



Cover Letter Writing

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a document sent with your resume to provide additional information on your skills and experience. A cover letter typically provides detailed information on why you are qualified for the job to which you are applying. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and identify your most relevant skills or experiences.

Do I always need a cover letter?

The short answer is “**Yes.**” It is generally an accepted practice that if you send a resume to an employer for a job or internship you also include a cover letter. If you are applying through a job search website, you will want to also upload a cover letter. If you are emailing your materials to an individual, you can use the cover letter in the body of the email.

Why?

The cover letter serves as your sales pitch. It highlights the main points on your resume, summarizes your basic skills and talents, and serves to get the prospective employer excited about YOU!

Here are some basic tips before you start drafting your letter:

The cover letter is your opportunity to introduce you to an employer and provide an overview of yourself.

Detail how your skills and experiences match the requirements of the position.

Convey your enthusiasm, motivation, and sincere interest in the job.

The objective is to market your accomplishments and competencies, with the goal of securing an interview.

Cover letter tips

Employers are thinking, "What can this person do for me?" Your letter should answer that question.

Keep to one page with three or four short paragraphs. Use standard business letter format.

Individualize the cover letter to the specific position.

No errors in grammar or punctuation – use spellcheck!

Address the letter to the appropriate person; make sure that the individual's name and title are correct.

Personalize your letter if possible.

If your research fails to identify a proper contact then use Dear Hiring Manager.

Last names and proper titles are important.

How can I create a basic cover letter?

Look at the position description or job posting and/or look at the employer's website. Identify some reasons why you would be a good fit for the position. Craft the letter outlining how your background, education, and transferrable skills would make you an ideal candidate for the position.

How to create a basic cover letter

Read the position description. Look for the qualities they are requesting, make a mental list of which of those attributes you already possess. Think of three or four reasons you would be a good fit for their position.

Sample Job Description:

The East Springfield Park & Recreation Department seeks *energetic*, qualified individuals to fill Summer Camp Counselor positions. A Summer Camp Counselor *is responsible* for supervising campers and keeping them safe. Their duties include **teaching children outdoor and recreational skills**, overseeing and planning camp activities and learning and *implementing emergency protocol efforts to ensure the protection of campers*.

Examples of Duties:

Develop, lead, and actively participate with children in various age-appropriate activities.

Be able to effectively monitor behavior while using appropriate discipline techniques.

Ensure a high level of program quality and work to establish a positive relationship with all program participants and their families.

Ability to work as a member of a team and the ability to accomplish tasks with little direct supervision.

Serve as a positive role model to youth and teens.

Help write and implement a weekly schedule for your camp group.

Organize and lead a variety of small and large group activities each week. Activities may include crafts, nature, sports, games, field trips, swimming, etc. This includes time spent on the bus.

Communicate with parents about participants' experiences and report concerns to the Camp Director.

Qualifications: *Must hold valid CPR/First Aid Certifications at time of hire.*

Salary: The salary range for this position is \$16.00 per hour.

To apply, send your resume to Anne Fake, Camp Director, at Afake@ESpringfield.org

Read through the Job Description and find things you may have that make you qualified for the position. **Do you have experience working with children? Have you done any teaching or babysitting? Is your major related or have you taken any classes related to the position? Are you responsible, self-motivated, and a good role model with strong communication skills?**

Identify three or four qualifications that you have for the position.

Sample Cover Letter Preparation

They want

1. Experience working with children
2. CPR certification
3. Responsible Role Model

You have

1. Two years of babysitting experience
You worked as a lifeguard last summer
You are majoring in Psychology and took an intro class and did a four-hour observation in the Child Development Center
2. You are still certified from your year as a Lifeguard
3. You have been volunteering with the Best Buddies Program on campus this year serving as a mentor to a young adult with developmental disabilities
You are a Student Ambassador

Formulate a Sample Draft:

First Paragraph: I am writing to apply for the Camp Counselor Position with..... I think I would be a good fit for this for this job because I have direct experience working with children, I am a responsible role model and I am CPR/ First Aid Certified.

Body Paragraph(s) to back up the reasons you state in the first paragraph. I have worked with children for the past few years babysitting for a family with three children between the ages of 6-11. I watched the children from 3:00 in the afternoon until their parents arrived home, so I helped them with their homework and then took them outside to play games and explore nature as often as possible. I am on the Springfield College Soccer team, so I especially enjoyed putting together quick scrimmages with the children.

Closing paragraph: Thank them for their consideration. Ask for an interview.

