

The **cover letter** is used to introduce yourself and to briefly explain your qualifications to a prospective employer. The purpose of the cover letter is to arouse the employer's interest and gain his/her attention to your application for employment. A cover letter should always accompany your resume when applying for a position.

The cover letter should highlight the information included on your resume. It should not duplicate information on your resume word for word.

9 TIPS ON WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

1. The letter should be typed on quality paper that matches the color of your resume. If sending electronically, include the cover letter in the text of your email and attach the resume, unless instructed otherwise.
2. Always address the letter to the appropriate individual by name and professional title. If you are not able to obtain a name, address it to the apparent job title of the individual receiving your application, "Dear Human Resources Director," or "Dear Hiring Manager."
3. Mix up how you start each sentence and avoid beginning every sentence or paragraph with the word "I."
4. Attract the employer's attention by beginning your cover letter with a strong statement. Many employers receive hundreds of applications and you want yours to be one that is remembered. To do this, develop a bridge or common bond between yourself and the employer. Tell how you learned of the company/organization and/or the vacancy. The best introduction to a potential employer is to remind him/her of the face-to-face or telephone conversation you have already had relative to your job search or to mention that you have heard about the job vacancy from a friend or other contact that works for the organization.
5. Tell why you are interested in the employer. Indicate what you can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you. You can combine this with your first paragraph when you are gaining their attention, or this can be a separate paragraph all on its own.
6. Use the center of your letter or next paragraph to arouse the employer's curiosity by stating brief facts from your resume about your education, experience and accomplishments. Highlight your talents and particular points in your background that complement the type of job you are seeking. The employer will be looking for skills that you possess to benefit the organization.
7. Always thank the employer for their time and consideration.
8. Always sign your letter. If sending electronically, make sure you type "Sincerely" and print your name. An electronic signature is not expected.
9. Proofread to correct all spelling and punctuation errors. Both the cover letter and resume must be free of mistakes.

Cover Letter Structure:

Your Present Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date of Letter

Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. _____: or
Dear Recruiting Manager:

First Paragraph—ATTENTION In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening. (Include prior contact with an employer or employees of the organization you are applying to, newspaper advertisement, the internet, etc.)

Second Paragraph—INTEREST Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or services. This is the number one item that most students leave out of the cover letter. Show the reader that you have done your research and know what makes them unique and/or stand out from their competitors. Make it clear that you are interested in the position for more than just a J-O-B. You can combine this paragraph with the first paragraph if you prefer.

Third Paragraph—FIT If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have related work or internship experience, point this out by mentioning specific achievements or unique qualifications gained through this experience. Do not repeat information word for word as it appears in the resume. Above all, indicate the skills that you have gained and what you can do for the employer.

Fourth Paragraph—FOLLOW-UP In the closing paragraph, indicate that you are very interested in an interview. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

(Your Name Typed)

Enclosures (denotes resume, applications, etc. that are enclosed)

1212 College Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
February 5, 20xx

**Cover Letter
Sample I**

Ms. Joann Smith
Director, Human Resources
Redbook
300 W. 57th St.
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to apply for a summer 2011 internship in either the features or fashion department at *Redbook*. There is something special about *Redbook*. It does not just toss out its motto, "love your life," to catch readers; it gives readers the power to make loving their lives a reality. Majoring in Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I would love to be a part of a publication that inspires women to love themselves and find happiness in all aspects and stages of their lives.

Through my experience with *Kaleidoscope*, our campus' first women's fashion magazine, I have had the opportunity to collaborate on topics ranging from Human Papillomavirus vaccination to exam week, crunch-time beauty tips. I have become a regular columnist over my three semesters on staff, writing on the evolution and impact of famous women's clothing items. Additionally, my semester-long magazine writing class was one of the most rewarding and invaluable journalist experiences I have had. Working with a staff of six to build from scratch a women's divorce magazine, *Chapter Two*, I played assigning editor, writer and copy editor. Nothing was more gratifying than seeing the final product, including my three articles.

My love for the fashion industry and the desire to be anywhere near the Milan fashion matrix drove me to study abroad in Florence, Italy, last summer. Not surprisingly, I found a way to combine my trip with my love for journalism. Eager to let the world know every detail of my life-changing adventure, I submitted a feature, "My Italian Life," to *Carolina PASSPORT*, our campus study abroad magazine. When my article was selected as one among 10 others and the only piece representing Italy, I joined the copy editing staff. I possess the communication and research skills you seek in an effective contributor to your magazine.

My passion for the magazine industry, coupled with my passion for your magazine and all it stands for, made applying an easy decision and task. Redbook is the place for me and I would love to prove that. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Jane Doe

Enclosure

**Cover Letter
Sample 2**

Box 1
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
October 25, 20xx

Mr. Ron Jones
Human Resources Representative
Hilton Hotels Corporation
933 Civic Center Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Mr. Jones:

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with Ms. Tricia Gibbs from your Marketing Department at an International Careers Networking Night at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I am a student. Ms. Gibbs suggested I contact you regarding my interest in working at one of the resorts or overseas properties owned by Hilton Hotels Corporation.

I am looking for an entry-level career opportunity in the hospitality industry and the Hilton Hotels Corporation is one of the leaders in the industry with a national reputation of excellent customer service. From my own personal experience, I know that Hilton Hotels provides impressive and high quality service to guests. It is my desire to make a difference for people as they travel, and I want to be a part of the best in the business.

From my attached resume you will note that I have direct experience in the fields of restaurant management and public relations in both the United States and Brazil. My educational background in International Studies, which includes proficiency in Spanish and French, and my study abroad experience, will allow me to communicate effectively with both co-workers and customers. Additionally, I have been involved with and taken leadership roles in a couple of organizations on campus, one in public relations and one in international, which have strengthened my skills in the areas of supervising, organizing, and planning. I am confident that I have the talents and background to make a difference for Hilton and its customers.

I would like to discuss my qualifications at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Doe

Jason Doe

Enclosures: 2