



## What's included in this guide?

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## How to Prepare an Effective Cover Letter:

### 1. Cover Letter Essentials

The goal is to provide information that will make employers want to read your résumé. Your cover letter should communicate enthusiasm for the desired position and be short and to the point! *Note:* you should only submit a cover letter if requested to do so by the employer in the job posting.

### 2. The Content of Your Cover Letter (Typically Three Paragraphs)

#### First Paragraph

This is your purpose for writing. It should express your interest in the particular type of job or position. If a reference number is listed for the position, include the number and where you came across the position. *(For instance: I am extremely interested in the Part-Time Bookkeeper position, Reference Number 7783, that I found listed in CareerHunter.)*

#### Second Paragraph

The second paragraph contains much more substance. It highlights those positive characteristics that will be of particular interest to the employer. Research the company and review the job description in order to connect your specific experience and qualifications to the skills and capabilities the employer is looking for in a candidate. It can also help to indicate a familiarity and alignment with the company's mission.

#### Third Paragraph

This is your closing and states your interest in meeting with the prospective employer to discuss your skills further. Thank the hiring manager for considering your candidacy.

### 3. Formatting your Cover Letter

Your cover letter should be formatted as a business document:

- Include your name and information at the top of the letter.
- Aligned to the left, indicate the date, followed by the hiring manager's information and the company's address.
- Do not indent paragraphs.
- Single space the entire document, with an extra space in between paragraphs.
- Keep it to one page.
- Include a greeting and closing (e.g. *Dear Hiring Manager* and *Sincerely*).

### 4. Five Tips for Effective Cover Letter Writing

- Do the basics. Proofread for spelling, grammar and writing style and be consistent with your formatting.
- Use transition words and phrases (e.g. *Additionally* and *As a result*) to create logical connections between your sentences and paragraphs.
- Integrate language from the job posting to make your experience more relevant. Focus on what you bring to the employer, not what you want from the job.
- Avoid using negative language (e.g. *although*, *however*). Focus on the positive characteristics you can bring to the job.
- Avoid redundancy and repetition. Make sure you are saying what you need to say using straightforward and understandable language.

**You are probably aware that writing a quality cover letter can be a difficult process! Make sure you do your research, look at plenty of examples, and have your cover letter reviewed by Career Development Services!**