



Concise Cover Letters

LWTech Employment Resource Center

W-207

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www.lwtech.edu/erc



WorkPlace 101: Cover Letter

Agenda:

- Purpose of a Cover Letter
- When do I need a Cover Letter?
- Characteristics of an outstanding Cover Letter
- Cover Letter structure
- Writing the Cover letter
- Cover letter variations
- Special circumstances

WorkPlace 101: Cover Letter

Purpose of a Cover Letter:

- Makes your application stand out
- Introduces you and your qualifications
- Persuades reviewer to look at resume
- Presents qualifications for a *particular position*
- Writing and communications sample
- Explains “special circumstances”

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Cover Letter Structure:

1. Strong first sentence, then “this is the position I’m applying for”

2. Qualifications:

(from job description, 3-5 bullets)

3. Thank you, I look forward to speaking with you.

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Characteristics of an Outstanding Cover Letter:

- Brief
- Addressed to a particular individual
- Strong opening first sentence
- Reflects your personal voice
- Immediately addresses WIIFM - why the employer must speak to you – why you are one of the best candidates

(continued)

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Characteristics of an Outstanding Cover Letter:

- Tailored to the company and particular position – reflecting your knowledge of the industry, occupation and company
- Outlines best qualifications and your enthusiasm
- Outlines follow-up steps you will take

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1st Paragraph:

- Addressed to a particular individual
- Strong opening sentence
- What position you are applying for
- How you found out about the opening
- Personal referral or other connection
- Why the position interests you
- Why you are a fit for the employer/company

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2nd Paragraph

- Proof for the top 3-4 most important skills:
 - Refer to Position announcement
 - Your knowledge of the occupation
- Refer to your resume – “Skills Summary”
- How have you demonstrated in the past that you have the needed skills?

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3rd Paragraph:

- Refer to enclosed resume
- Thank you for taking the time to review the letter and application
- You would be glad to provide additional information.
- Ask for the interview
- Tell them you will follow-up
- Contact phone/email

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Writing the Cover letter:

- Look at the job description: “Qualifications”
- Write the *body* of the cover letter, paying special attention to emphasizing what are your 3-4 very best qualifications for this job?
- *Return to the first sentence.* How can you present your top qualifications in one sentence to capture the reader?

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Cover letter - Variations:

- Responding to a job announcement
- *Referral* (include name) for a job
- Following up on a meeting or phone call
- Responding to an HR Department: T-letter
- Responding to small business owner
- Creating an Opportunity (Inquiry letter)
- Academic / Government
- Personal Statements for advanced schooling

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Special circumstances:

- Should you even bring it up?
- The positive spin!
- Gaps in employment, a career change, relocating

“Though currently living in Seattle, we have been planning a move to Cleveland to be closer to our Ohio relations. For this reason, I will happily relocate at my own expense for the right opportunity with ABC company.”

WorkPlace 101: Cover Letter

- Resources:
 - Winning Cover Letters – Robin Ryan
 - Cover Letters for Dummies – Joyce Lain Kennedy
 - www.lwtc.edu/erc – “Job Search Tools” cover letter outlines and samples
- Need a second opinion?

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