Full Sample Cover Letter for Sample Position Description:

263 Alden Street
Springfield, MA 01109
June 1, 2023

Ms. Anne Fake
Camp Director
East Springfield Parks and Recreation Department
123 Pretend Street
East Springfield, MA 00000

Dear Ms. Fake,

Please accept this as an application for the Summer Camp Counselor Position with East Springfield Parks and Recreation. I think I would be a good fit for this position because of my education and training, my experience with children and my interest in serving as a positive role model. I grew up going to town summer camps and would love the chance join your team in a counselor role this summer.

During the past three academic years, I worked as a babysitter for a family with three children between the ages of 6-11. I watched the children from 3:00 in the afternoon until their parents arrive home. I helped them with their homework and then took them outside to play games and explore nature as often as possible. I am on the Springfield College Soccer team, so I especially enjoyed putting together quick scrimmages with the children. I also worked as a lifeguard during the last summer, keeping children and families safe in a community pool setting. Due to this experience I still have a current CPR/ First Aid certification. I am currently majoring in Psychology and had the opportunity to learn several theories of child development and visit the Child Development Center on our campus to see how they create developmentally appropriate games and activities for the children. I be very interested in using some of this knowledge to create a camp schedule and run activities with campers.

I enjoy serving as a role model and have been volunteering with the Best Buddies Program on campus, working individually with a young adult with a cognitive delay one day a week. We do his homework together and I plan some fun games that we can both enjoy. I am also involved in the Student Ambassador Program at Springfield College giving campus tours to prospective parents and students. This has allowed me to develop strong communication skills and work effectively as part of a team.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications in person. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Juan Candidate

Juan Candidate

Cover Letter Outline

Your Address
City/State/Zip
Date
(2 blank spaces)

Contact Name
Title or Hiring Manager
Organization
Street Address
City/State/Zip
(2 blank space)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Dr. Last name, (Use Title/Hiring Manager, if name is not available)
(1 space)

Opening Paragraph: (Capture attention, build a match)
State purpose, position seeking
If applicable, use name of mutual colleague, person who recommended you
Mention source of lead (LinkedIn, Indeed.com or other job board, alumni connection)
Very briefly state why you are interested in the position and organization

Body Paragraph(s): (Explain why you are best qualified)
Back up your statements about why you would be good for the position
Show enthusiasm
Demonstrate your skills and state your credentials
Identify how skills were obtained
Tell a brief story, give examples of achievements
Use self-descriptive words
Put adjectives with activities
Use action verbs

Closing Paragraph: (Ask for the interview)
Restate solid match
Take charge . . . say you will call to follow up
Explore potential meeting/interview
Affirm confidence
Express thanks for consideration of your interest
(1 blank space)

Sincerely,
(3 spaces)

Your Signature

Type Your Name

Tips to get started

- Introduce yourself to an employer and clearly state the position for which you are applying; this ensures your application makes it to the correct person/committee for review.
- Show them how you can benefit their organization, NOT how they would benefit you!
- Choose two or three skills/qualifications from the job posting and detail previous successful experiences demonstrating these in a work, internship, or classroom setting.
- Convey your enthusiasm, motivation, and sincere interest in the job!

Now it is your turn:

Look at the position description and identify three reasons you would be a good fit for this position:

They want

I have

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

Be sure to show the link between what they want and the qualities and experience you possess. Then turn these into the body paragraphs of your cover letter. While you do need to write a cover letter specifically for each position, many of the skills employers seek will remain consistent. You may be able to reuse content in different cover letters. Be careful that if you reuse content, you double check to make sure it is what they are seeking and that you have updated any employer specific information.

For a More Advanced/Professional Cover Letter:

Common Cover Letter Mistakes to Avoid

- Don't use a generic template you found online. You absolutely must tailor your cover letter (and resume) to fit the company and position.
- Don't explain what the job will do for you. Explain what you can bring to the job.
- Don't just reiterate or summarize your resume.
- Don't indicate a disability, visa status, or reference to a religious organization.
- Don't discuss salary requirements, paid time off, or other benefits at this stage.
- Don't stay too general or fail to give compelling examples as proof of your stated strengths and abilities.
- Don't send your document out without carefully editing for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- Don't forget to change the recipient's name and company name for each cover letter you write!

Cover Letter Format

Opening Paragraph

The cover letter is the first introduction to you. A great first impression is crucial. Your first paragraph is only two or three sentences in length and should state clearly why you are writing this letter. Be specific to the position for which you are applying, and explain why you would be a strong candidate and a good fit for them.

