



## COVER LETTER GUIDELINES & SAMPLES

A cover letter is an opportunity to fill in the blanks from your resume. Through a cover letter, you set yourself apart from other candidates by showing a potential employer the depth of your experience. Each letter must be unique to every position you apply to, and should only be about 3-5 paragraphs. When writing a cover letter follow the steps below:

### PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER

- Introduce yourself to the employer and state the position you are applying to.
- Express why you are interested in working for the organization.
- Emphasize your qualifications and how they contribute to the organization.
- Request an interview.

### HELPFUL HINTS

- Address each letter to a specific person, using their title, and organization using a business letter format.
- Ask others to proofread the letter for clarity, grammar, and spelling.
- Include a cover letter unique to each position when submitting a resume to an employer.

### SAMPLE FORMAT

Your address  
 Your phone number  
 Date

Employer's name  
 Employer's title  
 Organization name  
 Address

Dear Mr./Ms. (or Sir/Madam, if it's impossible to get a contact name):

**YOUR PITCH:** State the reason you are writing. Attract the employer's attention by pitching the letter to his or her needs or interests, rather than to your career goals. Tell the employer why you want to work for *them*.

**YOUR EXPERIENCE:** Explain how your abilities, background, and qualifications will enable you to contribute to the organization. Describe how your specific skills, strengths, or personal attributes are relevant to the position. You may emphasize one or two items from your resume, but try not to be redundant. The cover letter *supplements* your resume, highlighting your special qualities that might help persuade an employer to contact you. Try to pick two or three key experiences that directly speak to the job description. Keep it oriented to the employer's needs!

**YOUR CONCLUSION:** Reiterate your interest and ask for an interview at the employer's convenience. Provide contact information (NYU email and phone number) where the employer can easily reach you. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

*Your signature*

Your name typed

80 Madison Lane #2E  
New York, NY 10002  
(212) 555-5555  
[Today's date]

Mr. Richard Spencer  
Assistant Vice President, Operations  
National Banking Corporation  
280 Park Blvd., 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10022

Include your university, major, and year in school (or graduation date) in the first paragraph.

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I am interested in the Junior Systems Analyst position you listed on NYU CareerNet. As a senior at New York University majoring in Computer Science, I believe both my education and my experiences in computers are an excellent match with the responsibilities outlined in your job description.

Many challenges exist with systems analysis at a large organization like the National Banking Corporation. These issues stem from both the constant upgrading required and the diversity of application needs. As the Computer Operation Faculty Liaison at NYU, I gained a wide range of experience in this type of environment. On several occasions, I advised university departments on their selection and set-up of LAN hardware and appropriate new software.

Shows knowledge of the organization's needs and the specific experience of the student to fulfill them.

In addition to a strong technical base, I perform well both independently and as part of a team. I communicate effectively with all levels of personnel, as reflected with my experience working with student assistants and department directors on the above-mentioned projects.

I would greatly appreciate the chance to work for the National Banking Corporation, and look forward to the possibility of meeting with you to discuss this position in further detail. In the meantime, I can be reached at (212) 555-5555 or you can e-mail me at student@nyu.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Always end by politely asking to meet in person, and provide your contact information.

Sincerely,

*Your signature*

Norman Gates

[DON'T COPY - BE ORIGINAL! ]

Setting up your cover letter to match your resume heading is a formatting alternative.

**Reggie Harris, C.S.W.**

277 Lexington Street #4F New York, NY 10016-9823  
(212) 555-5555 student@nyu.edu

[Today's date]

New Directions Community Agency  
13 Norwick Street  
Brooklyn, NY 13356-7765

Dear Sir/Madam:

My background in social work fits well with the required qualifications for the Social Worker position described in your NY Times advertisement. Having worked in psychiatric social work for two years at a large urban medical center, I am now interested in working for a community agency like New Directions.

Shows the student researched the company and understands the organization's work. Make sure to *do your research* when applying to different positions!

