

**Frontenac
Employment
Resource
Centre**

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COVER LETTER

HINTS



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COVER LETTER POINTERS

Did you Know...

“that experts tell us that the average adult attention span when reading is only 8 seconds. That means you have the time it takes your heart to beat 12 times to capture the reader’s attention.

(Cited from: “The Kingston Whig Standard” –Cauleen Viscoff and Gloria Whitfield – la Boss)

A successful cover letter will essentially uncover pertinent and concise aspects of your uniqueness and ultimately direct the reader to the resume. When creating your cover letter factor in the following: intention, style, content and neatness.

Intent:

- to introduce the applicant to the reader
- to reveal your ability to articulate and communicate clearly
- to capture the reader’s interest by expressing concisely your unique skills
- to promote the applicant’s characteristics such as: desire, enthusiasm, and interest in the position
- to create enough curiosity in the reader so that the resume is read

Style:

- address the person or people responsible receiving the cover letter and resume
- organize the cover letter logically using the following format; introduction, body of the letter and closing paragraph
- follow the correct format for creating the cover letter
- use the same font style for both the cover letter and resume
- send an original letter; not copies that look mass produced
- focus your letter and tailor your information to the position applied for
- ensure the cover letter is clean, concise, clearly written and error free

Content:

- include your return address, date, inside address, salutation, and reference number or position title (if required). (Refer to: [How to Type a Cover Letter Pg. 7](#))
- use the traditional “Dear Sir/Madam” if you do not have a contact name.
- close the letter with “Yours truly”. The cover letter is a business letter selling a product – your qualifications.

Introductory or First paragraph

- Indicate the position applied for and where and when you saw the ad
- May also indicate your interest
- May also reference your resume

- A recent grad may also indicate certificate, diploma or degree(s) granted (E.g. As a recent graduate from St. Mary's University, with a degree in Journalism, I am eager to begin a career as a reporter for the Journal News.)
- **Second Paragraph** (Get to the point here and strut your stuff!)
(Refer to: [How to Type a Cover Letter. Pg. 7](#))
 - May reference past work experience that is relevant to the position
 - May mention accomplishments or achievements
 - May include skills or abilities acquired through practical experience
 - May include soft skills or characteristics to show your desire, innovation, and creative ability for example
 - Could bullet your skills that match the job requirements
 - Understand what the employer wants and express how your experience matches the employer's needs
- **Third Paragraph** (This could be a closing paragraph or may also be part of the body of the letter where you are discussing further relevant experience.)
 - May expand on additional qualifications that are pertinent to the position but not that obvious in the Resume
 - May note special qualifications or other relevant experience that enhances your application for the position
 - May be an opportunity to express how past experience is relevant and how you can meet the requirements of the position
- **Fourth Paragraph** (There may be a fourth paragraph, but this is not always the case. However, should the cover letter contain a 4th paragraph, then it would be the Closing Paragraph.)
 - You may express your keen interest in the position
 - Request an interview but not inconveniencing the prospective employer
 - State where or how you can be reached

Neatness:

- Neat, clean and well presented
- Style should be consistent
- Word process with absolutely no errors
- Ensure the tone of the letter reveals your desire and interest for the position
- Maintain a business-like fashion
- Refrain from using graphics or non-standard fonts, unless perhaps, it would demonstrate a creativeness demanded by the type of work applied for.
(Be very selective when using this style-type)

COVER LETTER STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Cover Letter Strengths:

- ☺ Do make sure you have signed your name.
- ☺ Do proofread the letter to avoid spelling or grammatical errors.
- ☺ Do ensure that the letter is clean, neat and pleasing to the eye.
- ☺ Do send an original letter; never a photocopy.
- ☺ Do present a clear, concise and comprehensible letter.
- ☺ Do let your enthusiasm and interest show.
- ☺ Do focus on your strengths and support with examples.
- ☺ Do try to obtain the name of the person receiving the applications; otherwise –
Dear Sir/Madam: is acceptable.
- ☺ Do attach your resume.

Cover Letter Weaknesses

- ☹ Don't print your cover letter on inexpensive copy paper.
- ☹ Don't send the same letter to different employers.
- ☹ Don't include irrelevant information.
- ☹ Don't make excuses.
- ☹ Don't use typefaces that are overly fancy. Keep it simple.
- ☹ Don't send out a cover letter that is disorderly.
- ☹ Don't assume that the reader will fill in pertinent information that you may have left out.
- ☹ Don't forget to include contact information.
- ☹ Don't hand-write your cover letter unless requested; always word process.

