

WRITE ▲

COVER LETTER

Cover Letters

Cover letters are a great way to explain to a hiring manager exactly how your experience applies to the job at hand. Just like with resumes, you should tailor your cover letter for every job you apply for.

That said, most cover letters will follow the same basic format:

- Why you're excited about the job
- An overview of your relevant experience for this specific job
- A closing summary paragraph



Cover Letter Outline

Before you try to sit down and write a cover letter, it's usually a good idea to collect all the information you need first. Read over the job description again. What about this job interests you? Why this job, as opposed to others in your field? The more specific you can be here, the better.

STEP 1: Open a new document and copy and paste the following bullet points. For these bullet points, add examples from the job description that led you to be interest in the position.

- Example 1
- Example 2
- Example 3

STEP 2: Go through the job description and highlight anything that you've done. Paste those bullet points here. This will be your experience section.

- Example 1
- Example 2
- Example 3

Momentary Pause: Let's Be Real

Let's say you started brainstorming and immediately got stuck. When you tried to think about why you were excited about this particular job, your brain went somewhere along the lines of "paying rent" and "grocery bills." Or maybe the reality is that this job isn't the perfect fit for you but you're shooting your shot anyway (in which case: good for you!). That's all understandable. You probably don't want to put the unadulterated truth in your cover letter, but you definitely don't want to lie either. Hiring managers can generally tell if you're not being sincere. If you're feeling stuck, try writing down everything you liked about your last job. Are any of those relevant to the job you're applying for? If so, put them in! If not, go back to the job before that. Keep going until you find at least two things.



Writing the Darn Thing

STEP 3: Your bullet points from STEP 1 and STEP 2 will work as your outline. Now that you have your outline, it's time to turn it into paragraphs.

1. If you know the name of the hiring manager, address it directly to them! If not, "Dear Hiring Manager" is totally fine, or "To the ___ Team". Avoid "To Whom it May Concern" – it's outdated and impersonal.
2. Your first paragraph should summarize why you're excited about the job, using the examples that you brainstormed in your outline.
3. Your second (and third, if needed) paragraphs should summarize relevant experience, using the examples that you brainstormed in your outline.
4. If you have a gap on your resume between jobs, it's probably smart to head off any questions in a cover letter. You really just need one or two lines in the second or third paragraph. [Here is some sample language](#) for different scenarios. One scenario that isn't covered in this article is being fired. If you were let go from a job, it's best not to try to explain that in a cover letter, but you should prepare a diplomatic answer in case someone asks about it in an interview. (More on that in the interview section!)
5. Your final paragraph should close the letter out and summarize the whole thing.

For great sample language, check out [this article](#) or do a quick Google search for "Cover Letter Templates" or "Cover Letter Examples." (But also – remember that everyone applying for this job is getting the same links! Don't copy and paste directly, please, or it'll make you look suspicious.)



Formatting Your Cover Letter

STEP 4: Format your cover letter. Ideally, your cover letter and resume should be visually consistent.

If you have your own resume:

- Make sure the font is the same on your resume and cover letter.
- If you're using colors, make sure the colors are consistent.
- When you're done, save it as a PDF!
- Name the document: [Your Name] [Company You're Applying To] Cover Letter
 - Example: Mia Spurlock The Pawffice of Barkington Cover Letter

If you've already made your resume on Canva with us:

- Draft your cover letter outside of Canva! Make sure to proofread.
- When you're ready to format, type "cover letter" into the Canva search bar.
- Select the blank cover letter option.
- Name the document: [Your Name] [Company You're Applying To] Cover Letter
 - Example: Mia Spurlock The Pawffice of Barkington Cover Letter
- In a different tab, open your Canva resume.
- Copy your resume header and paste it into your Canva Cover Letter.
- Copy and paste your proofed cover letter into your Canva Cover Letter.
- When it's time to apply, download as a PDF.

STEP 5: It is common to reuse the same cover letter, with adjustments, for different positions you apply to. If you are reusing a cover letter, triple check that you have changed your greeting, and are addressing the correct employer throughout the letter.

Congrats! Your cover letter is complete.