

# Guide to Writing Cover Letters & Thank You Letters



Whether written in a traditional letter format or sent via email, cover letters and thank you letters are an essential part of your search for internships and jobs. Well written and focused cover and thank you letters set you apart from other candidates because they specifically market you as a candidate for the position for which you are applying. Poorly written or generic letters say that you are not really interested in the position.

## COVER LETTERS

**Good cover letters present a brief overview of your qualifications as they directly relate to the qualifications sought by the employing organization.** They motivate the reader to want to learn more about you (read your resume) and, hopefully, invite you to interview. Cover letters should never be or appear generic or mass produced, rather tailored to the position for which you are applying. **In most instances, your cover letters should NOT exceed one page!**

There are three main parts to every cover letter:

**Part One (the introductory paragraph): Tell the reader why you are writing – state your case!** Be specific, including the position for which you are applying and how you learned about it. If you have been referred by someone, mention that person's name here. You can also introduce your relevant qualifications here, but save the detailed information for Part Two.

**Part Two (the body paragraphs): Tell the reader why s/he should care that you are applying – defend your case!** Use this section to give examples/details of education, experience, skills and other qualifications you have that match with the qualifications the employer is seeking (as outlined in the position description, job announcement, etc.). This section “teases” the reader to get more information about you through your resume. Not all of your accomplishments are necessarily relevant, so only present information about you that is relevant to the reader's decision making regarding your application.

**Part Three (the closing paragraph): Wrap up the letter and talk about next steps.** Use this section to reinforce your qualifications, cite attachments (resume, writing samples, references, etc.), suggest a follow up meeting/interview; provide information about your availability; and thank the reader for her/his time.

A cover letter should accompany your resume **every time** you apply for a position, whether the employer asks for one or not! It is a valuable marketing tool that should not be neglected.

Cover letters should be:

- a) Typewritten and formatted on 8.5x11 inch stationary paper for postal mail delivery,
- b) Saved and sent as a PDF attachment in the same format via email;
- c) Uploaded/converted to PDF for submission via online systems such as CareerSource; or
- d) Sent directly in the body of an email.

The medium you use will depend upon the preferences of the organization to which you are applying.

## **THANK YOU LETTERS**

Thank you letters should be written to everyone with whom you interview within 1-2 days of your interview. Effective thank you letters:

- Thank the interviewer for the time they invested in your interview;
- Reference some aspect of your interview or qualifications that was of particular interest or importance to that interviewer;
- Reinforce your qualifications for the position; and
- Express your continued interest in the position.

Thank you letters should NOT exceed one page.

Thank you letters can be (a) type-written on traditional 8.5x11 inch stationary or on 6x9 inch personal stationary, (b) handwritten on a note card and sent via postal mail, or (c) sent via email. The medium you use will depend upon the nature of your relationship with the person to whom you are sending it. The more formal the relationship, the more formal the thank you communication should be.

## **EMAIL, FAX OR POSTAL MAIL**

When sending your application via email, you have three options. The right option to choose depends upon the position, the company, and the employer's preferences in receiving your information. Your primary goal is to present your qualifications in the best possible format.

Your options are:

- a) Cover letter in the body of the email with resume (in PDF) attached **(RECOMMENDED)**;
- b) Cover letter and resume (both in PDF) attached to the email as two separate documents;
- c) Cover letter and resume (saved together as one PDF) and attached to the email as one document.

In general, do not send your resume as a Word document attachment as the formatting is often lost or altered and your text can be edited.

If you are sending your cover letter and resume via postal mail, format the letter and resume for printing, print all documents on stationary paper and send via postal mail. Overnight or registered mail is usually not worth the added expenses.

If you are sending your cover letter and resume via fax, format as you would to send via postal mail, but don't waste your good stationary paper. Plain white copier paper will suffice.

## FORMATTING TIPS

**For traditional business correspondence:** We recommend using a full block letter format. That is, all dates addresses, salutations, body paragraphs, etc. left justified with no indentations. The attached sample letters are all written using this letter writing format.