**The cover letter is your initial introduction to the prospective employer -
Make it happen!**

CREATING YOUR COVER LETTER

Examples of an OPENING PARAGRAPH

I am writing in response to your advertisement that appeared in (Source of Ad) on September 2, 200_. The position of (Position Title) is of considerable interest to me. I believe that my education and experience in this area of work have prepared me to offer quality performance. I have enclosed my resume for your review.

The position of Accounting Assistant, advertised in the (Source of Ad) on June 24, 200_, requests an experienced accounting professional with a sound background in business and financial applications. I believe that my qualifications and experience as a junior Accountant matches the requirements for this position. Please refer the enclosed resume for details.

Examples of a SECOND PARAGRAPH

I possess over three years experience within the retail and wholesale business sector. I am committed to quality sales and service standards and am eager to continue my record of success with (Company Name). As your newest Sales Associate, I would contribute strong interpersonal skills and an enthusiastic selling approach.

My past experience as a Supervisor of a Child Care facility has helped me develop and implement the necessary people skills to communicate effectively and diplomatically with children of all ages and their parents. In addition, my experience in shift scheduling enabled me to learn strategies to cope with cancellations of shifts. My ability to resolve employee issues or parental concerns led me to develop excellent problem solving skills.

Examples of a THIRD PARAGRAPH

I believe my education, skills, experience and knowledge fit perfectly with the requirements of this position. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. I can be reached at 555-5555.

I have enclosed for your review a brief resume that outlines my experience. If I may provide you with additional information, please contact me at (Your Phone Number) or the address given above. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in more detail.

THE “APPLICATION” OR “COVER LETTER”

AN OVERVIEW

This letter is as critical to your job search as putting together your resume, and no less important!

- * **It matches your qualifications to employer needs.**
- * **Highlights any special qualities you may have.**
- * **It demonstrates a knowledge of and an interest in the company.**
- * **It attempts to answer the reader’s question, “Why should I want to interview you?”**

Having read the Intent, Style, Content and Neatness needed in a cover letter, here is a snapshot view of a few basic rules to remember.

1. The letter must be brief, yet complete and informative.
2. It must be well written, grammatically correct and absolutely error free.
3. Always send the original letter, never a photocopy.
4. The letter should be addressed to a specific person.
5. Letters are always word processed unless you are specifically directed otherwise. (Occasionally, an employer will ask for a hand written letter)
6. Must be centered and formatted in an acceptable business letter style.
7. It is a good idea to have someone read it the letter over for you to ensure that it is grammatically correct.
8. Follow-up your letter with a telephone call to the individual to whom it was addressed to confirm that the application arrived. It gives you an opportunity to make a personal contact.

**Cover Letter
Hint**

Tailor Your Cover Letter to the Job

When preparing a cover letter make sure that you tailor it to the specific job you are applying for. A cover letter that has been sent out in bulk, or involves ‘filling in the blanks’, will be the first to be thrown out!

(Cited from: The Canadian Job Directory)

HOW TO TYPE A COVER LETTER

177 Autumn Street
Gold Lake, Ontario
K7K 7K1

(Return Address - begin at the top of page)
(Enter twice to leave one blank line)

June 16, 200_

(Date) (enter four or five times)

Ms. Pat Cummings
Communications Department
Crimson College
Abbey Dawn Road
Kingston, Ontario

(Inside Address)
(enter twice)

Dear Ms. Cummings:

(Salutation – always end with a colon) (enter twice)

Re: #77132000 – Writing Instructor *(Ref. Line after the Salutation) (enter 2x)*

Please consider this letter and the enclosed resume as an application for the position of Writing Instructor as advertised in the Gold Lake Gazette, on June 12, 200_. *(enter twice)*

I have been a college-level teacher of writing for the past eleven years and offer strong writing, editing, and proofreading skills. I am also a writer; my published works include short stories, essays, and poems. Last February, a one-act play of mine was produced in New York City. I also have experience ghostwriting, editing for the Tree Top Review, and publicity writing for a rock group. *(enter twice)*

I am confident that the above-listed experience distinguishes me as a qualified candidate for your opening. I would be delighted to discuss further how my abilities match your requirements. I can be contacted at (712) 333-4444. *(enter twice)*

Yours truly, *(Closing always with a comma) (enter four or five times)*

Sandy Shores *(Type your name) (enter twice)*

Encl. *(Type Encl. if enclosure)*