

How to Write a Cover Letter

Career Development Center, Ventura College



WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is your personalized, one-page sales pitch or introduction to an employer and should:

- Explain why you are sending the resume and how you heard about the position
- Link your skills, experience, and education to the requirements of the position
- Focus on your interest in the organization and what you can contribute to the team
- Convince the reader to look at your resume

Each resume you submit for a job opportunity should be accompanied by a cover letter, unless otherwise directed. Some industries and recruiters weigh cover letters heavily in the application review process. Do not submit a vague or general cover letter, be sure to tailor the letter to the job opportunity.

KEY TIPS

► Format

- Cover letters are often submitted as an email attachment or uploaded as part of an online application. Just like with your resume, send the cover letter as a PDF to avoid formatting issues.
- Always include a personalized introduction in the body of an email in addition to attaching a formal letter.

► Target to the particular organization and position

- Tailor each letter to show the connection between your qualifications and the employer's requirements.
- Read the job description and highlight skills the employer is looking for and link to examples of how you have showcased those skills previously. Demonstrate your knowledge about the organization.

► Appropriately address your letter

- Target an individual whenever possible when addressing your letter. If a name is not available, use a professional greeting such as "Hiring Manager" or "Internship Coordinator."

► Mention referrals

- If someone has referred you to the position or organization (e.g. an alumni contact, faculty, etc.), mention this at the beginning of the letter.

GET STARTED

1. **Begin your narrative.** Briefly share your major, degree anticipated and how you found the opportunity. You may choose to get creative to "hook" in the reader.
2. **Express your interest.** Demonstrate enthusiasm for the position and organization.
3. **Share your experience.** Use specific examples. Match your experience with the position requirements whenever possible.
4. **Convince the employer.** Show that you possess the skills and abilities they are looking for and that they should offer you an interview.
5. **Express gratitude.** End the letter by thanking the reader for their time and consideration. Be sure your contact information is included in your letter header or following your signature line.

EXAMPLES

Michelle Mills

(805) 555-5555 | FirstNameLastName@gmail.com | 1234 Street Address, Ventura, CA 93003

October 2, 2017

Human Resources Department
Family Care Center
4667 Telegraph Road, Ventura CA 93003

Dear Selection Committee:

I will be completing my Associate in Science in Child Development at Ventura College this semester, after which I will be available for full-time teaching assistant positions. I was referred to the Teaching Assistant position at Family Care Center by my professor, Jane Good, and I am excited to submit my application.

I am well qualified for the part-time Teaching Assistant position for several reasons:

- **I have 3+ years experience as an aid for toddlers and as an after school tutor for elementary students.** In these positions, I have excelled in providing excellent support to professional staff, supported classroom management, and supported individual's cognitive and psychosocial development.
- **I am a strong communicator and work well with various stakeholders.** My previous employers and professors can attest that I consistently demonstrate professionalism when collaborating with colleagues and administrators. Further, I take pride in ensuring effective communication with parents in both English and Spanish.
- **Early childhood education is my passion.** I stay abreast of trends in the field and I am knowledgeable about curriculum planning consistent with California Early Learning System for Infants-Toddlers and Preschool. Additionally, I am aware of developmentally appropriate teaching methods and have been trained to integrate a variety of appropriate teaching strategies as well as technology into the classroom.

I am confident my skills and prior experience make me an excellent candidate for this position. I would like very much to talk with you in the near future. I will contact you in the next couple weeks to discuss a convenient time to meet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle Mills

Tip:

Your cover letter header should match your resume header- think of this as part of demonstrating your brand.

Tip:

This is an example of a traditional cover letter. Feel free to get more creative (as appropriate in your industry).

Tip:

If you are sending your cover letter in the body of an email, omit the information to the right and begin with the salutation.

Jaime Castillo

(805) 555-5555 | FirstNameLastName@gmail.com

April 30, 2018

Jane Smith
ABC Hospital
1234 Ventura Road, Ventura CA 93003

Dear Jane Smith:

I am excited to apply for the part-time Medical Assistant position with ABC Hospital. I recently completed the Medical Assisting program at Ventura College and have one year of internship experience in a medical setting. I am passionate about the medical field and eager to contribute my skills to the team at ABC Hospital.

Through my internship, I gained experience communicating with patients and reading patient records. I was also trained in electronic health records and utilized the Microsoft Office Suite daily to track office tasks and streamline communication. Through my coursework, I have strengthened my knowledge of insurance protocols, lab test requisitions, and medical terminology. Additionally, I have exceptional customer service skills which I developed through my 5+ years in retail and food service. My combination of patient and customer service experience along with my knowledge of the medical field will allow me to immediately contribute to your team.

I am confident my skills and prior experience make me an excellent candidate for this position. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to interview for the Medical Assistant position.

Sincerely,
Jaime Castillo
Jaime Castillo

Tip:

Traditional format includes a signature before the printed name. If you're sending a cover letter electronically or writing an introduction in the body of an email, omit the signature and conclude your letter with your name and contact information.