

# Cover Letters

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**Your letter** is your introduction

- it continues or **starts a conversation about work or education**

Just as you start a conversation by introducing yourself, a résumé should always be sent with an accompanying letter. *Picture yourself sitting face-to-face with a person doing work that is interesting. What would you say? What do you want to ensure they know about you before you leave the room?* Your letter is a chance to make a great first impression or continue a conversation that has already been started.

Your letter should **clearly show the match between you and the work!**

Some employers scan your résumé first, while others start with the cover letter. To increase your chances of being invited to an interview, ensure that both documents clearly show the match between what the employer needs and what you can contribute. Once you have made the match, remember that the letter is your chance to stand out as an individual from the many other qualified applicants. Include information that supports and points to your résumé, without repeating it. Write professionally, using your own “voice”. Give relevant evidence from your life that will help them remember you.

✓ **REMEMBER**

Go over any your cover letter with care or any follow-up emails or thank-you letters

Any correspondence with a potential employer will be evaluated. A great cover letter that is followed by an unprofessional, poorly-punctuated email can change your opportunities quickly – and not necessarily in a positive way.

# COVER LETTER BASICS

## Letters should be:

Maximum one page  
Double-spaced between paragraphs and sections  
Body of text spaced well on the page  
Same typeface as in résumé

## Your Name

Street or PO Box  
City, Province  
Postal Code  
Telephone  
Email

Date of writing

Name of recipient  
Recipient's job title  
Organization  
Complete address

Salutation (e.g. Dear Ms. Brown or Dear Sir or Dear Madam)

THE INTRODUCTION: Paragraph #1 tells the reader why you are writing. Essentially, give an indication of who you are (not your name), what you want, and how you came to know them. If you know it, include the position title for which you are applying. Note attachments/enclosures.

THE RESEARCH PIECE: Paragraph #2 tells the employer why you want to work for them. It distinguishes your letter from all the rest. Let them know that you know what they do and that it matters to you. Show that you have investigated the organization and the work.

THE MATCH: Paragraph #3 let them know why they should hire you. Highlight the major skills, personality traits and areas of knowledge and expertise that you have to offer, and indicate how you perceive your attributes match their needs. Include evidence of positive contributions and perhaps write about when you have used some of the skills they require.

THE CALL TO ACTION: Emphasize your interest in speaking with them and suggest possibilities for follow-up. Express appreciation.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

Your typed name