If you are not applying for a specific position, you still need to state your reason for writing (inquiry, networking, etc.). Mention how you learned about the position and any contacts that you have. Research the company's website, articles, annual reports, etc. to familiarize yourself about the organization's needs and its culture. Describe how you can contribute. This is where you would mention any referrals.

Body Paragraph(s)

In the second paragraph introduce your education and experience. Highlight your skills and experiences that directly relate to the position responsibilities and qualifications. Provide detailed examples of your successful accomplishments. Do not simply repeat the content of the resume!

Focus on your skills, awards, achievements, project outcomes (include class projects). Express your knowledge and familiarity with the company and why you really want to work for this specific company. Indicate why you want to enter their industry or their particular company. Demonstrate your knowledge and enthusiasm!

Closing Paragraph

This is a very short paragraph. Thank them for their consideration of your application and tell the employer that you are available for an interview. Don't end on a neutral tone. Show the employer you care about landing this position. Thank the employer for their time and that you look forward to hearing from them.

Do include your contact information. When you end your letter with your name, also include:

- Your preferred phone number and/or email address.
- Your LinkedIn profile (or consider creating one).
- Your electronic or written signature (under the paragraph).

Sample Letter of Application *Use when responding to a posted opening.*

Springfield College
263 Alden Street, Box 2888
Springfield, MA 01109
September 1, 2023

Mr. Paul Phillips
General Manager
Healthy You Fitness, Inc.
3346 Main Street
Dustin, CO 33404

Dear Mr. Phillips,

I have been interested in working for Healthy You Fitness for some time now because I consider it the premier fitness training facility in the Denver area. My goal is to work in a highly professional environment where every member is valued and the focus is on helping each person achieve his or her individual fitness goals. I am confident that I possess what you are looking for in the personal trainers you hire to your team. I obtained my Bachelor's Degree, have extensive experience designing and running classes, while utilizing strong communication and interpersonal skills.

I have recently completed my Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science at Springfield College and have become a certified personal trainer (ACE). Through my internship at HealthTrax I gained confidence in my ability to create and lead group exercise classes and to design individualized fitness programs for members. I initiated a new exercise class entitled Power Up, an upper body strengthening program. I assisted in designing and marketing the class and taught it three times per week. Interest in the class grew by word of mouth and the class size doubled within the first three months. I possess excellent interpersonal skills which allow me to develop positive rapport with members by listening to their needs and concerns, and encouraging them through each stage of their program. My strong communication skills not only impact club members, but colleagues, visitors, and student interns as well.

My studies in Exercise Science have given me a comprehensive understanding of anatomy, kinesiology, management concepts in sport and fitness settings, worksite wellness, fitness assessment and prescription, and stress testing. I have also taken courses related to fitness for special populations including the elderly and the disabled. Through my coursework and fieldwork experiences, I feel very competently trained to work with members of all ages and fitness levels. I enjoy continual learning and will take advantage of educational opportunities to stay current with new trends and research in the Exercise Science field.

Thank you for considering me for a position at Healthy You Fitness. As a reliable and energetic new professional, I will bring strong fitness training skills and a positive attitude to your staff. I will contact you within two weeks to confirm your receipt of my application materials and to learn more about your timeline for hiring. If you wish to reach me you can contact me at sallen@springfieldcollege.edu. I look forward to the opportunity to interview for this position.

Sincerely,

Samantha Allen
Samantha Allen

Sample Letter of Application

4113 West Main Street
East Hartford, CT 06478
July 13, 2023

Dr. Gary M. Wells, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
232 Williams Street, P.O. Box 789
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Dear Dr. Wells,

As a School Counselor I am a firm believer in advocating for students and creating a community atmosphere where children can learn and grow in a supportive environment. I am already certified as a School Counselor in Connecticut. My passion for counseling students and the ability to manage multiple priorities would make me a great candidate. While reviewing the Connecticut Education Association website, I learned of the Guidance Counseling position opening in your school district. I am very interested in the current grade 6-school counselor position, and would welcome the opportunity to become an active member of Glastonbury's developmental guidance program.

Through my School Counseling experience I have had the opportunity to utilize my education in developmental guidance in working with students, parents, teachers, and administrators as part of a collaborative team. I have been working with children and families for the past nine years. From summer camp counseling, to after school programs, to practicum experiences, I have found working with children to be an extremely educational and rewarding experience.

One of my keys to successes has been my ability to multitask. As a school counselor it is essential to be able to manage several tasks at once. I have demonstrated this trait through many experiences, but one I am particularly proud of is the production of two theater performances I produced during my practicum. In addition to carrying a full caseload of students, I utilized my teamwork attitude, exceptional organizational and time management skills, and patience to produce two fantastic performances of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and Peter Pan.