**For business correspondence via mail:** We recommend using basic HTML or plain text without any formatting (as formatting can be lost or jumbled in transmission). The attached sample email letters are all written using basic HTML

**For PDF submission via online systems such as CareerSource:** We recommend using standard fonts and checking the integrity of your document after it has been converted to PDF format. Non-standard fonts are often substituted for standard fonts and documents with very small margins often convert into two-page documents when converted from Word to PDF. **Always check your cover letters after they have been converted to PDF format to make sure the formatting remained intact.**

## SAMPLE COVER LETTERS AND THANK YOU LETTERS

Following are sample cover letters and thank you letters to illustrate the concepts and guidelines recommended in this handout.

## Sample Cover Letter – Via Email

 Send	To...	<u>starmaker@wme.com</u>
	Cc...	
	Subject:	William Morris Summer Internship Program
	Attached:	<u>Resume – Ima Longhorn.pdf (18 KB)</u>

TO: Stephen T. Armaker, William Morris Endeavor  
[CKatz@WMEEntertainment.com](mailto:CKatz@WMEEntertainment.com)

Dear Mr. Armaker,

I am writing to apply for a position in the WME 2011 Summer Internship Program. As a radio-television-film major at the University of Texas at Austin, I believe I have relevant educational and work experience to excel at an agency like William Morris Endeavor. I have always held a deep passion for the business of entertainment and want to apply that education, experience and passion in a career which requires business savvy individuals with a readiness to face new and exciting challenges.

**Why WME?** William Morris Endeavor is the premier agency within the industry. The forward thinking nature and aggressive disposition WME displays have made it an industry leader and will cement its place as the premiere agency well into the future. The current strong emphasis on emerging media platforms to further the monetization of clients influencing ability on consumers and the launch of LVRAGE are clear displays of this thinking. I identify well with the culture of WME and, given the opportunity to learn from those around me, will work my way up and become an incredibly valuable asset to the company.

As you can see from my resume, I have extensive experience in marketing and sales with Kaplan Test Prep and Paradigm Books. Both positions required personal and professional initiative and discipline, as my success was determined on my ability to form relationships, sell services, and prospect new business. Also, as treasurer of my fraternity I was required to manage an extensive budget and aggressively pursuing new members to meet revenue and operational objectives.

I will be participating in UT's Semester in Los Angeles Program in summer 2012. The program includes classes taught by industry professionals and an internship; all designed to help participants develop an in-depth understanding of the business and creative sides of the entertainment industry. An internship with WME will allow me to maximize this summer program and lay the foundation for my future career in entertainment management.

My resume is attached for your review. I will arrive in Los Angeles on May 24 and will be available to interview in person any time after that date. Prior to that date, I am available to interview via phone or Skype. I look forward to hearing from you regarding an interview.


Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

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**Ima Longhorn** | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu) | 512.555.1212 phone  
LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn](http://www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn) | Skype: Ima.Longhorn

## Sample Cover Letter – Via Email

 Send	To...	<u>johnsmith@xyzproduction.com</u>
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Scheduling a meeting the week of March 13th
	Attached:	<u>Resume – Ima Longhorn.pdf (18 KB)</u>

Dear Mr. Smith,

People say you're asking for trouble working with a child actor.

My short film ***The History Lesson*** has fifteen. And fourteen of them had never acted before. The film tells the simple story of a fourth grader, Sam, who has five minutes to come up with something to say for a presentation in front of the class. He hasn't prepared, and he's only one F away from being sent to the "dumb class. "

I cast non-actors because I was determined to portray childhood as accurately as possible. My greatest asset as a director is **my ability to clearly explain my creative ideas**, and I was confident I could guide the young cast. The result is a rarity: an original film infused with genuine emotion, about the joy and misery of elementary school. You can watch the ten-minute film online:

**[www.vimeo.com/longhorn/thehistorylesson](http://www.vimeo.com/longhorn/thehistorylesson) (password: historylesson)**

Frankly though, I need your help. I'm expanding the ideas of *The History Lesson* into a feature-length screenplay, and I would love the opportunity to meet with you to get your input on this, other film projects, and on the industry itself. **I will be in Manhattan from March 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>** and hope we might be able to schedule a brief visit.

