

COVER LETTER GUIDE

A cover letter is a way to introduce yourself to a potential employer and should express your interest in and qualifications for a particular position. Each cover letter should be targeted towards a specific company and position, and reflect your knowledge of the company's needs and goals.

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COVER LETTER DO'S AND DON'TS



Prepare beforehand

Review the job description of the position you are applying for. Reflect on your experiences and draft a few examples of specific experiences that match what the company is looking for in a potential candidate.

Be direct and concise

Keep letters to around 3-5 paragraphs. Write cleanly and simply without using a lot of verbiage or jargon.

Use a warm, professional tone

Strike a balance between being personable and professional. This is a formal document, but it should communicate that you are an optimistic, responsible and productive person.

Address your letter to a specific person

Try your best to determine who this letter is going to. Use information in the job posting, the company's website or social media to find their hiring manager. "To whom it may concern" should be used as a last resort.

Proofread your work

Always check for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors - if you can, try to get another set of eyes on it!



Reuse cover letters without changes

Even if you are applying to similar positions, always ensure your cover letter addresses each unique position's job description and desired qualifications.

Repeat information from your resume

Cover letters are meant to complement your resume - give specific examples of your experiences that make you uniquely qualified for the position.

COVER LETTER NOTES



EXAMPLE

← **HEADER**

Your name, address & contact information

Date

Hiring manager's name, address & contact information

Thomas S. Aquinas
123 Main Street
Anytown, MI 12345
123-456-7890 | aquinast@email.com

March 7, 20XX

Jane Smith
Director, Human Resources
123 Business Rd
Business City, MI 12345

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please accept this letter as an application for the author's assistant position at Acme Company, as advertised on LinkedIn. I am currently employed as legislative director for Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, Chairperson of the NYS Assembly, and believe that the skills and experiences I have gained at this position make me an ideal candidate for the job of author's assistant.

As legislative director, I have developed strong writing and editing skills. For example, one of my main duties is to prepare Assemblywoman Nora Kiel's personal correspondence, which deals with issues related to her position as Senior member of the NYS Assembly Standing Committee. This duty requires meticulous writing and editing skills, and an ability to convey complex legal ideas clearly. I have prepared dozens of pieces of legislation and received praise for the clarity of my writing.

I have also gained extensive experience in legal and policy research—fields that you state the author's assistant must be familiar with. My experience in the NYS Assembly has afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the consolidated and unconsolidated laws of the State of New York. In particular, through my work with Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, I have become heavily involved in the current welfare and Medicaid reform movement. I am always eager to learn more about state legislation, reading up on these topics on my own time to become more knowledgeable. I would love to bring this passion for policy and law to your company.

I am confident that my experience in the Legislature and my research and writing skills qualify me for consideration. If you would like, I can provide you with current samples of my work. I have also enclosed my resume. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Aquinas

Thomas S. Aquinas

REMEMBER! → Leave room for a signature!

TYPICAL FORMAT

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- Articulate purpose and interest
- Identify the position you are applying for and source of information
- Introduce your themes

SECOND PARAGRAPH

- Outline your strongest qualifications
- Provide evidence of related experience and accomplishments
- Convince the employer you have the personal qualities and motivation to succeed in this position

NOTE:

While you should ideally keep your letter to three paragraphs, you can include an additional body paragraph if it would enhance the flow - but only do so after considering if anything can be rephrased more concisely!

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Thank the reader for their time
- Reiterate interest in the position and opportunity to interview
- Provide information on how best to contact you