Cover Letters

- Are sales/marketing letters, with a business-like, yet friendly tone.
- May be sent as an email message with resume attached as a pdf.
- Are clear and concise, and convey enthusiasm and respect.
- Should be tailored for a job with a specific company/organization.
- Should be addressed to a specific person. Call the organization to obtain a name.
- If on paper, should be printed on the same bond paper used for your résumé.
- Need to be letter perfect. Always proofread.

Cover Letter Outline

First paragraph – create interest, establish rapport, and state your purpose.

1. Capture the employer’s attention and explain why you are writing.
2. Indicate the job/area in which you are interested.
3. Tell how you heard about the position/company/organization.

Second and possibly third paragraph – tell your sales story.

1. Explain how you can meet the employer's needs, summarize your qualifications.
2. Document your claims with statements that show evidence of your skills.
3. Show how your skills match those needed for the position.
4. Refer reader to your enclosed résumé.

Closing paragraph – ask for what you want.

1. Request an interview.
2. You can also state that you will call to inquire about setting up an interview (or inquire about vacancies), or you can list a phone number where you can be reached.

Many examples of résumés and cover letters are available in the Career and Personal Development Office.
February 26, 2012

Rick Finch
Living History Farms
2600 111th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322

Dear Mr. Finch:

As a fourth grader at Smart Elementary School in Anywhere, Iowa, I visited Living History Farms on our class field trip. Because I was so fascinated with the school room and wash house, I was the last one to get on the bus to leave. It is now ten years later, and as a college sophomore majoring in history, I am excited to apply for your historical interpreter internship for summer 2011. My college advisor, Dr. So and So, made me aware of this opportunity.

I love learning about the daily lives of earlier generations in America. I would very much enjoy helping to re-create history for school children and tourists of all ages so they can learn about Iowa’s interesting past.

My coursework and campus activities have developed my interpersonal communication and organizational skills. Overall, I am dependable, outgoing, and a hard worker. I handle pressure well and am willing to work overtime. Most importantly I learn quickly, and I am not afraid of a challenge.

My resume is enclosed. Spring semester at Buena Vista University ends May 16, 2012, and I could begin training for the position immediately after that date. I am available to interview on short notice. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Scholar

Nancy Scholar
schonan@bvu.edu
(712) 749-9999

Enclosure
Buena Vista University
610 W. Fourth Street Box 9999
Storm Lake, IA 50588

February 15, 2012

Mr. Richard Finch
Director of Human Resources
XYZ Company
9999 Ontario Street
Anywhere, IA 99999

Dear Mr. Finch:

Thank you for speaking with me by phone about the internship opportunity in your department for the coming summer. As I mentioned, I am completing my junior year at Buena Vista University and am anxious to apply what I’ve learned about business and especially the human resources area. I feel prepared to take this step and would appreciate your serious consideration.

I can offer you a strong academic record in my business classes. My professors have noted my work ethic, punctuality, and numerical skills. I have successfully managed my time in order to play two varsity sports while maintaining a GPA above a 3.0. My experience as a teller at Peoples Bank, my involvement in sports and my volunteer service has helped me develop strong interpersonal skills so essential in HR.

Furthermore, a recent class project in my Advanced Human Resources course allowed me to interview professionals in the field and observe benefit negotiations in a company similar to XYZ. This course inspired me to pursue the human resources area in business as a career choice.

I am available for an interview on short notice. Spring semester at BVU ends on May 20th and I could begin immediately after that date. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcy Davis

Marcy Davis
davimar@bvu.edu
(712) 555-5555
100 Sesame Street
Winningtown, Iowa 55555

April 23, 2012

Mr. Ed U. Cator, Human Resources Director
Farmersville Community Schools
P.O. Box 9999
Farmersville, IA 55555

Dear Mr. Cator:

I was excited to see the advertisement in the Farmersville Review for the middle school special education position. I am particularly interested in the Farmersville district because of your emphasis on individualized instruction and commitment to diversity. As you will note in my resume, my qualifications seem to be well suited to the position, and I would very much appreciate the opportunity to personally speak to you about how my skills might be a good fit for your program.

My qualifications include:

- Bachelor of Arts Degree with K-8 special education licensure in May.

- Knowledge of Iowa Core Standards: I was an active participant in Iowa Core Standards in-service and successfully incorporated those standards into both student teaching assignments.

- Knowledge of team process: I was the only student teacher chosen to serve on a five-person team assigned to design new assessment tools to gauge student progress.

- Commitment to student achievement: Student mastery is primary criterion by which my lessons are evaluated.

I am a highly motivated to begin my professional career. Please note the positive evaluations in my credential file from my professors and cooperating teachers where I have been recognized for approachability, a team spirit, and effective use of Positive Behavior Support.

My application was submitted online for your review as requested on your web site. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joan Jones

Enclosed: Resume, Credential File
COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

— I know why I am applying for this job. I have thought about what I would bring to the job and organization.

— My first paragraph establishes rapport with the reader and states what job I'm applying for, or why I am writing.

— I have mentioned my network connections I have with the reader of the company.

— I have accurately and succinctly described how my qualifications match the need of the employer.

— I have been completely honest in describing myself and my qualifications.

— I have double and triple checked the name and address of the person to whom I am writing for accuracy.

— My cover letter is no more than four focused paragraphs and uses just one page.

— My cover letter enhances the information on my resume rather than repeating it.

— I have included a request for what I want – typically an interview.

— The tone of my letter is balanced between friendly and professional.

— I have proofread this letter for both grammar and spelling.

— I have used the word “Sincerely” to close the letter.

— I have signed the letter in blue or black ink.

— My cover letter and resume are printed on the same paper.

— I am placing the letter and resume in a 9 x 12 envelope rather than business size.

— I will follow up with a phone call to continue to convey interest in the position.