Given the opportunity to join your team I will bring an optimistic yet realistic attitude with a dedication to student education and success. I feel that the knowledge I have gained from my educational background as well as my experiences working with people will allow me to make a positive contribution to your school. Thank you for reviewing my qualifications. I can be reached at (413) 555-5555 or jcross@springfieldcollege.edu. I look forward to interviewing with you.

Sincerely,

Jane Cross

Jane Cross

Sample Letter of Inquiry – *Written to inquire if there are opportunities within an organization that may not be publicly advertised, or to propose an opportunity. This format might be good for developing an internship or informational interview.*

2907-B Maple Drive
Orleans, NH 03044
August 31, 2023

Ms. Maria Shea
Rehabilitation Manager
Essex Park Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
265 Essex Street
Beverly, MA 01915

Dear Ms. Shea,

As I begin my career as an Occupational Therapist, my goal is to affiliate with a dynamic sub-acute and long-term care facility whose mission is to increase the independence and quality of life of their clients. Ms. Ann Aberin, a HealthBridge Management Talent Recruiter, who attended a recent Springfield College networking event, encouraged me to contact you. I would like to bring my varied experiences in Occupational Therapy, my holistic approach to treatment, and my passion for working with an aging population to your team.

In browsing Essex Park's website, I was very impressed by its specialized programs, experienced and dedicated staff, and commitment to high quality care. My clinical internships, encompassing the complex medical, cognitive, and orthopedic diagnoses of a sub-acute skilled nursing facility and the focused musculoskeletal injuries of an outpatient rehabilitation clinic, provide a broad background well suited for Essex Park's clinical rehabilitation needs. In addition, previous experience teaching yoga and providing therapeutic massage at a health spa, and training in the Feldenkrais method, bring to my Occupational Therapy practice communication, education, and client rapport skills.

Over the past year, while preparing for the national board exam and obtaining a license to practice, I have managed the daily care of an elderly family member with dementia. During this time, I introduced a daily reminder journal, established a regular walking routine, improved nutrition and normalized body weight, and increased participation in personal hygiene, cooking, and recreational activities. This experience not only reinforced my interest in working with the elderly, but has broadened my awareness of both the professional and family centered issues of this population.

I would welcome the opportunity for an interview and to further discuss my qualifications for an Occupational Therapy position with Essex Park. I can be reached at (413) 555-5551 or JJohnston11@springfieldcollege.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Janelle Johnston

Janelle Johnston

Sample Letter of Referral - *This is an extremely effective letter that stems from a network contact. The objective is to make a connection through a mutual acquaintance to attract attention and secure an interview.*

17 Southcrest Boulevard, #11
Hartford, CT 06117
July 3, 2023

Mr. Tom Foley
Youth Services Director
Riverside Family Services
888 Elm Street
Riverside, CT 94606

Dear Mr. Foley,

During recent conversations with Scott Dranka, Director of the Career Center, I learned about the Youth Counselor Internship at Riverside Family Services. As a junior Psychology major at Springfield College, I am very interested in developing skills to work effectively with high-risk adolescents. I would bring my experience working with youth in both education and recreational settings along to the position along with my drive to be successful. After graduation, I wish to pursue a career in social services working with a similar population.

My coursework and summer work experience have prepared me well for this internship opportunity. I have taken several courses in the areas of child and adolescent development and counseling in multicultural environments. In addition, my volunteer experience has afforded me exposure to societal issues regarding poverty, homelessness, and the effects that drug use and alcohol abuse have on the whole family. I feel passionate about my career choice where I will be able to provide services, education, and hope to young people who have lived in difficult family situations. This past summer I worked at Windsor Hills Camp in Portland, Oregon where I was the Activity Coordinator. I learned valuable skills in supervising youth, coordinating a daily schedule of activities, and working as a part of a team in order to provide a safe and fun environment. Providing a variety of structured activities as well as opportunities for creative, free play was the key to our success with the camp participants.

Through the Partner's Program at Springfield College, I had a very rewarding experience tutoring a third grade student from a level four inner-city elementary school who struggled with reading. Not only do I feel that I made a positive impact on this student academically, but socially as well. After tutoring sessions, the program allowed tutors to interact recreationally with the children and take them to dinner in the campus dining hall. I enjoyed building rapport with this student to increase both his literacy skills and college awareness.

