

## How to Write a Cover Letter \*

A cover letter is a one page document that you send with your resume when applying for a job. It is meant to:

- ✓ **Introduce yourself to the hiring manager**
- ✓ **Argue why you'd be a good fit for the job**
- ✓ **Fill in places your resume cannot describe**
- ✓ **Further explain other aspects of your resume**



By hitting those 4 aspects, a cover letter can be a convincing and powerful companion to a well-written resume.

### 1. Contact Information

To begin your cover letter, include your information, and then the company's information:

**Autumn Newman**  
 1254 Happy Street #3  
 San Francisco, California, 94113 United States  
 (123) 456-7891  
 autumn.newman@snailmail.com

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Mar 1, 2016  
 Hiring Manager's Name

341 Company Address  
 Palo Alto, California, 94301  
 (198) 765-4321  
 hiring.manager@snailmail.com

Dear Hiring Manager's Name

### 2. Introduction

Find out to whom you're writing! Look through the company's website, LinkedIn, or even give the company a call to ask for the hiring manager's name. Even if you get it wrong, it still looks like you've made an effort.

Introduce yourself in the first paragraph of your cover letter, begin by telling the employer the position you are applying for and how you learned about the opportunity.

The rest of this paragraph should briefly present basic info about yourself, including: degree, area of study/expertise, and your career goals in terms of how they align with the goals of the company.

\*This information was taken and edited from the Resume Genius website (<https://resumegenius.com/cover-letters-the-how-to-guide#WriteaTargetedCoverLetter>)

### 3. Sell Yourself

The second paragraph should respond directly to the job description written by the hiring manager. Describe how your previous job experiences, skills, and abilities will allow you to meet the company's needs. To make that easier, you can (and should) literally include words and phrases from the job description in your cover letter.

To go the extra mile, do some research about the company, and try to find out what they are doing — and why — given the current state of their industry. In a third paragraph, explain how you can fit into that schema, and help push the company forward and achieve any goals you suspect they may have.

### 4. Conclusion

The final paragraph is called the "call to action" portion of your cover letter. Inform them that you'd love to get interviewed. Tell them that you'll be in contact with them in a week if you don't hear back. Thank them for spending the time to read your cover letter.

### 5. Cover Letter Page Format Guide

Aside from the content on the page, the actual look and feel of the document is also an important aspect of the cover letter. Elements such as margins, font size and style, and alignment all factor in to the hiring manager's overall impression of you.

Here are a few quick tips when styling your cover letter:

1. **1" – 1.5" margins are always a safe bet**
2. **Don't go below a 12-point font**
3. **Font style is really a matter of preference**
4. **Maintain a uniform left alignment throughout your cover letter**

### Formatting For Applicant Tracking Systems

If you don't know what an ATS is, you absolutely must read up on it (visit Resume Genius.com) before sending in your next job application. Applicant tracking systems are mostly designed to read through resumes, sifting through keywords and key-phrases to statistically determine whether to let you through to the next stage. **70% of jobs are filled via an applicant tracking system.** Some ATS software is designed to read through cover letters as well, while others are not. You might as well be completely prepared. The good news is that simply by following the instructions we've written above, your cover letter should already be in good shape. If you've responded directly to the hiring manager's job description, and included language from it in your own cover letter, you already have a high likelihood of hitting statistically important keywords and phrases.