I was glad to read that you provide mental health services at the preventive as well as the treatment maintenance level. In my current role, I provide a variety of preventative interventions, such as parent training and stress management, to individuals and groups at risk. A recent proposal of mine, which is under budgetary consideration, is to establish a series of these workshops for young lower-income parents. I strongly believe in preventative approaches, and would be happy to conduct such workshops at your agency.

Displays concrete results of *specific* experience, and the ability to contribute effective support to the organization. Only use one or two examples. *Do not restate everything on your resume.*

As you can see from my resume, I have extensive experience, including the provision of concrete services. In turn, I am prepared to serve the diverse local population needed to contribute to your organization. I have worked with patients of all ages and from many ethnic/racial backgrounds, and these experiences proved the most rewarding to me.

I am very interested in your position, and look forward to telling you in greater detail how I can contribute to your team. Please feel free to reach me at (718) 555-5555 at your convenience.

Sincerely,

*Your signature*

Reggie Harris, C.S.W.

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## Prospecting Letter Format

35 Georgia Avenue, #419  
New York, NY 10003-6677  
(212) 555-5555  
[Today's date]

This type of letter is a valuable networking tool. Target companies of interest through resources like Glassdoor.com, Hoovers, or LinkedIn, and research the appropriate person to contact.

Mr. David Newton, Director  
American Environmental Council  
716 Scranton Avenue, Room 200  
White Plains, NY 70889-0090

Dear Mr. Newton:

I am a rising senior at New York University majoring in Environmental Science. Similar to the American Environmental Council, I also believe that collaboration is needed between businesses and environmental groups for conservation. Your goal of convincing businesses that they benefit when they strive to preserve the environment is an incredibly worthwhile pursuit, and I am eager to contribute to these efforts. However, it is difficult to convince the public that these endeavors are worthwhile.

As the president of a campus organization, I regularly influenced people to sign up for membership, pay a reasonable increase in dues, and donate funds to a local health clinic. I accomplished my goals by utilizing both my written and oral communication skills. And, as you can see from my resume, my motivation and commitment achieved results.

Relates to the efforts of the organization with concrete experience.

I would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to discuss your experiences, and gain any insight you may have to offer as I begin my full-time job search. Please let me know if there is a good time in the next few weeks to get together for coffee, or to schedule a phone appointment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Requesting an *informational interview* is a great way to find more about different companies, and to expand your network. This will put you in a good position in the future if opportunities arise within the company.

Mei Jen Lee

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## Networking Letter Format

45 Iowa Avenue, Apt. 8-B  
Brooklyn, NY 22344  
(718) 555-5555  
[Today's date]

Ms. Amy Greenburg  
Vice President  
Global Entertainment, Inc.  
17 Sunrise Boulevard, 5th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 89904

If someone you know referred you to an individual, state their name and your relationship to them in the first paragraph.

Dear Ms. Greenburg:

Michael Powers from Triangle Studios suggested that I contact you. During the summer I assisted him with various tasks regarding his business, and developed a deep interest in the business side of entertainment. I plan to relocate to Los Angeles once I graduate from New York University this May. Michael thought that you might recommend some organizations that could use my skills.

As a student at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, I am especially interested in pursuing a career in film distribution because it requires both the knowledge of film and a strong business sense. As a drama major, I gained an extensive understanding of film production, which is important when setting up the distribution schedule. In my various managerial positions, I learned how to negotiate with vendors and motivate a staff in order to have projects accomplished on time. These skills are combined with a love of California and a "don't quit" attitude that I believe qualifies me to make a solid contribution.

Summarize your experiences and reason for interest in industry to give the reader a general personal background.

My resume summarizes my background, and is included in this email for your review. I will arrive in Los Angeles by the end of this month, and hope we can get together. I would appreciate insights you can share with me. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Include your resume with cover letter to show the entire range of your experiences.

Andrew Chase

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