

# What is a Cover Letter

An individually typed cover letter typically accompanies each resume you send out. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview and having your resume ignored. It makes sense to devote the necessary time and effort to write effective cover letters.

A cover letter should compliment, not duplicate your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression.

## Cover Letter Template

Your Name

Your Address

City, State, Zip

Date

Name of Contact Person

Title Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear (Contact Person or Human Resources Representative):

**Opening Paragraph:** Opening salvo: make it good!

- Catchy opening sentence to make the reader want to continue reading.
- Name of job for which you are applying. Tell how you learned about it.
- Mention the name of the person (if any) who referred you to the organization and vacancy—preferably a colleague of the contact person.

**Body:** Crucial content section.

- Acknowledge the skills required by the open position.
- State the skills/strengths/highlights of qualifications you will bring to the career opportunity that paral-

els those needed to fulfill the position.

- Give examples of your skills and work experience—quantified results, accomplishments, achievements—and how they will transfer to the job.
- You may wish to build this section from several short paragraphs that separate and emphasize your skills and strengths.

**Closing Paragraph:** Push for personal contact; interview.

- Refer to documents enclosed or available, such as your portfolio with resume, references letters, a reference sheet, and writing samples.
- Assert yourself by telling the contact person you will call him/her on a designated date to set up an interview. Alternatively, state you are available for a personal interview at his/her convenience.
- Make it very easy for the person to contact you; list one or two phone numbers and days and times when you can be reached. Yes, even though it's on the resume, state it again.

Sincerely, (or Respectfully, In Anticipation, Enthusiastically, etc.) Sign above your name

Your Name Typed

Enclosures: Resume and/or Writing Sample (list only those enclosed)