

What Goes in a Cover Letter?

The cover letter is a **separate document to support the résumé**. It's not a place to repeat items stated in the résumé, but to elaborate on unique qualifications that make you a strong candidate. This is where you tell why you're excited to work at the organization and what specific experience you bring to it, and where you talk in depth about your top two or three qualifications. Expectations for cover letter format and content vary, but here are some common principles.

Do

- Be concise, original and direct.
- Promote yourself.
- Focus on the positives.

Don't

- Be vague, too wordy, boastful, presumptuous, deceptive.
- Summarize your résumé.

Tips

- Proofread at least three times.
- Read it aloud.
- Print it out and have at least two people review format and content.
- Match the header (your name and contact information) to your résumé's to maintain a consistent, polished look.
- Be careful of your tone; strike a balance between professional, genuine excitement and humility. You don't want to sound like you lack confidence or that you are prideful.

First Name Last Name

Email Address | Phone Number | Physical Address or LinkedIn URL

Date

First and Last Name of Recruiter

Their Position/Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear [Director or Coordinator _____] or [Hiring Manager]:

Opening paragraph. State your reason for the letter: the position you are applying for, how you heard about it and your interest.

Second/third paragraph. List examples and illustrate how and why you are a qualified candidate. Describe relevant work, volunteer, educational or personal experiences not listed in your résumé or expand on what was listed.

Closing paragraph. Share your desire to meet with them/follow up in person, preferably for an interview. Tell them to refer to your résumé for further review of your qualifications. Thank them and tell them you can be reached at any of your provided contact information.

Sincerely, Best regards, etc.

Your signature

Your full name



Oregon State
University

Career Development Center
A110 Kerr Administration Building
541-737-4085 | career@oregonstate.edu