

ENCOURAGING WOMEN ACROSS
ALL BORDERS

CAREER GUIDES

COVER LETTERS

Encouraging
Women
Across All
Borders

EWAAAB

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Cover letters can be even more intimidating than a resume - or at least that's how I found them. The first cover letter I wrote was handed back to me covered in red correction marks. Since that first "failure" I've written many more cover letters and still find myself struggling at times. Writing professional documents, especially when you're eager to be accepted at a company, will always come with difficulties. Thankfully, as you gain more experience, they will become easier to overcome. The key pieces of advice I urge you to consider the next time you sit down to write a cover letter are 1) spend a lot of time with the position description - pull out the aspects you are most excited about or qualified for and highlight those and 2) always ask for help - ask a mentor or a senior in your field to review; even if you've written a 100 letters, a second opinion will always be helpful.

Many of these tips were inspired by the Becker Career Center at Union College, Schenectady. See if your university offers any resources!

Cover letters are intended to generate interest in you and to successfully express your enthusiasm for the position.

COVER LETTER WRITING



Expand and connect

Your cover letter should expand on your experience and connect your resume content to the position requirements. Describe specific experiences/skills that demonstrate your fit for the position and be sure to cite examples from the most relevant parts of your background.



Prepare a unique letter

Tailor every cover letter you submit to highlight relevant skill sets and credentials based on the position description. Customize the employer's information **and** specify why you are interested in this position at their company.



Address letters correctly

Use "Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name,". Do not use phrases such as "To whom it may concern," or "Dear Sir or Madam". You can also address the letter "Dear Hiring Manager/Selection Committee".



Keep a copy

Designate a folder on your computer to save all the cover letters you send to employers. If you don't hear back within 2 weeks (unless they've designated another timeline) you can follow up by attaching your original cover letter.



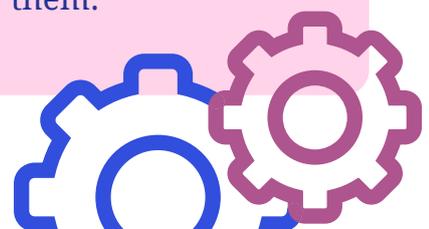
Make it perfect

Poor word choice, misspellings and typographical errors will make your application an automatic "no". Ask a mentor or senior in your field to review the content of your letter **and** have somebody proofread for grammatical errors before sending it out.



Enthusiasm sells

Employers are looking for candidates who are eager to work for them. Show them you've researched their organization and make a convincing case why you want to work for them.



Your First and Last Name
Your Address

Today's Date

Name of Contact or Hiring Manager
Title of Employer
Company/Organization
Address

Dear Hiring Manager,

Your opening paragraph tells **why you are writing** and notes where you learned about the position. Be sure to use the position title used by the employer - if you're unsure what the title is, be as specific as possible about the kind of position you're applying for. Research is key - show your genuine interest in this particular organization and why it is a good fit for you.

Your middle paragraphs should **highlight** examples that demonstrate your relevant experience, background, and/or coursework that will show potential employers why they should consider you as a candidate. Connect your **experiences** and/or education directly to the position description. You could include another paragraph detailing additional experience. Conclude your middle paragraph(s) by summarizing the skills and personality traits that you would bring to the job.

In your closing paragraph, **reiterate your interest** in the position and thank the employer for their consideration. You should also include your **contact information and indicate the follow-up action** (i.e. contacting you further to discuss the available position or you will call to follow-up on the status of your application).

Sincerely,
Sign your name

Formatting Tips:

- Use 1" margins all around the page ★
- Use 10-12 point font and choose the same style as your resume. ★
- Use a block style format & align names, dates and paragraphs along the left-hand margin. ★
- Keep it to one page, single spaced. ★

Sentence Starters

Introduction

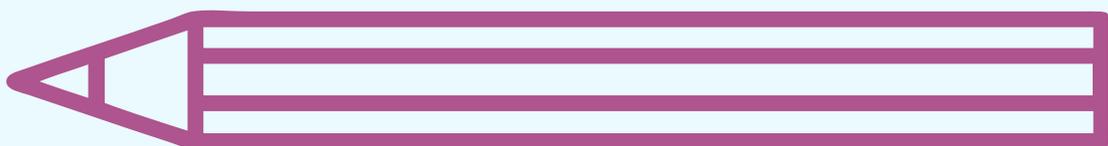
- It is with great interest that I am applying for the position of ____.
- As a recent graduate of ____ with a degree in ____ and an avid (reader, writer etc.), I am a strong applicant for the position of ____.
- I am eager to apply for the position of ____ because I have the ____ skills that will allow me to be successful in the role.

Body

- My experience as a ____ will help me to contribute ____.
- I can contribute to your organization's effectiveness by ____.
- My previous success in ____ has proven my ability ____.
- To highlight some of my accomplishments I have)____.
- Working with ____ has strengthened and improved my (analytical, research, interpersonal etc.) and (organizational, analytical, research etc.) skills.

Closing

- I am eager to learn more about ____ and would like to discuss my qualifications and interests with you.
- Beyond my enthusiasm for this opening, I offer all the essential elements it requires.
- My ____ and ____ make me a strong candidate for this position, and therefore look forward to the possibility of employment with (name of organization).
- I will contact you within ____ to ____ (follow up action).



Example

Sid Patrick

1 Encourage Plaza Hoboken, New Jersey 01110
555-555-5555
s.patrick@email.edu

January 18, 2017

Professor Prof Professorson
KU Leuven University
Oude Markt 13
Leuven, Belgium 3000

Dear Professor Professorson,

I am a current Pinnacle Scholars Physics student at Stevens Institute of Technology. As a freshman in my second semester, it is apparent that I only recently declared my major. However, my passion for physics, and my understanding of college-level topics began at an early age of fourteen. It has always been a goal of mine to conduct research in a university, where I can gain knowledge in my field and experience a new educational culture. For this reason, I believe that the Skyrmion lattice in Magnetic Films Internship at KU Leuven would

Sid does a great job pulling out d professional career.

specific pieces of knowledge

they have that will relate to

this internship. They expand

and relate their experience

directly to this opportunity.

Through these works, I feel confident in my understanding of the topics of

Relativity, the beginnings of Thermodynamics, and various aspects of Particle Physics. I want to take the knowledge I have learned and apply it to research, specifically on Skyrmion lattice in Magnetic Films. I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to conduct research on questions that I could not simply find the answers to in a book. My goal is to do research so that I can one day ask my own questions and seek the answers. By gaining this experience in a research lab, I would be able to understand how to ask the correct questions, how to proceed with ideas, and formally conduct the research.

Although I lack research experience, my drive and genuine love for physics makes me a good fit for this opportunity. I am someone who works hard to complete a task, is willing to learn anything necessary to be successful, and if I do not understand a concept, I ask for clarification and will learn it quickly. This can be seen in my FIRST Robotics team, where I had no outside experience with robotics. I learned how to use different tools, software, and electronics within 6 weeks and was appointed to an officer position as the lead of the mechanical team. This research opportunity goes beyond the research and offers a cultural experience that I could not receive at my current institution. I can easily adapt to any environment that I am in and thrive. I would love the opportunity to travel to a foreign area and learn from experts in the physics

In closing, I would like to say that I would be thrilled to bring my knowledge to this project and to dedicate myself to a project regarding Skyrmion lattice in Magnetic Films. Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Note how Sid emphasizes their passion for physics right away and states that this specific internship is what they're aiming for.

This third paragraph is where Sid really shines. They acknowledge their lack of experience but draws attention to useful skills that may not be seen on a resume.