

Cover Letters (Advanced)

1. What is the job of a cover letter?

To explain why you, over all the other candidates, are worth taking the time to find out more about; to sell yourself; to ensure the prospective employee reads further.

2. What do you know about Cover Letters?

	True	False
You don't need one unless the advertisement specifically asks for one		✓
Potential employers rarely read them		✓
They should be changed for each job you apply for	✓	
They should highlight the most important parts of your resume	✓	
Writing a good one takes time	✓	
They provide a sample of your written communication skills	✓	
They should be approximately two pages		✓

There are 2 types of cover letters:

1. The **APPLICATION LETTER** which responds to a known job opening e.g. an advertised position
2. The **PROSPECTING LETTER** (aka letter of interest, enquiry letter) which inquires about *possible* positions

3. What should your cover letter include?

- *Your personal/ contact details*
- *The date*
- *A salutation/greeting*
- *How you heard about the job/company*
- *Why you believe you would be an asset to the team*
- *How you will follow up*
- *A closing/signature*

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Section A: Personal Details

4. Which of the following information should be included in your details?

	Yes	No
Title (e.g. Mr, Dr, etc)	✓	
Full name	✓	
Nickname		✓
Date of birth		✓
Nationality		✓
Email address	✓	
Mailing/residential address	✓	
Marital status		✓
Daytime phone number	✓	
After hours phone number	✓	
Visa status		✓

Section B: Salutation & Date

5. What should you do if you don't have the name of a person to address your cover letter to?

Find one by researching online or making a phone call.

- OR
- *Dear Mr/Ms/Dr Jones* (Always double-check the spelling of the contact person's name)
 - *To whom it may concern*
 - *Dear Sir or Madam*

Section C: Reason for your interest

APPLICATION LETTER

- The job title and/or job/advertisement reference number
- How you heard about the job **e.g.** newspaper advertisement, online advertisement, colleague (If you have been referred to a potential employer by a friend or acquaintance, be sure to mention this mutual contact)

For example: *It is with great interest that I write to present my credentials for the position of **Chemical Engineer** with Giant Explosions Pty Ltd which was advertised on Seek.com on Monday, May 5th.*

PROSPECTING LETTER

- How you heard about the company/organisation
- Your specific job objective

For example: *I am writing to enquire about upcoming employment opportunities in Civil Engineering at Super Structure Pty Ltd, after reading about your company in Radical Roads Magazine. I am seeking an entry level position having recently graduated from a Bachelor in Civil Engineering.*

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Section D: Your most relevant skills and experience

APPLICATION LETTER

- Illustrate how your particular abilities and experiences relate to the position
- Show how your education and work skills are transferable, and thus relevant, to the position
- Be specific; use brief examples
- Ensure you address any specific selection criteria mentioned in the advertisement
- Call attention to additional elements of your background that seem relevant
- Emphasize your achievements

PROSPECTING LETTER

- Give evidence that you have researched the organization thoroughly and that you possess skills used within that organization
- Describe your general workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving etc

Section E: Closing

APPLICATION LETTER

- Reiterate your interest in the job
- Thank the recruiter for their time
- Ask for an interview
- Draw attention to your CV
- Indicate that your references are available on request

For example: *I would be very pleased for the opportunity to join your team. I have attached my current resume for your consideration and am available for interview at your earliest convenience. Thank you for taking the time to review my application; I look forward to hearing from you.*

PROSPECTING LETTER

- Let the employer know when you intend to follow up, and how (e.g. via email/phone)

For example: *I would be very pleased if I could meet with you to discuss any upcoming employment opportunities and will call you in a week to discuss my application further.*

Section F: Signature

- *Sincerely*
- *Sincerely yours*
- *Regards*
- *Best regards*
- *Kind regards*
- *Yours truly*
- *Most sincerely*
- *Respectfully*
- *Respectfully yours*
- *Thank you*
- *Thank you for your consideration*

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Email Cover Letters

- Put your name and the position for which you are applying in the subject line of your email
- Paste your cover letter into the body of your email message (unless specified otherwise by the employer)
- Include your contact information in your signature instead of at the top of the message
- Save any attached files with your name, so they don't get mixed up with other applicant's materials e.g. Annabel Duckworth-Smith - Resume
- Include your resume as an attachment (unless specified otherwise by the employer)
- Use a basic font and remove the formatting

Formatting Tips

- *Double-check spelling and grammar*
- *Have someone proofread your cover letter*
- *Choose a plain simple font such as Arial, Calibri in 10-12 point.*
- *Avoid novelty fonts – they are not professional*
- *Use plain white A4 paper*

Further Reading and Resources

ONLINE

How to Write a Cover Letter

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/a/aa030401a.htm>

A comprehensive list of cover letter samples

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm>

More cover letter samples from internet recruitment site 'Monster'

<http://career-advice.monster.co.uk/cvs-applications/free-cover-letter-samples/jobs.aspx>

Engineering Cover Letter – Tips

<http://free-sample-cover-letters.blogspot.com.au/2012/01/engineering-cover-letters.html>

BOOKS

The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Cover Letter Susan Ireland

Cover Letters for Dummies Joyce Lain Kennedy

Overnight Job Change Letter Donald Asher

Dynamic Cover Letters Katherine & Randall Hansen

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9 June 2011

Ms I Needthejob
Human Resources Department
Acme Engineering
3400 Princes Hwy, Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Ms Needthejob

Re: Graduate Civil Engineer, (Position Reference Number- 16255)

After talking with your Human Resources representative, Marjorie Smith, at the Monash University Graduate Careers Fair, I would like to apply for a position within your Graduate Engineering Program. Currently, I am in my final year of a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) at Monash University and believe my skills and experiences are well suited to a position as a Graduate Engineer at Acme Engineering.

Acme Engineering is a company of particular interest to me due to the opportunity to be involved in completing projects such as the Monash Freeway Upgrade and the Frankston Bypass safely, on time and within budget. I would enjoy the challenge of working within a graduate program that incorporates rotations through the Research and Development, Procurement and Risk Analysis departments.

Through my studies at Monash, I have learnt analysis, design and management techniques in each of the four streams in civil engineering: including geotechnical, transport and traffic, water and structural engineering. The course has focused on tackling real engineering problems and incorporated twelve weeks of industrial placement which I undertook with VicRoads. During my placement I worked on the M80 upgrade where I was able to apply my theoretical knowledge of occupational health and safety, environmental management, risk management and customer service principles. In addition, my conceptual and analytical skills when assessing complex technical issues and my ability to demonstrate independent judgment were proven.

As assistant shift supervisor with Fine Food Supermarket, I am required to prepare rosters, arrange shelf space, assist customers with their enquiries and provide back-up to the cashiers and storeroom staff. By working collaboratively with management and staff, I have demonstrated my written and verbal communication skills, ability to plan, set and achieve goals and expertise with staff training and support. Additionally, during my role as a volunteer instructor with VICSwim, I have presented community education programs to raise awareness of water safety and conducted swimming classes for individuals and groups. These activities have developed my skills in public speaking, organising and taking responsibility for managing an activity program.

Thank you for considering my application. Enclosed is a copy of my resume and academic transcript. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you in more detail at an interview.

Yours sincerely
Jenny Smith