

COVER LETTERS

When applying for jobs, a well-written cover letter is just as important as a well-written résumé. While the résumé is designed to provide an overview of your relevant skills and qualifications, the cover letter is your opportunity to discuss relevant experiences and to display your personality to your reader. In other words, the cover letter is your chance to humanize yourself to your reader and to give them a sense of who you are.

Dos	DON'Ts
BEGIN WITH AN INTRODUCTION THAT CONTEXTUALIZES YOUR LETTER by describing the job you are applying for, indicating your interest in being considered for the position and previewing the credentials you will discuss.	BEGIN WITH YOUR QUALIFICATIONS. It's important to establish what you job you're applying for before describing yourself.
INCLUDE ONE OR TWO BODY PARAGRAPHS THAT HIGHLIGHT YOUR MOST RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES. One paragraph may be enough, but use more if necessary. Discuss one topic per paragraph.	CREATE A NARRATIVE RÉSUMÉ. Your résumé will tell them what you've done. Instead, make connections between your experiences and qualifications for the position.
SHOW, DON'T TELL. Provide descriptive examples by referring to specific courses, research projects, internships, and prior work experiences.	JUST TELL. Anyone can write, "I am an excellent leader." However, describing an experience that allows you to <i>show</i> the reader that you are an excellent leader is much more effective.
CONCLUDE BY EXPRESSING INTEREST in being contacted for an interview. Be sure to also include your contact information in your conclusion, and remember to thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.	FORGET TO SHOW APPRECIATION to the reader for his or her time and effort in considering your application materials.
ESTABLISH ETHOS THROUGH A PROFESSIONAL TONE. Although you are writing in first person, avoid being too informal. Avoid contractions and jargon, and strive to create a mature, self-aware, and confident tone.	ADOPT EITHER AN ARROGANT OR SELF-DEPRICATING TONE. When presenting your qualifications, it is important to show confidence. However, it is also important not to sound cocky or aggressive.
FOLLOW CONVENTIONS OF THE FORMAL BUSINESS LETTER. Use a standard font and font-size, keep the letter to one page, and use appropriate formatting conventions for business letters.	FORMAT YOUR COVER LETTER LIKE AN EMAIL OR A PERSONAL LETTER. Don't use a unique font or include color in your cover letter.
PROOFREAD YOUR LETTER SO THAT IT IS GRAMMATICALLY PERFECT. Hiring managers receive many cover letters. Often, regardless of the content of yours, a typo or grammatical error can quickly eliminate you from the pool of applicants.	THINK THAT A COVER LETTER IS NOT NECESSARY. Even if a job ad does not specifically request a cover letter, most professional positions expect them