

# CRAFTING A COVER LETTER

A cover letter is your introduction to an organization, highlighting your skills and what sets you apart from all other candidates. Your cover letter is an example of your writing skills, so write thoughtfully! **A poorly written letter can destroy a stellar resume.**

## BE CONCISE

Use a standard business format with the same font as your resume.

💡 *You can also use the same header as your resume!*

## BE SPECIFIC

Address the letter to a specific individual whenever possible and always tailor the content to the position. No generic or massed produced letters. Never use "To Whom it may concern;" a personal approach is always the way to go!

## BE CLEAR

Let them know you have researched the position and point out how you are uniquely suited for the job by including relevant qualities, skills, and experiences.

## BE POWERFUL

Use facts, examples, or evidence to support your claims. Quantify and provide scope of work. "Can initiate tasks with little direction" can be improved with "independently began revisions to enhance the organization's website."

💡 *Call to request the name and title of the person hiring for the position or, if unavailable, use "Dear Director of Human Resources" or "Dear Hiring Manager."*

## ANATOMY OF A LETTER

**The opening paragraph** explains why you are writing.

- Mention the specific job title or position.
- State the proper name of the organization at least once, Ex: Oklahoma City University (OCU).
- If you've met the recruiter or hiring manager, indicate this in the introduction.
- Have other connections to the organization? Let them know, but only after asking permissions from those individuals.



**The closing paragraph** wraps it up.

- Reiterates your interest; expresses enthusiasm for the opportunity.
- Be gracious and thank them for their time and consideration.

**"Sincerely, Your Name"**

💡 *A digital signature is a nice touch here. Not sure how to make one? Ask your Career Advisor.*

**The middle paragraph** is where you put the sparkle.

- This is not a replay of your resume, but an opportunity to highlight and explain your skills and achievements in further detail.
- Most importantly, include support statements. If you say that you are motivated with a demonstrated proficiency in graphic design, then offer up an example: "In my most recent role as an assistant graphic designer at X company..."

💡 *Remember, it's all about what you can do for the employer, so pick things that are translatable to the position.*

## YOUR CHECKLIST

- Your document is well organized, error free, and one page long
- The letter is saved as a PDF labeled with your name, the document type, and the date
- The header and/or font match your resume
- The letter is addressed to someone or a title
- The recipient will know why you're writing and what position you're seeking
- You have highlighted at least two specific skills that translate to the job
- All your skills are supported by statements that illustrate and explain how you will be an asset
- There are no repetitive words or ideas
- You have mentioned something you know about their mission, values, or projects
- The recipient will know more about you after reading the letter and will want to review your resume