

# What is a cover letter

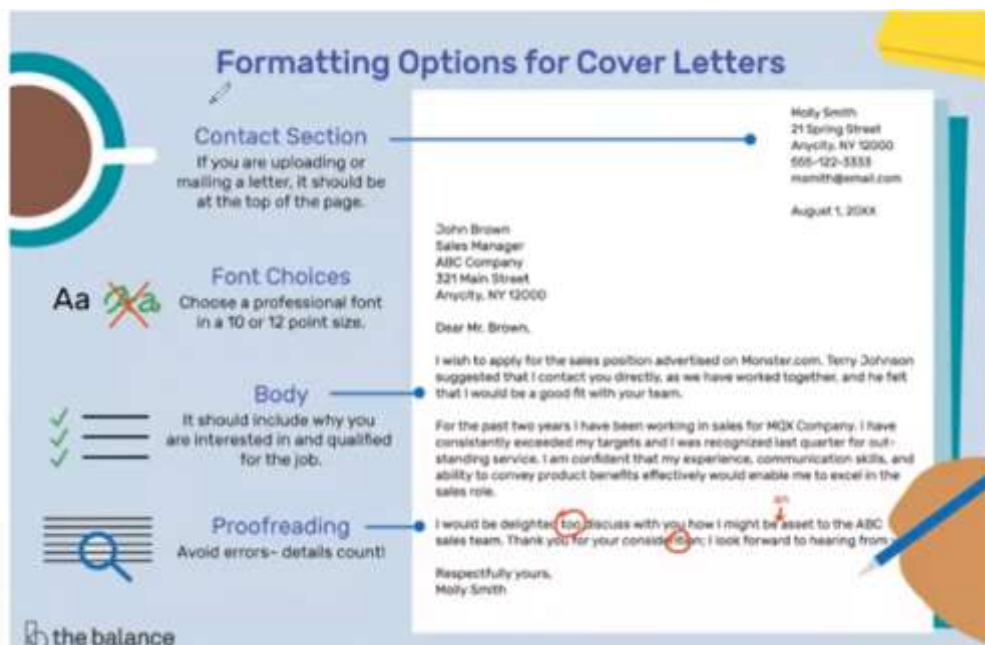
- When you are applying for a job, how you format your cover letter is important because the letter is one of the first impressions you'll make on an employer. In fact, how you format your letter is almost as important as what you write in it.
- A cover letter that is formatted incorrectly, or is difficult to read, can quickly eliminate you from the pool of candidates, so it's important to pay just as much attention to the formatting of your letter as to its content.
- The more effective your cover letter, you will get selected to the job eventually

## Cover Letter Format

- Formatting includes factors such as page margins, font type and size, line, paragraph and section spacing, and document type. For example, a letter without the correct spacing between paragraphs, or with too much text on a page, is going to look cluttered, or a letter saved as a file type that is not meant for a text document (such as a .jpg or a .png) may prevent the reader from opening and viewing it.
- Adhering to typical standards in formatting is especially important considering that communication skills are important in nearly every field, and failing to compose a readable cover letter will certainly not inspire confidence in your abilities.

## The Easiest Way to Format

- The easiest way to format a letter is to write the letter first, then format it. Once you have all the content ([contact information](#), why you are applying and qualified, signature, etc.) on the page, you can then easily adjust the margins, font, and alignment. Here's an overview



- **Contact Section:** How you include your contact information will vary based on how you are sending your cover letter. If you are uploading or mailing a letter, put the information at the top of the page.
- With an email cover letter, your contact information should be below your signature.
- **Employer Address:** How you address the cover letter will depend on how much information you have about the employer.
- **Salutation:** A salutation is the greeting you include at the beginning of a cover letter. Here's how to write a salutation, including what to use if you don't have the name of a contact person to list.
- **Body:** The body of a cover letter includes the sections where you explain why you are interested in and qualified for the job for which you are applying. Here's what to include in each section or your letter.
- **Paragraphs and Bulleted Lists:** A more traditional cover letter contains written paragraphs describing your qualifications.
- **Closings:** When you're writing a cover letter or sending an email message to apply for a job it's important to close your cover letter in a professional manner. Here's how to close your letter with class.

# What to Include in Each Section

- Cover Letter Format Example

- **Your Contact Information**

Name

Address

City, State Zip Code

Phone Number

Email Address

- **Date**

- **Employer Contact Information** *(if you have it)*

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State Zip Code

- **Salutation**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

- Cover Letter Greeting Examples: *Note: If you do not have a contact name, you can skip the salutation entirely. Or, you can use Dear Hiring Manager, To Whom It May Concern, or one of the other examples listed in the slide. Ideally, you will be able to address your cover letter to a specific person. Doing research can help you figure out who is the most appropriate person to receive the letter. Note: If you do not know the gender of your contact, you can write out the person's full name, e.g., "Dear Cory Smith" or "Dear Jordan Parish."*



# Cover Letter Sample

➤ Molly Smith  
21 Spring Street  
Anycity, NY 12000  
555-122-3333  
msmith@email.com

➤ December 11, 2020

➤ John Brown  
Sales Manager  
Acme Corp.  
321 Main Street  
Anycity, NY 12000

➤ Dear Mr. Brown,

- I wish to apply for the sales position advertised on Monster.com. Terry Johnson suggested that I contact you directly, as we have worked together, and he felt that I would be a good fit with your team.
- For the past two years I have been working in sales for Goodman & Co.. I have consistently exceeded my targets and I was recognized last quarter for outstanding service. As an avid cyclist and user of many of your products, I'm aware that Acme Corp. is a company with tremendous potential. I am confident that my experience, communication skills, and ability to convey product benefits effectively would enable me to excel in the sales role.

- I would be delighted to discuss with you how I might be an asset to the Acme Corp. sales team. Thank you for your consideration; I look forward to hearing from you.

- Respectfully yours,

- *Signature* (hard copy letter)

- Molly Smith

- **Body of Cover Letter**

The body of your cover letter lets the employer know what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, and how you will follow-up. Organize the body of your cover letter into the following paragraphs:

- **First Paragraph**

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing. Include the name of a mutual contact, if you have one.

### ➤ **Middle Paragraph(s)**

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Think of this section of the cover letter as where you're making a pitch for your fit as an employee and show what makes you a great candidate. Make the connection between your qualifications and the job requirements clear. Use this section to interpret your resume—don't repeat from it verbatim.

### ➤ **Final Paragraph**

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow-up. Optionally, you can briefly restate why you would be a good fit for the position.

### ➤ **Complimentary Close**

Respectfully yours,

### ➤ Closing Examples

### ➤ **Signature**

### ➤ Handwritten Signature (*for a hard copy letter*)

### ➤ Typed Signature