



Creating Effective Cover Letters

Cover letters are the primary self marketing tool when applying for a job. Different from an objective statement a cover letter allows one to explain how they fit into the opportunity that they are applying for (Internship, Job, Graduate School). A cover letter should consist of four paragraphs. Each paragraph is presented in bold and walks through the key themes each paragraph should include.

Dear _____,

(Include the name of the person you are sending to, this is important, do your research, and do not use to whom it may concern.)

1. Humble Approach - Could be the only paragraph read by the employer, it is most important.

- **Opportunity:** Rather than consideration, open the letter by thanking the employer for the opportunity to apply for this specific position/opening. Follow this with who, where, or how you found out about the position.
- **Research:** What do you notice the company doing that is making a difference, and appealing to you, point that out to the employer.
- **Fit:** How, based on your past experiences, could you fit into what the company is doing. This will be a transitional sentence to your second paragraph about your past.

2. Past & Passions

- **Past five years:** Explain what has brought you to where you are now, significant experiences that have shaped who you are leading to a pivotal moment.
- **Pivotal moment:** What is the thing in your past that made you choose your particular field, and how is it driving you. Your passions motivate your career choices.

3. Present & Future

- **Current Accomplishments:** What are you currently accomplishing that apply to the position, relate these accomplishments to the job description.
- **Future Five Years:** What do you hope to be doing, demonstrate that you have goals.
- **How does the company fit you:** What are your plans for being with this company?
 - **Invest:** Do you hope to grow within the ranks of the organization?
 - **Transition:** Is this a job between jobs, something temporary?
 - **Foundation:** First job or internship, establishes one's professional foundation.

4. Thank you & Call To Action

- **Reiterate Humble Approach:** Thank you again for the opportunity (remember not consideration). Consideration demands of the employer, opportunity serves the employer.
- **Call To action:** Either to you the writer or them the employer.
 - Express that you will follow up with the employer in a specific time frame, about two weeks, then follow up, this demonstrates reliability.
 - Be Forward: I will be in your area within the next two weeks, I would like to meet with you to find out more information about the position.

Writing your cover in this way creates a chronological view of the your life, what is driving you, your accomplishments, where you hope to be in the future, and how the organization fits into your timeline. The letter concludes humbly, but also presses for future action, enabling the hiring process to move forward in hopes that you will receive the position that you are striving for.