I am eager to use these skills to assist the children in your program, and I am extremely interested in learning from your dedicated staff of counselors and assistants. Thank you for considering me for the Youth Counselor Intern position. I am available at your convenience to meet for an interview.

Sincerely,

John Newbury

John Newbury

Sample Cover Letter

977 Upper Church Street
Hardwick, MA 01037
September 5, 2023

Mr. Mark McKensie
Director, Human Resources
Well Flow Inc.
188 Flower Street
Meriden, CT 06457

Dear Mr. McKensie,

I am writing to express my interest in the International Marketing position open at Well Flow Inc. I am very familiar with your products, and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about how I could help increase your international market share. Janna Dooley, the Senior Direct Marketing Associate for Well Flow Inc., recommended that I contact you directly about this position. Jana and I have worked closely in the industry for many years, and she thought that I would be an excellent match for Well Flow Inc. I have direct industry knowledge, a proven record of increasing profits, and my focus is always on maintaining excellent customer relationships.

My extensive experience marketing similar products internationally has given me an overall knowledge of the business, directly applicable to your interest in increasing sales abroad. In my previous position as International Marketing Manager with InfoTech, I successfully increased our revenue in each of my territories by over 40% within my first year. In the six years I spent at InfoTech, I helped to establish a market share in an additional ten countries, while increasing revenue and profits in all locations. I have established relationship and connections within this industry and can bring a book of business with me to the position. The client is always the focus in any business setting and I make sure that my clients' needs are consistently anticipated and met, this allows me to establish long lasting sales relationships.

I am confident that I am an excellent candidate for this position, and would very much like the opportunity to meet with you discuss what I have to offer Well Flow, Inc. If you wish to reach me you can contact me at (413) 555-5595 or Jarmour@comcast.net. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Armour

John Armour

Sample Thank You Note – *Written to thank someone for helping you in your career, good for after a job or internship interview, shadowing experience, information interview, giving you a recommendation or basically every time someone helps you advance your career. Can be a handwritten note or in an email.*

Ms. Pam Winger
Human Resources Manager
Acme Organization
2000 Line Drive
Holyoke, MA 01030

Dear Ms. Winger,

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to meet with you and see your facilities today. Both the interview and the tour made for an exciting and complete day. The Marketing Trainee Program you outlined sounds both challenging and rewarding.

As mentioned during the interview, I will be graduating in May with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Through my education and experience I have gained many skills, as well as an understanding of marketing concepts and working as part of a team. I have worked as an Office Assistant in our Marketing Department for the past two years and held the position as V.P. of Promotions for our Outing Club. I feel strongly that my education and work experience would complement the Marketing Trainee Program.

I have enclosed a copy of my college transcript and a list of references that you requested.

I appreciate the opportunity to be considered by Acme Organization. The interview reinforced my strong interest in becoming a part of your organization. I can be reached at (413) 555-1111 or by e-mail at jbolder@springfieldcollege.edu should you need additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Bolder

Jane Bolder

<p>Management Skills administered analyzed assigned attained chaired contracted coordinated delegated developed directed evaluated improved increased organized oversaw planned prioritized produced reviewed scheduled strengthened</p> <p>Communication skills addressed arbitrated arranged authored collaborated convinced corresponded developed directed drafted edited formulated influenced interpreted lectured mediated negotiated persuaded promoted publicized reconciled recruited spoke translated wrote</p>	<p>Research Skills clarified collected critiqued diagnosed evaluated examined extracted identified inspected interviewed investigated organized reviewed summarized surveyed systematized</p> <p>Technical Skills assembled built computed designed devised engineered fabricated maintained operated overhauled programmed remodeled solved upgraded</p> <p>Financial Skills administered allocated analyzed appraised audited budgeted calculated computed developed forecasted managed marketed planned projected researched</p>	<p>Creative Skills conceptualized created customized designed developed directed established fashioned founded illustrated initiated instituted integrated introduced invented originated performed planned revitalized shaped</p> <p>Helping Skills assessed assisted clarified coached counseled demonstrated diagnosed educated expedited facilitated familiarized guided motivated referred rehabilitated represented</p> <p>More Verbs achieved expanded improved pioneered reduced (losses) resolved (problems) restored spearheaded transformed</p>	<p>Organizational Skills approved arranged cataloged classified collated collected compiled dispatched executed generated implemented inspected monitored operated organized prepared processed purchased recorded retrieved screened specified systematized tabulated</p> <p>Teaching Skills adapted advised clarified coached communicated coordinated demystified developed enabled encouraged evaluated explained facilitated guided informed instructed persuaded set goals stimulated trained motivated</p>
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