

Cover Letter Guide

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is an opportunity to speak directly to an employer and explain why you are the best candidate for the position. A successful cover letter is tailored for the position/employer and describes how your experience, education, and personal qualities will enable you to succeed in the role.

Cover Letter Guidelines

A cover letter should be one page unless otherwise specified on the job advertisement. It includes your contact details, an introduction, body, and a conclusion. These sections should be between three to four paragraphs, single spaced.

Your cover letter should be written using professional, industry-specific language and proofread carefully. Spelling and grammatical errors in your cover letter are often a red flag for an employer and will limit your chances of being invited for an interview. Remember that your cover letter is often the first impression you make to a potential employer. Ensure that your writing is clear, confident, and persuasive.

Steps to Writing an Effective Cover Letter

1. Review the job advertisement carefully and research the company
 - Pay attention to the key skills are emphasized throughout the posting.
 - Review the mission statement, vision, current programs/projects, and values of the organization.
2. Write down your top skills for the position.
 - Make a list of at least 3 top skills for that position. Then place them in order them based on their value to the employer.
 - Think of examples for how/why these skills would enable you to succeed in the position.
 - Ensure you are not repeating everything that is on your resume.
 - Reference aspects the company (as listed above), which can show the employer you have done your research
3. Follow the format listed on the next page to create your cover letter.
 - Keep in mind that certain employers may have specific requirements for a job application. If these differ from the format described here, then it's best to contact them beforehand and follow their preferred format.

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Larry Lakehead (Your full name)
1234 Oliver St. (Your current address)
Thunder Bay, ON
PXX XXX
lakehead@lakeheadu.ca (Your email and phone number)
(807) XXX - XXXX

June 15th, 2018 (Current date)

Ms. Mary Smith (Employer's name)
Human Resource Manager (Position with company)
ABC Company (Company full address)
Toronto, ON
M5A XXX

Re: (Position title) (ref number on job ad)

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am excited to apply for the position of *(position title)* with your company. I am confident that my work experience, education, and passion *(or other personal attributes)* can be a strong asset to your company.

My interest in this role is based on my *(describe how the company aligns with your core values and your interest in the work they do, based on the research you have done).*

As a *(insert past position(s) or program of study)* I was able to enhance my *(insert at least three skills which are from the job ad, or at the very least, relevant to the position. Support skill #1 with a specific example of how you have used that skill to accomplish a goal. Explain skill #2, but use a different example). Explain skill #3 in a similar fashion).* I am confident that these skills would be highly beneficial as a *(position title)* with your organization.

I would be honoured to contribute my skills and knowledge with *(company title)* as a *(position title)* and welcome the opportunity to share my qualifications during an interview. Thank you for taking the time to review my resume and cover letter.

Sincerely,

(Insert Signature)
Larry Lakehead