



Cover Letter Writing Guide

A well-written cover letter will compliment your resume by discussing your interest in the position and the experiences and skills that qualify you to be considered for the position. An employer may not be able to tell **why** you are interested in a position from your resume.

In some cases, a cover letter may be optional, but **you should always include a cover letter** because it enhances your resume and shows your genuine interest in the position.

8 STEPS TO WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER

Step 1: Think about why you're applying to this job

Your reason for applying to a position is a significant indicator of whether you'll succeed if you get the offer. Try to link your reason for applying to the company's mission and the role's description.

Step 2: Think about the specific job you're applying to

Read and reread the job description. Research the company online. List out key words and phrases from both and use them when discussing your own qualifications. Consider how your experience suits you for this particular job.

Step 3: Think about the person who will be reading your cover letter

Remember that it's a real person who will be reading your cover letter. Make it easy for them to get excited about you so that you stand out from the other candidates they are interviewing. Use your prospective employer's job description, website, or LinkedIn to identify who your cover letter should be addressed to. **Always address your cover letter to a person with a title...do not use "Dear Hiring Manager"** or other generic titles/salutations.

Step 4: Think about your cover letter as a storytelling document

Your cover letter summarizes your experience and connects it to this position, so make sure your story tells how your life up to this point has prepared you to fill this position for them.

Step 5: Complete/update your resume

You can view our Resume Writing Guide [here](#).

Step 6: View the cover letter writing video

This [video](#) by Cultivate Your Career presents a clear, relevant, user-friendly cover letter explanation and provides you with a **free template**.

Step 7: Sign your cover *by hand*

A handwritten signature is simultaneously personal and professional.

Step 8: Talk with the Advisor for Vocation & Career Development

Visit the Southern Seminary & Boyce College Office of Career Development in Williams Hall, Room 112 or email careerdevelopment@sbts.edu to make an appointment for cover letter review.

COVER LETTER WRITING TIPS

- Keep your formatting simple and professional. Most companies appreciate black and white with font between 10- and 12-point.
- Avoid spelling and grammar errors. Proofread.
- Don't regurgitate your resume. Use your cover letter as an opportunity to introduce yourself and get the interviewer excited about you.
- Be confident and do not slink behind humility. If you are skilled, competent, and the best fit for the job, show them why.
- Don't draw attention to skills you don't have. **Leave out** statements like "Despite my lack of experience in _____."
- Be professional, but not overly formal. The interviewer is a person, so draw them into a well-written story.
- Use numbers to quantify your successes (and try to not to use the same ones in your resume).
- Use a consistent file naming system to help you keep track of your cover letters.
 - *Example:* CoverLetter_TracyJackson_10.6.19