

Writing Center Tip Sheet

Writing a Strong Cover Letter

Your cover letter is the first impression an employer receives of you and your work. How it's written can make or break your chances for a job interview. Here are five ways to be professional, yet unique.

1. **Size matters.** Keep your cover letter to no longer than one page—preferably, three paragraphs. This ensures you will remain informative without going on and on.

2. **Pleasing to the eye.** Create a header with your name, address, and contact information to act as your letterhead. Remember: simple and clear is best. Wow them with your portfolio pieces, don't scare them with your name!

3. **No mind games.** In researching where to send your letter, you came up with reasons why this particular firm appealed to you. Tell them what they were—you have to convince your reader that this is the best place for you to work. Don't make them guess at your skills, interests, or why you selected them.

4. **Be confident.** From the opening to the closing, you want to appear confident about your chances of getting the position. End with "I look forward to hearing from you soon," or a phrase that puts the onus on them to take the next step.

5. **Give directions.** Make reference in your cover letter to achievements or interesting projects found on your resume or in your portfolio. Provide enough information about the project to pique their interest, getting your reader to look more closely at your work. For example, "As seen in my portfolio, the piece *Shoe With No Sock* closely resembles the style of the Nike ad campaign you ran last year." Or, "Attached is my resume, where you will see that I mentored children for several years through Montserrat College of Art's Young Artist Program. This experience helped me to develop skills such as...."

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Cover Letter Guide

Here's a model of strong cover letter:

Creative Header

Includes name, address, email address and or phone number

Hiring Manager/Intern Manager's Name

Company Name

Street

City, State Zip

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

(first paragraph=about the ad you saw for the job/why you're interested)

I would like to be *Company Name's* newest intern/designer/illustrator. After seeing your ad/posting/listing for *job title*, I believe that my skills and your needs are a strong match. [Or, After reading about /my instructor introduced me to Company Name, I realized that Company Name is the best place for me to learn the design skills I need to be an effective *career goal*, and am interesting in interning for you.] I am a team player/enthusiastic/willing to learn...etc, and would be an asset to your company.

(second paragraph=your skills and how they fit with the company)

Currently, I am a ____ year art student at Montserrat College of Art, pursuing a degree in _____. At Montserrat, I have developed skills such as _____, _____, and _____. My primary focus has been _____, which is best represented in _____ piece in my portfolio. I have exhibited/won prizes/received a scholarship for/worked extensively in _____, and this corresponds to the ____ work done at Company Name.

(third paragraph=closing)

My resume and portfolio are attached. I am happy to provide additional samples of my work, as well as contact information for references. Company Name appears to be an encouraging and creative environment, one that I would like to be part of. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and can be reached at the number/email address above/below at any time.

Regards,

(skip four single-spaced lines and sign)

Name (typed out so they can read it)