

## FIRST STEPS

- ✓ Research the company to which you are applying and look at the specific qualifications listed for the job you are applying for.
- ✓ Highlight your skills and experiences that match the listed qualifications.
- ✓ Construct a rough draft of your cover letter and have it reviewed by peers and advisors.

## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

The purpose of a cover letter is to complement your résumé with a personal touch. It gives you the opportunity to...

- **Tell** the employer what type of position you are seeking and provide your résumé objective.
- **Entice** the employer to learn more about you by reading your résumé.
- **Impress** the employer by showcasing your knowledge about the company and/or its goals.
- **Show** the employer how well you can express yourself.

## GETTING STARTED

**Address the letter to a specific individual.** Call to request the name and title of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career areas. You may direct the letter to someone with a specific job title or a group, such as Director of Editorial Services, Human Resources Representative, or Hiring Committee. If these don't fit, simply begin the letter without a salutation.

**State the position for which you are applying and point out your relevant qualifications.** Do not merely repeat the contents of your résumé. Select specific experiences relevant to the job and discuss them. Fill in the blanks your résumé leaves open. Tell the employer why *you* are uniquely suited for the job. Avoid using "I" to start every sentence.

**Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and requirements of the position.** How will *the employer* benefit by hiring you? Want ads and company publications offer clues about what to highlight. Get inside information about the workings of your chosen industry and let them know that you are aware of — and possess — exactly what it is that they are looking for.

## Remember!

- Match your stationery and résumé in size, weight, and shade without exceeding one page
- When writing, avoid listing your skills and starting sentences with "I".
- Don't forget to sound positive and confident!

### MU CAREER CENTER

Lower Level,  
Student Success Center  
University of Missouri  
PHONE: (573) 882-6801

Visit us online at:  
**career.missouri.edu**  
career@missouri.edu

## COVER LETTER STRUCTURE

August 1, 2011

123 Hitt Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
TrumanTiger@mail.missouri.edu  
(573)123-4567  
(Space down four spaces)

Mr. /Ms. Recruiter's or Employer's Full Name  
Recruiter's Title  
Department Name  
Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Liu,

While researching publishing companies online, I discovered an opening on your firm's website for an Editorial Assistant. I would like to be considered for this position at the company headquarters in Kansas City and am very excited about the opportunity to apply. This May, I will graduate from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in English, and I would like to use the knowledge, skills and experience that I have gained to contribute to Walsworth Publishing.

I have had extensive experience editing and feature writing at several newspapers and magazines. For the past year, I have been the lead copy editor for The Maneater, a bi-weekly campus newspaper with a readership of 30,000. In addition, I interned as a writer and editor for Mizzou Weekly, a faculty and staff publication, and reported on the health and science beat for the Columbia Missourian. By creating copy and editing, I have improved my writing skills, learned to develop engaging stories, and honed my eye for detail and accuracy. I am confident I will bring creativity, professionalism, and a diverse writing style to the job.

Walsworth Publishing's commitment to young readers and reputation for excellence are compelling reasons to join your team and further its mission, if given the opportunity. My communication style would fit well with the youth population your publications reach. I also believe that my work ethic and passion for writing are values shared by your staff. Joining the Walsworth Publishing team would be an excellent way to become a professional writer and I would anticipate a long and productive career there.

I would like to discuss my background with you in person and have enclosed a resume for your review. You may reach me at TrumanTiger@mail.missouri.edu or (573)123-4567. I will contact you in the next two weeks to confirm the receipt of my application materials. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Truman Tiger*  
Truman Tiger

### The opening paragraph should state **why you are writing**

- Explain why you are interested in the organization and position.
- If someone referred you to the employer, this is the best place to mention that person's name.
- Be sure to entice the reader right at the very beginning; make them want to know you better through your enthusiasm.

### The **second paragraph** is devoted to explaining **how you are qualified**.

- Draw attention to your résumé and highlight specific skills, achievements, and qualifications relevant to the employer
- Talk about any relevant experiences, especially if not mentioned on your résumé.
- It is easy for this section to sound like a list: break things up by using short examples to expand upon and illustrate certain qualities.

### The **third paragraph** states **why you are right for this job**.

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and why you should be considered for the position.
- Some homework on the company or industry can show the employer that you are informed about the type of work and experience required.
- Focus on what you can contribute to them, not what they can do for you.

### The **closing paragraph** states **what you will do next** or what you would like the recipient of the letter to do next.

- Ask for an interview or inform the employer of a specific time frame when you will make contact with them again if appropriate.
- Thank the employer for their time.
- Restate your phone number and email address in case this becomes separated from your résumé.

## NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about your job search and schedule a mock interview
- ✓ Visit our Handouts link on <http://career.missouri.edu/resources> to download other handouts in our Job Search series.