

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a *career marketing tool* designed to introduce the job seeker, highlight notable qualifications and career successes, and generate an invitation for a personal interview.

Purpose and Objectives of a Cover Letter

- Introduce yourself and clearly define “who” you are—an aspiring teacher, accountant, graphic designer, engineer, etc.
- Highlight your most notable qualifications, experiences, credentials, skills, and achievements.
- Identify the value you can bring to the organization.
- Capture your reader’s interest in you, your resume, and your availability.
- Motivate the reader to call and offer you the opportunity for an interview.
- Complement your resume, not repeat it.

Top 10 Strategies for Writing Winning Cover Letters

1. Uniquely tailor each cover letter to the position or opportunity, addressing your letter to a specific individual when possible.
2. Use a professional format when writing and typing your cover letters. (The contact information heading at the top of your cover letter should match the contact information heading on your resume.)
3. Highlight your most relevant qualifications.
4. Shine a spotlight on your most notable achievements.
5. Include information that you know about the company or the position for which you are applying.
6. Explain why you want to work for this organization in particular.
7. Be sure that your cover letters are neat, clean, and well presented.
8. Double-check, triple-check, and then have someone else check your letter to be sure that it is error-free.
9. Keep your cover letters brief.
10. Always remind yourself why you are writing each cover letter, and be sure to ask for the interview.