

{ COVER LETTERS }

(/Students/Handouts-Guides/Media-Complete-A-V-Library/Guides-(What-Are-You-Writing-)/Audio/Cover-Letters)One of the most important parts of your resume package is the cover letter. By highlighting how your skills and experience could contribute to the company or program, a good cover letter will invite the reader to browse your resume to learn more about you.

In a cover letter, be concise and personal. You have to show both professionalism and personality. Good cover letters illustrate your sense of purpose, your enthusiasm for the position or company, and your ability to help employers meet their goals and needs. Conduct research on the company so your cover letter is tailored specifically to it—these should not be mass-produced letters!

Proper Form

Your cover letter should follow a professional business letter format. Include the company address as well as your own address and the date. If you're sending a hard copy, use heavy, quality paper rather than the standard printer paper.

Like your resume, the cover letter should be grammatically correct, with no punctuation or spelling errors. Surface errors make you appear sloppy or ignorant, so proofread your letter carefully and then ask a trusted friend or advisor to review it, too.

Don't begin with "Dear Sir or Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern." These openings are outdated and sound somewhat pretentious. Instead, be as specific as possible. If you can, find the name of the hiring manager by calling the company and address your letter directly to that person. If you cannot find the hiring manager's name, begin your letter with "Dear Hiring Manager for [name of position]."

A cover letter should typically be no longer than a page.

If you're contacting an employer by email, be sure the subject line of your email is clear and specific. If it's not, your message may never get opened.

Content and Style

Tailor your letter to each job opportunity. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the organization, whether it's company structure or a corporate policy or goal. Consider two or three of your skills that best match the position and describe how those skills will benefit the organization.

It's important to use a mature, confident, and straightforward tone. Avoid long sentences that may be unclear or confusing to a reader. You want to sound assured, enthusiastic, and optimistic. Use action verbs (such as *conducted*, *supervised*, *managed*, *produced*) to convey purpose and energy. Remember, however, to maintain a respectful, professional tone.

Format

Opening Paragraph

Your opening paragraph should state who you are, what specific position you are applying for, and why you are applying. Begin by introducing yourself and giving a little background information such as your degree and your university. Next, state the position you're interested in and how you heard about it. Last, explain why you are applying and why you would be a good candidate.

Ex. My name is Albus Severus Potter, and I recently graduated from Windhaven Magical University with a degree in Magical Sports Management. I first learned of your company from my friend and former professor, Oliver Wood. I am writing to apply for the assistant position on your team of World Cup managers. I believe my organizational and leadership



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skills, honed during my time as team captain, make me a prime candidate for this position.

Body Paragraphs

Use your body paragraphs to highlight specific skills and experiences that qualify you for this specific job. Use concrete examples to both expand on your resume and show how your education and experience make you suitable for the position. Explain how these abilities would contribute to the organization. Knowing specific details about the organization is not necessary, but it is a good way to catch the hiring manager's eye. Your cover letter should elaborate on, not merely copy, your resume. Think of the letter as an opportunity to draw attention to what you want to highlight about your qualifications and experiences.

Ex. During my three summers working for Weasley's Wizard Wheezes, I held several key leadership positions, including supply supervisor and sales manager. While earning my degree at Windhaven, I was Chaser and Captain of my house Quidditch team for three years, training my team and winning the Cup two years in a row. These experiences taught me how to unite individuals towards a common goal and manage their different temperaments and abilities—a skill I feel would be integral to helping your company in overseeing an event like the Quidditch World Cup.

Closing Paragraph

Leave your reader with a course of action. Indicate what materials you have enclosed and offer to provide any additional information (writing sample, portfolio) if you have it available. Thank the reader for considering your application and indicate that you are looking forward to a response. Be sure to include your contact information; you want to make it easy for the employer to contact you.

Ex. I would be honored to work with your organization in its commitment to spreading peace across the international magic community through games. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A.S. Potter

Albus Severus Potter

enc: resume