he or she should send a cover letter with it. A cover letter is more informal than a résumé. Unlike a résumé, one can let some of his or her personality and unique qualities show through in the letter, which may appeal to the employer. In fact, employers are more likely to review a résumé sent with a cover letter than one without.

### Technical Aspects

- No longer than one page (standard 8 ½ x 11 in., quality paper)
- No more than four paragraphs
- Margins: ½ to ¾ inch on all sides
- Font size: professional font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, Courier); 10 or 12 pt. size

### Content and Organization

1. Address to particular individual (name and title). If no name, then to HR or Personnel director, or department head of the department in which one wishes to work.
2. Statements of how one's skills and experience will contribute to the success of the company.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: Write a concise statement of work experience or skills; affirm that those skills will benefit the company. Here, mention the company by name; do not merely say "your company." If the letter is an answer to an advertisement, mention where and when the ad was seen.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> (and 3<sup>rd</sup> if necessary) paragraph: Here is where one explains how he or she will benefit the company. If one mentions a skill s/he has, s/he must also write specifically how that skill will benefit the employer (this also works in the interview phase). S/he should also highlight some significant parts of the résumé, describing a specific situation in which s/he contributed to a positive outcome, and expand on some accomplishments s/he did not have room for in the résumé.
3. Brief conclusion that invites the employer to follow up on the letter and résumé.
  - This last part is a simple, positive, yet ambitious expression of one's desire for an interview. Be bold! Ask, "When can we arrange an interview?" not "Hope to hear from you soon" or "Thanks for your time." Then repeat her contact information (phone and email).
4. Remember business letter etiquette:
  - Return address and phone number in top right or left corner
  - Place date underneath the address
  - Employer's full address, flush left margin
  - Greeting (Dear....; Mr. So-and-so; Ms. BossLady always use a name.)
  - No need to indent paragraphs, but double space between them
  - Salutation
  - Signature
  - One's name, typed below the signature
  - Type "Enclosure" or "Encl." if sent with a résumé