

# Crafting your Cover Letters

## What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is your written introduction to an employer. It not only shows off your written communication skills, it also conveys your very personal interest in the job and the organization offering it. For each application, you should personalize your cover letter to fit the employer.

## What are the main sections of a cover letter?

*Inside address* – where you include the full address and title of your audience.

*Salutation* – where you address respectfully.

*1st paragraph* – where you state the position for which you're applying, how and when you found out about it, and note that your resume is attached.

*2nd paragraph* – where you highlight your skills and qualifications that match those in the job posting. Explain how you would be an asset to the company.

*3rd paragraph* – where you request an interview and restate your interest in and qualifications for the position. Be sure to thank them for their time as they review your resume.

*Signature* – where you close and sign your full name.

## What are some guidelines for writing cover letters?

- Address your letter to a specific person by name and title.
- Use the first paragraph to attract the reader's attention.
- Concisely describe what you can do for the employer. Borrowing language from the original job posting can be helpful.
- Introduce your resume by referring to it in your letter.
- Use direct language and make it look professional by checking for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Be sure to sign the letter above your typed name.
- Let your individuality shine through, but keep it professional.
- Close your letter with a request for action. Offer to call, or request an interview within a specific amount of time.
- Include your contact information in case the letter becomes separated from your resume.

## Resources to help you craft cover letters:

- Attend the "Resume 1 & Cover Letters" workshop at WorkSource. Schedules can be found online at [www.go2worksource.com](http://www.go2worksource.com).  
Hint: Look for your local office first.
- Use the AutoWriter tool in the WinWay database to help you choose language and build your cover letters.
- Make use of a tutorial in the **LearningExpress** online resource in the library or from home at:  
<http://www.fvrl.org/findinfo/index.cfm#careers>.
- Visit <http://www.onetonline.org/> to do some research on the occupation you're seeking.

**Example:**

Nathan Carpenter  
910 Garrison St.  
Vancouver, WA 98664  
(360) 987-4321  
natec223@gmail.com

*Current Date*

October 1, 2010

*Inside Address*

Ms. Bethany Tyler, Communications Officer  
Gigantic Corporation  
3456 Pekinese Drive  
Vancouver, WA 98665

*Salutation*

Dear Ms. Tyler,

*1st Paragraph*

Several things you said in your advertisement for an executive assistant in the September 30, 2010 edition of the *Columbian* made me think that your company was searching for someone like me. As you can see from my attached resume, I have several years of experience providing administrative and office assistance.

*2nd Paragraph*

Let me show you how I am uniquely qualified for this position:

- I am familiar with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PageMaker, and type 90 wpm.
- I have coordinated executive calendars and scheduled meetings in a large corporate environment for six years.
- I excel at using and troubleshooting office equipment, such as printers, photocopiers, fax machines, and multi-line telephones.
- I have experience and vendor contacts for planning large events in major cities across the United States.

*3rd Paragraph*

I believe these qualifications fit your requirements exceptionally well, and would like to schedule a personal interview. Please contact me soon so that we might find a mutually convenient time to meet.

*Signature*

Sincerely,

Nathan Carpenter