

Cover letter

A cover letter, covering letter, motivation letter, motivational letter or a letter of motivation is a letter of introduction attached to, or accompanying another document such as a résumé or curriculum vitae.

Cover Letter for Employment

Job seekers frequently send a cover letter along with their resume, CV or employment application as a way of introducing themselves to potential employers and explaining their suitability for the desired position. Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as one method of screening out applicants who are not sufficiently interested in their position or who lack necessary basic skills. Cover letters are typically divided into three categories:

- The application letter or invited cover letter which responds to a known job opening
- The prospecting letter or uninvited cover letter which inquires about possible positions
- The networking letter which requests information and assistance in the sender's job search

Cover Letter Format

Cover letters are generally one page at most in length, divided into a header, introduction, body, and closing.

The *Header Cover Letters* use standard business letter style, with the sender's address and other information, the recipient's contact information, and the date sent after either the sender's or the recipient's address. Following that is an optional reference section and an optional transmission note. The final part of the header is a salutation.

The Introduction paragraph briefly states the specific position desired, and should be designed to catch the employer's immediate interest.

The *Body* paragraph highlights or amplifies on material in the resume or job application, and explains why the job seeker is interested in the job and would be of value to the employer. Also, matters discussed typically include skills, qualifications, and past experience. If there are any special things to note such as availability date, they may be included as well.

In the *Closing* paragraph, the applicant closes or sums up the letter and indicates the next step the applicant expects to take. It may indicate that the applicant intends to contact the employer, although many favor the more indirect approach of simply saying that the applicant will look forward to hearing from or speaking with the employer. Following the closing paragraph is a goodbye (e.g. "Sincerely"), and then a signature line. Optionally, the abbreviation "ENCL" may be used to indicate that there are enclosures.

Cover Letters Other Uses

Resume Cover letters may also serve as marketing devices for prospective job seekers. Cover letters may serve the purpose of trying to catch the reader's interest or persuade the reader of something, or they may simply be an inventory or summary of the documents included along with a discussion of the expected future actions the sender or recipient will take in connection with the documents.