The attached resume provides additional details of my skills and experience. Thank you for your time.


Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

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Ima Longhorn | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu) | 512.555.1212 phone  
LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn](http://www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn) | Skype: Ima.Longhorn

## Sample Cover Letter – Via Email

 Send	To...	<a href="mailto:recruitment@dch.com">recruitment@dch.com</a>
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Legal Assistant Position
	Attached:	<a href="#">Resume – Ima Longhorn.pdf (18 KB)</a>

I would like to be considered for an entry-level legal assistant position at Dewey, Cheatham & Howe. Following is a summary of why I am confident that I am a strong candidate for such a position with DC&H

- **Outstanding education:** I am completing my bachelor's in corporate communication and business foundations at The University of Texas at Austin, home to two the best communication and business programs in the nation. As a research assistant and joint researcher, I have been fortunate to work with a team of professors and graduate students researching contemporary issues in multicultural advertising and cultural intelligence for over two years. My desire to go outside of the classroom setting to find answers ultimately led to my receiving a University Co-operative Fellowship as an undergraduate student, enabling me to conduct my own research in organizational intercultural communication.
- **Education put in practice:** My internships with Sierra Services, a multicultural marketing consultant, and Jeremy Solomons & Associates, a global diversity consultant, put my academic knowledge to the test. I gained invaluable real world insight by working closely with experienced consultants and clients ranging from Austin High School to Boeing.
- **Leadership and passion:** In addition to applying my knowledge of intercultural issues in academia and at work, with a few fellow students equally passionate about multicultural issues, I helped create BREAK - a student organization with the purpose of breaking cultural, racial and ethnic barriers. My role with BREAK allowed me to develop my leadership skills by working on multiple team projects and create campaigns in collaboration with various cultural organizations and hundreds of students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will contact you within the next two weeks to confirm your receipt of my application and discuss the possibility of an interview. In the meantime, you can reach me during the day at (512) 555-1212 or by email at [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.


Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

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**Ima Longhorn** | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu) | 512.555.1212 phone  
LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn](http://www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn) | Skype: Ima.Longhorn

## Sample Cover Letter – Via Email

 Send	To...	<u>imorales@nacla.org</u>
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Associate Editor Position with NACLA
	Attached:	<u>Resume – Ima Longhorn.pdf (18 KB); NACLA Writing Samples.pdf (36 KB)</u>

Dear Mr. Morales,

At the recommendation of my professor, Dr. Mercedes de Uriarte, I am writing to apply for the position of associate editor of *NACLA Report on the Americas*. I have just completed a Master's in Journalism, with an emphasis on Latin America, at the University of Texas at Austin. During my graduate studies I worked extensively in both digital and print media, strengthened my skills at writing and editing in *Chicago* and *AP Style*, and deepened my working knowledge of Latin American social justice issues.

As you will see in my resume, my skills match well with the required and preferred qualifications for the job, and NACLA's mission describes my motivation as a journalist focusing on Latin American issues that are often overlooked in other media. My attached writing samples from my research and reporting on peasant rebellions in Peru and Mexico reflect this.

I have extensive experience in reporting, organizing, translating, editing, and fact checking with professional publications, among them *Texas Monthly*, NPR, and *The Austin American-Statesman*. Moreover, my fluency in Spanish and field experience in Latin America give me the insight and knowledge to be an effective associate editor for *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

I am available for interview via phone or Skype immediately, and in person at our mutual convenience. I would be glad to provide references or further writing samples upon request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

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**Ima Longhorn** | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu) | 512.555.1212 phone  
LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn](http://www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn) | Skype: Ima.Longhorn

## Sample Cover Letter

**Ima Longhorn**

817-555-1212 | imalonghorn@utexas.edu

January 10, 2012

Brian Fligor, ScD, CCC-A  
Director, Diagnostic Audiology Program  
Boston Children's Hospital  
300 Longwood Avenue, LO-367  
Boston, MA 02115

Dear Dr. Fligor,

I am writing to apply for the 2012-2014 Au.D. externship in pediatric audiology with the Boston Children's Hospital Diagnostic Audiology Department. I am eager to apply my education, broaden my experience in pediatric audiology, and grow in my audiology skills working with a hospital like Boston Children's which understands and emphasizes the importance of patient-centered care.

