

COVER LETTER ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP

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Today's Agenda

1. Common mistakes
2. Purpose of a cover letter
3. Anatomy of a cover letter
4. Good practices for writing a cover letter



When you think of
cover letters, what
comes to mind?

Share in the chat!



Common Mistakes

- Not addressed to a specific person (e.g., “Dear Hiring Manager”)
- Missing date, header, or signature
- Fails to mention the specific job title being applied for
- Does not clearly state why the applicant is interested in the position
- Focuses only on what the applicant wants, not on what they can contribute
- Lacks a clear narrative connecting the applicant’s background to the role



Overview of Cover Letters

Purpose	• Your pitch, resume enticement; writing sample; obtain interview
Audience	• Hiring Manager, HR, and/or Search Committee
Scope	• Who are you and what are you applying for? • What value can you add to this organization/company? • Why are you interested in this opportunity at this time?
Content	• Highlight most relevant skills, experiences, or accomplishments
Structure	• Paragraphs, complete sentences
Length	• 1-2 pages (this is not a throw-away)
Formatting	• Formal letter



Good Practices for Writing Cover Letters

- Piece of **persuasive** writing
- Show **why** you want the job and **how** you will be good at it
- Serve as a **bridge** between the job description and your résumé—they provide the context around, and highlights from, the experiences outlined on your résumé
- Important to **personalize** your cover letter to the specific opportunity to which you are applying
- Think about your **target audience** and demonstrate the value you can add to the company/organization
- Whether required or optional, a cover letter is a great opportunity to **stand out** from other applicants and to demonstrate your writing skills



Good Practices for Writing Cover Letters (cont'd)

- Keep it to 1-2 pages
- Use clear and concise language
- Mention the name of the role and the name of the company
- Incorporate, as much as possible, keywords and short phrases from the job description
- Tell (very short) stories from your experience that demonstrate the skills, attributes, and experience they are looking for
- Check your spelling and facts
- Avoid re-writing your résumé in paragraph form
- Craft your letter in your own voice



Formatting Guidelines

- Match font to your résumé
- Limit length to 1-2 pages
- Standard margins (typically 0.75" to 1" margins)
- 11-12 font size
- Easily readable font type (e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial)
- Include full date (on the left)
- Full destination address (if you have it)
- Use a formal salutation (to a person, if possible)
- Sign it!
- Submit it as a PDF to preserve formatting



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Key Components

- Introductory paragraph

strong, attention grabbing

- Supporting paragraphs

details from your experiences

- Concluding paragraph

re-emphasize the main points of your fit and interest in position



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Month DD, YYYY

Henrietta Rollins
Recruiting Manager
Airplane, Inc.
8 Planet Boulevard
Flyup, CA 97654

Dear Ms. Rollins:

An announcement from my university's Center for Career Development about Airplane Inc.'s new entry-level Aircraft Engineering Program immediately sparked my interest. I have long admired Airplane's use of technology to prototype new products and am confident you will find my engineering background and entrepreneurial spirit a strong match for the Aircraft Engineering Program.

Throughout my studies as a mechanical and aerospace engineering major at Princeton University, I have sought out ways to apply theory to practice. During two significant course projects – a World Geography Card Game and a Box Lift Crane Design – I had the opportunity to collaborate with others and take on a team leadership role, and this past summer I accepted an internship that focused on process improvement. Collectively across these experiences, I have seen products through from concept to pilot test and have confidently presented my model designs to senior engineers and corporate executives.

As the leading aircraft manufacturing firm on the East Coast, it is understandable that you expect new hires into the Aircraft Engineering Program to demonstrate a penchant for ingenuity and design. Additionally, it is evident from the CEO's recent press release that Airplane is committed to addressing global challenges. My resume speaks to both characteristics, with project designs that have the capacity to improve lives and campus activities that emphasize community engagement.

I appreciate your consideration for the Aircraft Engineering Program and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Tammy Tiger

Header (use same style as your résumé)

Date and destination

Salutation

Introductory/opening paragraph

Body/supporting paragraphs

Concluding paragraph

Sign your name



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Introductory Paragraph

Use this opportunity to grab the reader's attention. They have lots of letters to read—make them excited to see what you have to say!

This paragraph should include:

- who you are, what position you're applying to, and anyone who referred you
- why you're interested in this **position** at this **company**
- why you're an excellent candidate
 - introduce these reasons here—you'll expand on them in the body paragraphs



Supporting Paragraphs

Topic Sentence

- Persuasive statement about how you are a good fit for the role
- Choose skills, experiences, or qualities from the job ad that you possess

Supporting Evidence

- Specific examples or stories that show you possess these traits and experiences from past roles or experiences, and how they would add value or relate to the company and position

Wrap it up

- Final sentence connecting your examples to their goals



Concluding Paragraph

- Refer in a fresh way to the mission or goals of the company or team, and how you will contribute to their success
- Reiterate strong enthusiasm for the position and for the opportunity to further discuss your qualifications
- Thank them for considering your application
- Provide best way to reach you if it's not already in the header



Getting Started

List three traits sought in a candidate	List three traits describing your personality
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
List three job duties/responsibilities	List an achievement related to each duty
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
List three facts about the organization	List why you find that fact appealing
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.



Exercise: Refer to a specific job description to complete this chart.

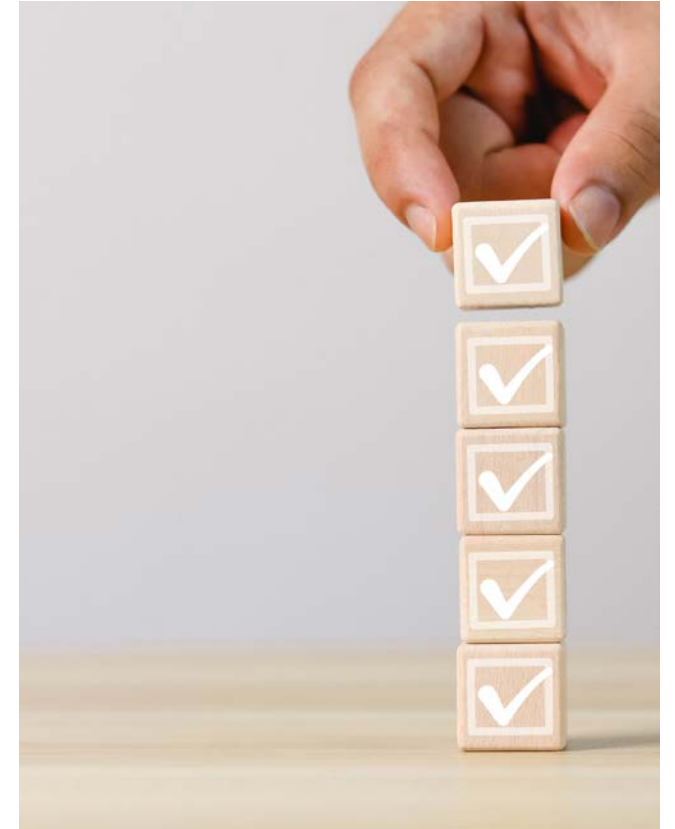


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Final Tips

- Submit a different cover letter for each position you apply for
- Tailor each document to the specific position that you are applying for
- You may go through multiple rounds of editing so start developing this early
- Ask for feedback!



Thank You.

