

WRITING THE COVER LETTER – WHITMAN COLLEGE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CENTER

The cover letter humanizes the person behind the resume. You're trying to show how your narrative could weave seamlessly into that of an employer. Every cover letter you write should be unique to the position for which you're applying.

- If you are mailing your resume and cover letter to a potential employer, include a business address above the heading.
- If you are emailing your materials, include your resume and cover letter as PDF attachments. It is not business protocol to copy and paste your letter in the body of the email.

Date

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name

Their Title

Name of Organization

Address

City, State, Zip code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

Start with something that will intrigue the reader. A strong declaration of why you're qualified, an expression of enthusiasm, or a brief anecdote about how you discovered your passion for lab research (or programming or art curation or...) are all great ways to begin.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Demonstrate how you would be a strong candidate for the position. This should be the most significant part of the letter. Do not repeat the exact information from your resume. Instead, elaborate on the stories behind the bullet points—the circumstances you dealt with, how you navigated them, and what you accomplished. Use the the job description as your guide for this section. Be specific and provide concrete examples that show how you have used each of the listed skills. Even if you do not meet all of the qualifications in a job description, NEVER say you don't have any experience! You likely can identify transferable skills from past jobs, volunteering, leadership, internships, or even family interactions.

Indicate why you are interested in the position, the organization, and its mission/products/services. This part requires some research on your behalf so you can say something specific. Broad statements that focus on how the job would benefit the applicant such as "I'm interested in marketing and thought it would be good to get some experience at a good communications consulting firm" sound like they could belong in cover letters for numerous companies and can sometimes read as self-centered. Try a sentence like "I love figuring out how to change a message for different groups of people, which is why I believe I would be an asset to a company like Strategy Unchained* that translates ideas into campaigns for more than twenty companies in four different sectors."

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for an interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Possibly repeat your phone number and e-mail address. If applicable, state that you will be in the city where the company is located on a certain date and would like to set up an interview. Thank the person for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

your signature

your name

**This is a made-up communications firm.*