In May 2012, I will graduate with a doctorate in Audiology from The University of Texas at Austin. I also hold a bachelor of arts in Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of North Texas. Through my education and off-site clinical rotations, I have accrued diagnostic and habilitative audiology experience working with adult and pediatric populations and developed strong patient rapport-building and structured medical record keeping skills.

My interest in pediatric audiology first developed when I participated in an audiology mission trip in South Africa with Jackie Clark, Ph.D. This experience helped me recognize the importance of early identification and audiological education in children. My additional experience working with children ages 3-18 as a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor and YMCA camp counselor has given me a greater understanding of the how to effectively communicate with and relate to children and youth, and the importance to them of positive adult role models.

The enclosed resume provides details and additional evidence of my education, skills and accomplishments. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions. I look forward to the opportunity to interview with Boston Children's Hospital Audiology department.

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn



# Sample Cover Letter

**Ima Longhorn**

817-555-1212 | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu)

LinkedIn: Ima.Longhorn

January 14, 2012

TracyLocke  
Media Department

RE: Application for Assistant Media Planner

I am writing to apply for a position as an Assistant Media Planner so that I can bring my advertising education, experience in media, planning and visual communication and unique approach to TracyLocke.

**Education:** A BS in Advertising: TexasMedia (pending May 2012) from UT Austin with a certificate in Business Foundations

**Experience:** Four internships in advertising and public relations , including Media Planning Internships with GSD&M in Austin and OMD in Chicago (full-time), an Advertising Internship with Texas Monthly magazine, and a Visual Communications Internship with Weber Shandwick Public Relations (full-time).

**Uniqueness:** I have the fundamentals, I am competitive and I succeed. Why? A strong foundation in media planning and buying, solid Excel skills, and sales experience. I have created complete media plans in my Advanced Media classes and my Advertising Campaign class, and I have won "*Best Media Plan*" for four out of the five plans.

The enclosed resume provides additional details of my skills and accomplishments.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I look forward to the opportunity to interview, as I am excited to bring my experience and, more importantly, my passion for media planning to TracyLocke.

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

# Sample Cover Letter

**Ima Longhorn**

817-555-1212 | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu)

LinkedIn: Ima.Longhorn

March 22, 2011

Andrea Minarcek  
National Geographic Adventure  
104 West 40th Street  
New York, NY 10018

Dear Ms. Minarcek,

I am writing to apply for the Summer 2012 Editorial Research Internship with National Geographic. My education, experience and skills in writing, editing and research and my passion for travel, wildlife, and outdoor activities, I believe, make me a competitive candidate.

National Geographic provided my bedtime stories growing up. The arrival of each new issue was followed by days of rereading and further researching the articles. It was my inspiration and I want the opportunity to participate in the continuation of National Geographic's tradition as it touches the lives of others around the world.

A junior at the University of Texas majoring in journalism, I have acquired skills in researching, writing, and editing through my journalism classes and internship experience. My journalistic skills have been polished and my scope of knowledge and experience has been expanded through my internships with magazines, websites, and newspapers including *WideWorld Magazine* and the *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram*. I have learned to manage web content and social media including Facebook and Twitter, and developed knowledge in new online media programs. These opportunities have provided me with the ability to write across media platforms and maintain strict deadlines, and have equipped me with strong time management skills, patience, and a commitment to excellence in my work. This past semester I was an exchange student at the University of Queensland in Australia where my passions for traveling, exploration, and outdoor activities were enhanced and my knowledge in international travel and cultures was expanded.

