

Writing Persuasive Cover Letters

Florida Southern College Career Center

Purpose:

Persuade readers to review your résumé.

- The process differs from writing a résumé.
- A cover letter is a **unique** letter to a specific person for a particular reason.

Recognize the importance of the letter.

- It is your first opportunity to make a good impression as a potential employee.
- Use good stock white paper for both cover letter and résumé.
- Sign your letter in black ink.

The cover letter is a formal document.

- Address your letter to a specific individual.
- Use their correct title and business address.
- Make certain you have the correct spelling.
- Avoid jargon and overly complex sentences.

Keep your letter brief, clear, and to the point.

- Letters should be limited to one page.
- Introduce yourself and clearly define your situation

Make it easy for someone to understand “who” you are.

- *graduating senior
- * junior seeking an internship
- *recent graduate
- *an alum with professional experience

Design your letter to be work and employer centered.

- Cover letters should address the **needs of the employer**, not your own.
- Research the company to show you understand **their priorities**.
- Be ready to make a contribution to the organization.

Do your homework!

- Use the job description to determine which **skills** are needed for the position.
- Highlight your experiences and accomplishments relating to those skills.

Convey your important skills.

- Include academic accomplishments
- Personal attributes communicate your potential to become a valuable asset.

Be positive!

- Make certain the content, tone, and word choice convey a **positive attitude**
- You are marketing yourself; so **SELL** the employer the idea of granting you an interview.

Be perfect!

- Carefully check for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Have a friend, professor, or career counselor review it before sending.



Writing appropriate cover letters can be one of the most difficult parts of finding a job. A well written, persuasive letter allows the employer to see how well you can think on paper, and can also lead to the all important interview...

Cover Letter General Outline

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip

Date (Fully written. ex: March 15, 2015)

Name of Contact Person
Title of Contact Person
Name of Company
Street Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name: (NEVER write “To whom it may concern”)

OPENING PARAGRAPH (1)

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS (2)

PROFESSIONAL PARAGRAPH (3)

CLOSING PARAGRAPH (4)

Sincerely,

(Sign here)

Your full name typed

Enclosure

(You are referring to your enclosed resume)



Cover Letter General Outline

(1) This opening paragraph should immediately tell the employer **why you are writing**, (i.e. in response to an advertisement, referral from a contact, knowledge of position opening). If you have been referred by an individual, be sure to mention the person's name. Offer information to show your interest in the position and in this specific organization. You should also include the title of the position for which you are applying.

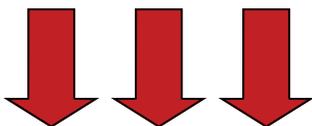


(2) The middle paragraphs should create a desire on the part of the employer **to want to read your résumé** and learn more about you. Point out several key accomplishments on your enclosed résumé, and highlight qualifications and skills which make you a good candidate for the position. Take care **not** to repeat your résumé verbatim, but refer the reader to important points of interest relating to the job description. *(Paragraphs 2 & 3 can be incorporated into one for most college students)*

**Make your
letter
really
Stand out!**

(3) This paragraph requires some homework on your part. Explain why you want to work for **this specific** organization. If you are not familiar with the organization, do some research. You might even contact the employer to request brochures or other informational materials. Most employers are impressed by the fact you would care enough to gather information before applying for a position. *(Paragraphs 2 & 3 can be incorporated into one for most college students).*

(4) This paragraph should tell the employer **what you are going to do next** by suggesting an action plan. Request an appointment and offer to call the employer during a specific time period. Let the employer know where you can be reached by providing your phone number and your email address. **Do NOT thank them!** Save the thank you for a note after you have had an interview.



TIPS: When writing a cover letter try not to start too many sentences with the word "I". In the first and last paragraphs you might need to use it in a couple of sentences, but for the most part try to reword your sentences so they don't start with "I". Also, try to watch your use of the word "that". Most of the time this word is used as a filler and it is absolutely **NOT** necessary. By following these tips your letter will sound a lot smoother and professional.

Sample Cover Letter Components

Your Street Address

City, State, Zip

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Date (Fully written. ex: March 15, 2015)

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Ann James

Director of Public Relations

Current Events, Inc.

51 Lemon Street

Lakeland, FL 33802

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Dear Ms. James:

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I am writing to apply for the position of Event Planner at Current Events, Inc., which was advertised in the Career Center at Florida Southern College. As a graduating senior, I am interested in joining a dynamic, community-oriented organization like Current Events, Inc., where I could make significant creative contributions. Current Events, Inc.'s focus on local organizations and activities appeals to me, as I am interested in remaining in Lakeland after graduation.

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My interest in event planning began when I served as an intern on the promotion committee for Mayfaire-by-the-Lake Art Festival in Lakeland. My internship position required great attention to detail, as I organized and coordinated vendor reservations, booth assignments, and all related correspondence. In collaboration with several other interns, I recruited over 100 food and art vendors, and participated in the design of security plans to ensure the safety of guests at the event. In addition to my internship, I have worked on the orientation committee at Florida Southern College for three summers, planning social events for both students and parents of incoming freshman classes. Through my internship and orientation experiences, I was able to express my creative ideas and refine my presentation skills, which have prepared me to be a successful Event Planner.

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Enclosed is my resume with additional information regarding my qualifications. I will contact you within the next week to ten days to see if my material has been received and an interview can be arranged. If you wish to reach me prior to this time, please call me at (863)-680-1234 or email at fscstudent@flsouthern.edu. I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

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Sincerely,

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¶ (Sign here)

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Your full name typed

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Enclosure