



## COVER LETTERS

### LETTER WRITING

Depending on your particular purpose, a cover letter can be described as a letter of application or a letter of introduction. It might also be called a letter of intent, a letter of interest, or a letter of inquiry. It is a professional tool used when you are applying for a job (as a responder to a posted position) or when you are networking (as someone who is initiating contact with a prospective employer). When you send your resume to an employer, it should always be accompanied by a well-written one-page formal cover letter.

Whether it is a printed hard copy letter, a letter attached to an e-mail, or the text of an e-mail message, your cover letter should be written in standard professional business letter format. It should be a personal letter, but not written in an informal or casual style. It should adopt a professional tone. It should be addressed to a specific individual, at a specific company or organization, and making reference to a specific job or opportunity.

Avoid salutations that sound too impersonal or too general, like *Dear Sir* or *Dear Sir/Madam* or *To Whom It May Concern*. The letter should be single spaced. Use active rather than passive voice. Edit carefully, double-checking for spelling, grammar, or typographical errors. When sending a printed hardcopy cover letter (or a cover letter document attached to an e-mail), the font, brand (style), and letterhead of your cover letter should match your resume.

### PROPER FORMAT

The header (or letterhead) of your cover letter should match the header of your resume.

The first item under the header is the current date.

A formal cover letter has an address block, which includes the name and title of person and a mailing address.

The salutation should use a formal title (Mr., Ms., Dr.) followed by the person's last name.

The first paragraph is your objective. Tell the reason why you are writing the letter. It should be short, simple, and direct. Include the name of the company and the position or department in the description of your objective.

The second paragraph is your summary statement. It should be straight-forward and factual description of your qualifications. Provide a brief overview of your education, experience, and skills.

The third paragraph is your action statement. Express your desire for a meeting to learn more about the job and the company. Ask for the interview. Indicate that you will follow up.

End with a complimentary closing, such as *Sincerely*, *Cordially*, *Best Regards*, *Best Wishes*, or *Respectfully*.

### Your Name

Your Address, City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number, E-Mail Address

Date

Name  
Title or Department  
Company  
Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear (Mr., Ms., Dr.) \_\_\_\_\_ :

Paragraph One. State your objective and mention the job position by specific title, by general function, or by department.

Paragraph Two. Give a brief summary or overview of your education, skills and experience as they relate to the job qualifications.

Paragraph Three. Express an interest in learning more about the company and the job. Request an interview. Indicate that you will follow up.

Sincerely,

Your Name

## PROFESSIONAL LETTER WRITING

A cover letter can be mailed as a printed hard copy letter along with a resume in an envelope. It can be attached to an e-mail message along with an attached resume (both documents should be converted to PDF format). Or it can be the actual text in the body of an e-mail message. Regardless of the platform used, the tone, language, content, and organization of the cover letter must be professional.

If you are **initiating contact with a prospective employer**, your cover letter is a letter of introduction. It is sometimes called a networking letter. As such, its tone is more exploratory and open-ended and the language is more general.

If you are **responding to a posted announcement**, your cover letter is a letter of application. As such, its tone is slightly more assertive and the language is more specific.

## E-MAIL COVER LETTERS

It is acceptable for your cover letter to be rendered as an e-mail message and sent electronically. While the e-mail platform is informal and defaults to a memo format, you should ensure that the tone, language, content, language, and layout remain formal and professional. Use the same business letter rules when composing a cover letter in an e-mail format.

An e-mail cover letter does not include a header. But, you may choose to create a simple signature block in which you include a very streamlined version of your contact information under your name. A typical signature block has three double-return lines, containing the following items:

Closing— Best Regards, Sincerely, Yours Truly

Name— Your Full Name

Contact Information—City & State, Phone Number, E-Mail Address

### Template 1 | Introduction Letter

March 10, 2020

Jonathan Smith  
Director of Marketing Department  
Big Deal Manufacturing Company  
123 Main Street, Birmingham, AL 35205

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to express my interest in exploring career opportunities in (Area of Interest, Job Function, Name of Department) with (Name of Company).

I will be graduating in (Month and Year) from the University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Science degree in (Major Concentration). I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of (Coursework, Curriculum, Academic Focus). I have extensive experience in (Job Functions, Specific Industry, Area of Specialty). I possess strong (Relevant Skills and Competencies) skills and excellent (Relevant Skills and Competencies) abilities.

I would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about (Name of Company) and opportunities in (Area of Interest, Job Function, Name of Department). I will contact you next week to follow up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Johnson

Montevallo, Alabama | 205-123-4567 | mjones@gmail.com

## **Template 2 | Application Letter**

April 20, 2021

Andrea Henderson  
Director of Public Relations Department  
Impressive Outreach Public Relations Firm  
123 Main Street, Birmingham, AL 35205

Dear Ms. Henderson:

I am writing to submit my application for the (Job Title) position with (Name of Company).

I will be graduating in (Month and Year) from the University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Science degree in (Major Concentration). I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of (Coursework, Curriculum, Academic Focus). I have extensive experience in (Job Functions, Specific Industry, Area of Specialty). I possess strong (Relevant Skills and Competencies) skills and excellent (Relevant Skills and Competencies) abilities.

I would like to be considered for the (Job Title) position with (Name of Company). I feel confident I can meet your requirements. I look forward to hearing from you regarding my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tommy Tuttle

Montevallo, Alabama | 205-123-4567 | ttuttle@gmail.com

## **Template 3 | Introduction or Inquiry Letter**

June 5, 2021

George Friendly  
Principal  
Happy Valley Elementary School  
123 Main Street, Birmingham, AL 35205

Dear Dr. Friendly:

I am writing to express my interest in exploring career teaching opportunities in Elementary Education with Happy Valley Elementary School.

I have my Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary/Collaborative Education from the University of Montevallo and I am certified to teach K through 6 grade. I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of teaching theory and practice, classroom management, educational psychology, and curriculum development. I have extensive instructional, tutoring, and childcare experience. I possess strong leadership, administrative, organizational, and interpersonal skills.

I would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about Happy Valley Elementary School and opportunities in teaching. I will contact you next week to follow up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Johnson

Montevallo, Alabama | 205-123-4567 | mjones@gmail.com

## SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to express my interest in exploring career opportunities in marketing with Superior Products Company.

I will be graduating in May 2019 from the University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of marketing principles, brand management, advertising and promotions, market research, consumer behavior, and professional sales. I have extensive experience in sales, event planning, public relations, and customer service. I possess strong planning and organizational abilities and excellent administrative and interpersonal skills.

I would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about Superior Products Company and opportunities in marketing. I will contact you next week. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tom. T. Tuttle

Dear Dr. Jones:

I am writing to express my interest in exploring career opportunities in health care with St. Vincent's Hospital.

I will be graduating in May 2020 from University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of biology, chemistry, and health-related concepts. I have extensive medical, research, and community service experience. I possess strong science and research abilities and excellent technical and analytical skills.

I would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about St. Vincent's Hospital and opportunities in health care. I will contact you next week. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Linda Q. Friendly

Dear Ms. Thomas:

I am writing to express my interest in exploring career opportunities in journalism with Deep South Magazine.

I will be graduating in May 2021 from the University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. I have comprehensive training in and a thorough academic knowledge of English language, literature, and grammar. I have extensive experience in writing, editing, and researching. I possess strong creative abilities and excellent writing and editing skills. I have strong research and information gathering skills.

I would like to meet with you at your convenience to learn more about Deep South Magazine and opportunities in journalism. I will contact you next week. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alice B. Wonder