

How to Write a Cover Letter

Cover letters may be used for any type of opportunity you may come across in your life. College and employment applications are two of the most important times you will need a cover letter. If you are able to write a compelling letter and convince your future employer or school that you are the perfect fit, you will place yourself ahead in the application process.

Remember

- Keep it short and sweet. A cover letter should rarely be longer than one page.
- Your letter must include your name, address, and contact information.
- Use specific word choice when you write your letter that can match what the employer is looking for. For example, if you are applying to a tutoring position, use words like mentor, teach, consult, designed, and analyze.
- Mention the exact job opening and number (if applicable) in the first paragraph.
- Give examples of how you have used or expanded your skills. If you are applying for a teaching position, talk about how you have coached teams or been a leader in a particular instance. If you want to apply for medical school, provide a brief example of your time volunteering at a local hospital.
- Be as proper and polite as possible while writing in a conversational style. Let the employer or school know that you are excited for the opportunity and will be a good addition to the community. Employers not only look at what you the skills you have, but also want to see if you have a good personality.
- If possible, address the letter to the individual in charge of hiring for the position. If you do not know that person's name, and cannot find out with a simple call, you should address the letter to either a generic "Hiring Manager" or "To whom it may concern."
- Use a friendly yet polite closing at the end of your letter. A good choice is "Sincerely."
- Include three spaces between the closing and your typed name for a signature.

An example of a cover letter is on the back of this handout. This specific letter is for an open sports writer position at the University of Texas at Dallas. Diction that would jump out to the hiring manager or potential employer is in bold. Note the specific examples that the writer has given to prove that they are proficient in sports, writing, and communicating.

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800 W. Campbell Road
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To whom it may concern,

As I reach the close of my college career, I am passionate about finding a professional career that will match my personality and experience. I think that the sports writer position at the University of Texas at Dallas would be a perfect fit for me as a lifelong resident of North Texas and avid soccer player. I have had many opportunities to visit the University ever since I was a child. Whether playing soccer on the pristine soccer fields, or visiting my older sister as she attended the University, I have always enjoyed the professional and comfortable atmosphere of the University.

Over the past four years working and learning at SMU, I have had many opportunities to explore my strengths in the written and athletic aspects of higher education. For example, in different education roles, such as **tutoring**, I have found that I am **efficient at communicating**. I have also gained the confidence to speak with any staff member, employee, and student, no matter the level of importance. As the captain of the SMU Soccer team, I am able to assert my **leadership** qualities in order to lead the team and specific individuals in the right direction. While working in the role of a tutor, I am able to **teach**, as well as learn how to relay information to individuals with disabilities. I had the opportunity to write and edit the SMU soccer team blog in order to recruit future players, which has helped my **persuasive** writing. I have also recently started volunteering at the local hospital in Dallas, Texas, and enjoy helping out at the front desk over the weekends to find patient rooms and point people to specific areas of the hospital. By being a captain, avid tutor, and a voice on my small campus, I have learned that I love to communicate with people. I enjoy being a **coach**, a **mentor**, to help people however I can. My passion is to see people succeed with my help. I am **proficient** in English and writing and I would like to find a career where I can help people have a voice or hear others with my words.

Thank you for considering me for this opportunity at the University of Texas at Dallas. I hope to hear from you shortly.

Sincerely,

Ryan Smith