In addition to my professional and educational experiences, a wide range of outdoor activities occupy my time and attention. I have experience in rock climbing, hiking, snowboarding, skydiving, camping, and kayaking. I am detail oriented, organized, and creative, diligent in my research, passionate in my writing, and a reliable employee. I thrive on challenges and opportunities for innovative thinking and am dependable in meeting prompt deadlines. I enjoy research, investigation, and the task of piecing together stories.

The attached application materials will further demonstrate my capacity to excel in this internship. I am eager to arrange an interview to discuss how my interests and abilities can contribute to National Geographic. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

## Sample Cover Letter

**Ima Longhorn**

817-555-1212 | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu)

LinkedIn: Ima.Longhorn

March 30, 2012

Nicole Houston  
Intern Recruitment  
Pierpont Communications

Dear Ms. Houston,

I am writing to apply for a summer public relations internship with Pierpont Communications. As a public relations major at UT Austin, I am eager to grow my public relations experience interning for an agency like Pierpont that likes to embrace tough challenges and help build the businesses of their clients. I believe my qualifications match well with what Pierpont seeks in its interns.

In addition to my studies in public relations, I have completed coursework in advertising, internet advertising, market research and marketing, and I am completing the UT business foundations certificate program. I will complete my bachelor's degree in December 2013.

My public relations and marketing experience includes a PR internship with the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Travis County and marketing projects while on staff at Lakota River Guides in Vail, CO. A highlight of my experience is my development and implementation of *CASA's 20/20 Vision* fundraising campaign. Intended to raise money for CASA's annual Children's Campaign, it was developed in honor of CASA's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For this campaign, I developed a brochure/direct mailing explaining the *20/20 Vision Campaign* and designed the framework for a calling center to make follow up calls. This project began as a class project and grew into a five-month internship.

The enclosed resume further details my education, experience, skills and other relevant qualifications. Please let me know when it would be convenient for us to meet. I am available to interview on weekdays after 3:30pm (Thursdays after 11:30am) and at any time on the weekends. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

## Sample Thank You Letter

**Ima Longhorn**

817-555-1212 | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu)

LinkedIn: Ima.Longhorn

May 19, 2012

John Smith  
Managing Editor  
*The Kerrville Times*  
1234 Tivy Lane  
Kerrville, TX 78877

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you very much for taking the time to interview me for the sports reporter position with *The Kerrville Times*. I really enjoyed our visit and the opportunity I had to learn more about the position itself and the goals you have for the *Times* sports section.


As you might imagine, I remain very interested in the position. I am confident that my interviewing, writing, copy-editing and social media experience will allow me to hit the ground running this summer and be prepared to cover the fall high school sports beat. Further, I am eager to learn and develop my skills as a journalist working alongside you and your experienced team of reporters. Lastly – as a native central Texan, I am excited by this opportunity to cover a sports beat with which I am already familiar!

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Ima Longhorn

## Sample Thank You Letter – Via Email

 Send	To...	<u>bscheiner@cohnwolfe.com</u>
	Cc...	
	Subject:	Thank you!
	Attached:	

Dear Ms. Scheiner,

Thank you for interviewing me for a spring 2012 internship with Cohn & Wolfe. Meeting with you, current interns and agency staff helped me better understand the scope of the opportunity and further solidified my interest in becoming a Cohn & Wolfe intern.

Meeting the Cohn & Wolfe staff showed me must how personally involved they become in making sure interns have a positive experience. The current interns have me some great “day-in-the-life” insights, and you provided a very thorough overview of your expectations and the skills and capabilities you seek when evaluating intern candidates.

I look forward to bringing my academic background and internship experience to Cohn & Wolfe and to honing my PR skills and learning from your team as a Cohn & Wolfe intern.

Sincerely,

Ima Longhorn

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**Ima Longhorn** | [imalonghorn@utexas.edu](mailto:imalonghorn@utexas.edu) | 512.555.1212 phone  
LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn](http://www.linkedin.com/ImaLonghorn) | Skype: Ima.Longhorn