

## GUIDE TO COVER LETTERS

Header **exactly** as it appears on your resume

Month Day, Year

Name of Recruiter

Title

Organization Name

Organization Address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

### 1st Paragraph) Making the Match

- Why are you writing/what position are you applying for?
- How did you get the employer's name?
- Where did you find the job listing?
- Who referred you?
- What is your interest in this position?

*This is your critical introductory paragraph. Do not tell the reader too much at first, just the special reasons you're writing. TIP: Try to grab their attention in a positive way and set an upbeat tone.*

### 2nd Paragraph) Making the Case

- Why are you qualified for the position you're applying for?
- What have you done that applies to this position?
- Why should they look at your resume?

*This paragraph is essentially a brief description of the most relevant parts of your resume relative to the requirements of the position. TIP: Highlight those critical parts of your background, as evidenced on your resume that address the core parts of the job description.*

### 3rd Paragraph) Making the Case Stronger

- Why are you further interested in this position or motivated to apply for this position?
- Why do you want to work there?
- What is special about you that should be considered for this position?
- What fit is there between your experience and this job?

*Continue to highlight selective and appropriate parts of your resume or mention your reasons and motivations for applying. TIP: Use this paragraph to validate additional core skills, your background, experiences and why this position excites you.*

### 4th Paragraph) Making the Close

- Restate your interest in the opportunity and an interview.
- Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

*TIP: Always end your letter positively and pro-actively. Remember: The purpose of your cover letter is to entice your reader to review your resume; your resume is what entices your reader to meet with you during an interview.*

Sincerely,

Your First and Last Name

## TIPS ON WRITING COVER LETTERS

**Cover letters should be no longer than a page**

**No contractions (i.e. “I am” rather than “I’m”)**

**Remember that this is a professional letter**

- ⇒ Should follow formal business writing
- ⇒ Be concise

**Do not know hiring manager name?**

- ⇒ Consider addressing it as follows:
  - Dear (Organization Name) Representative:

**Tailor your cover letter to the organization/company**

- ⇒ Research the company (explore their website if they have one)
- ⇒ What is the culture of the company/organization?
- ⇒ What are the company’s core values/mission?
- ⇒ What buzzwords (verbiage) do they use and how can you mirror that language?
  - Be aware of the words they use and weave that language in!

**Talk about how your skills align with what the company is seeking**

- ⇒ How will you be an asset to the company?
  - Demonstrate how you fit with the company

**Focus on strengths, not weaknesses**

- ⇒ Do not apologize for skills you are lacking (e.g. “Despite my lack of experience with Sales...”)
- ⇒ Focus on your personal strengths and lead with that!

**Do not repeat your resume!**

- ⇒ Do not just list out tasks but demonstrate how you have used or will be able to use these skills using real examples (“For example, as an intern at Disney I was able to build relationships by....”)

**Have someone look over it for grammar errors and content**

- ⇒ A cover letter is a sample of your writing abilities, like your resume you want it to be free of grammar and spelling errors
- ⇒ Have multiple people look over it to help in the editing process

**SPECIAL TECHNIQUE:** Put the job description on your desk on one side and your resume on the other. Envision the cover letter as a bridge between the two documents. When you review the job description underline or highlight the critical parts of it reflected in your resume. Then when you write the cover letter, relate and connect one to the other through the four paragraphs as described on the reverse side of this worksheet.