



Cover Letters

Like resumes, cover letters have to make a positive first impression. Sent together with a resume or application, the cover letter does not need to supply as much information. However, a cover letter should include details that make it less generic than your resume or application. It can be tailored to a specific organization or situation, and should stress the appropriateness of your qualifications for a particular position or scholarship. This can boost your chances of getting an interview or moving to the next level of consideration.

Give a to-the-point indication of your qualifications.

1. Begin by explicitly stating your reason for writing.

I am writing to apply for the Mary Aaron Scholarship for students at California colleges.

2. Make it clear why you're interested in the position, the organization, or the scholarship.

As someone who has served as a volunteer in several community groups, I am impressed by your organization which benefits students in the Yuba-Sutter area.

3. Give some sense of why the person you're writing to should want to meet or consider you. This may include information not on your resume or application.

While employed as a tutor in the Yuba College Writing Center, I learned strategies which I adapted for use with elementary school students, and used this knowledge while I was a volunteer at Hands of Hope. These experiences will be invaluable to me in my future career as an English teacher.

Think of your letter as an argument.

You are making the claim that you are qualified for a position or that you deserve a scholarship. Support your claim with reasons and evidence.

Use a business-like format.

1. Use a block letter format, with all paragraphs aligned on the left margin.
2. Include your return address and other contact information.
3. Include the date the recipient's name and address.
4. Include an appropriate salutation. Whenever possible, write to a specific person. Call the organization and ask who will be reviewing applications.
 - If you know the person's name and title, use it.
Dear Dr. Hitchcock: Dear Ms Waterman:
 - If you must write to an unknown reader, use a more general salutation:
To Whom It May Concern: Dear Sir or Madam:
5. Don't be chatty and personal in the body of your letter, but do be positive and cordial. Be informative but brief, showing that you value your readers' time.
6. Close your letter with "Sincerely" and your signature.

Proofread carefully!

This is a professional letter – you must strive for perfection. The use of spell check alone is inadequate. Employers receive dozens, even hundred of applications, so any sloppiness may result in rejection. The feeling will be that if you can't take the time or effort to proofread, your future performance will also be less than stellar.

(Use one-inch margins at left and right. Make sure your letter has even margins at top and bottom. Leave several blank lines before your return address if necessary.)

Patricia Phelps 616 "F" Street Marysville, CA 95901 (530) 822-5151 patp@hotmail.com

May 12, 2011 (return 4 times, leaving 3 spaces)

Mr. Gordon Davis
A-1 Equipment Company
1549 Colusa Hwy.
Yuba City, CA 95993 (return 2 times)

Dear Mr. Davis:

I am writing in response to your ad for a Bookkeeper and Payroll Supervisor in today's Appeal Democrat.

I worked for a heavy equipment company before having a family (over 20 years ago), and was responsible for job costing, Accounts Receivable, and payroll tasks. Although I recently spent two years managing a data base and bookkeeping for a local non-profit organization, I realized that more formal education would increase my qualifications. I will earn my Certificate of Achievement in Accounting from Yuba Community College this month, and will therefore bring up-to-date skills, as well as maturity, judgment, and experience to any position for which I am hired.

My resume is attached, and I am happy to supply several references. I look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely, (return 4 times, leaving 3 spaces for your handwritten signature)

Patricia Phelps

Patricia Phelps

Enclosure

Submitted by Karen Trefzger



This Yuba College Writing & Language Development Center Tip Sheet is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>