

Cover Letter Building Blocks

With the help of this sample template, we will break down what makes up a successful cover letter. The sample is broken up in two parts in an effort to flesh out the necessary details on the first and second halves of the cover letter. The first part will focus on the basic foundational structure and the introduction paragraph. The second half explains the body paragraphs and conclusion of the cover letter.

Basic Formatting Notes:

- Use 1 inch margins all around
- Font should be at least 11 or 12 pt

Header: Consider using your resume header on your cover letter – this will help the employer to easily match your resume and cover letter up.

[Date]

[The Addressee's Name or Hiring Department, if known]

[Name of Agency]

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear Hiring Committee or use name of a specific person, if known:

Introduction paragraph: This is your initial introduction to the agency. Key pieces include: the position you are applying for, how you found out about the position, your degree, which can also serve as a way of telling them when you can begin working, and a closing sentence providing an overview of why you should be hired or why you are of interest in the position – for this it's best to reference your body paragraphs for consistency and preparing the reader for what you are about to talk about.

Body Paragraphs: Tie it all together! Try to tailor your cover letter to the job posting. This is where you get to show the employer that you know what they want and that you have the skills from your previous experiences to meet their needs. For this part of the letter, aim for 2-3 paragraphs that are focused clearly on major skills you can contribute and the ways you have honed that skill(s) or you can focus these paragraphs on the workplaces where you acquired these skills.

Provide evidence! Conceptualize this as a persuasive paper whereby you are trying to provide evidence for why you are the best hire. For anything you say about yourself, back it up with a narrative of where and how you acquired that skill or quality.

Conclusion paragraph: This just a brief paragraph closing the letter. In this paragraph, be sure to always thank them for considering your application and provide your information so that they can contact you for (hopefully) the interview.

Sincerely,

Name