

ANATOMY OF A COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State Zip

Use accurate home or summer address during the summer and school address during the academic year OR copy your contact information and its formatting from your resume

Today's Date

Person's Name
Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code (Or Country)

Whenever possible, find a name and never use "To Whom it May Concern" Search Handshake, the company's website, or Google "[Organization Name] Recruiter LinkedIn" to try to find a name

Dear Dr./Ms./Mr./Mx. Last Name:

When you do not have a specific name, use "Dear Recruiter" or "Dear Hiring Manager"

The **first paragraph** introduces you to the employer and tells them why you are writing. To capture the interest of the employer, this paragraph should be concise and specific. Demonstrate that you've done your research and are especially interested in this particular employer and position.

State your reason for contacting the employer and refer to the specific position to which you are applying

For example: I am writing to express my interest in the Associate role at Organization X, and to submit my resume for your consideration.

Mention how you heard of the organization or position

For example: I learned about the Associate role through the University of Pennsylvania Career Services job board, Handshake.

State the proper name of the organization at least once and include a parenthetical note of the abbreviation

For example: Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)

If you know the person to whom you are addressing the letter, remind them how

For example: I enjoyed meeting you at the Penn Information Session last Thursday.

Share how you are connected to the company and why you are interested in the organization

For example: Your Conservation Director Forest Sherwood suggested that I contact you regarding potential web development openings.

Explain why you're interested

Know the company. Avoid generic descriptions such as "I know Org. X is a leader in the industry." Do enough research to articulate specifically why the organization appeals to you. If you have a good relationship with a current employee, mention a name. If you are impressed by certain aspects of the company, tell them here!

Explain how the position and/or company is a good fit with your career goals and interests. This is especially important when applying for positions in a different geographical location or in fields unrelated to your major.

If you are sending out prospecting letters (i.e. you don't know if a position exists or if there are any openings), identify the type of position you are targeting

For example: I am very interested in development positions within the non-profit sector.

The **second and third paragraphs** are your chance to elaborate upon the relevant aspects of your education, experience, and interests, and to emphasize how you will contribute.

Ask not what the potential employer can do for you, but what you can do for the employer

Go into greater detail about your relevant experiences and **don't repeat verbatim what's on your resume.** Highlight your qualifications by discussing them in terms of the contributions you can make.

Specifically address how you will fulfill the needs of the role

If the position description includes making presentations to clients, describe a time or times when you had to present to an audience and explain what was significant about how you did so. Really *show* your impact rather than list your responsibilities.

The **final paragraph** should pave the way for the interview. You may express your interest in an interview (though do not state a specific time or day), offer to provide additional materials, and thank the hiring manager for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name (typed)