

Part 1. Preparing Your Letter

1. Grab a piece of paper and make two columns.

In the left column write “Requirements” and in the right, “My Skills”. Read the job application carefully and become familiar with the requirements for this job. Next you will compare those to your skills and experiences on your resume.

- In the left column write down the requirements and skills needed for the job.
- In the right column write down points from your resume that fit those.
- Having these points of interest that correlate to the job will help you provide the most important information in your cover letter quickly and effectively.

2. Start your letter by adding your contact information at the top.

You want to make it as easy as possible for your prospective employer to contact you and know who you are. Before you begin your letter, make sure that you have the proper [letterhead](#).

- Make sure your document is aligned to the left.
- Include the current date, then separated by a space, add your contact information:
- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address
- Personal website (if you have one)
- LinkedIn profile

3. Include the company’s information.

After you include your information, you need to include the name of the employer to whom you are applying for the job, his title, name of company and address.^[1]

- By including the contact information of the company to which you are applying, you are showing that you have taken the time to write a specific letter or application to this company, and have done your research on the hiring manager for the position.
- Doing your homework puts you ahead of a majority of applications which are clearly generic cut and paste letters, and shows you are dedicated.
- If you don’t know the name of the hiring manager, search the company’s website to see if you can find him. Go to LinkedIn, and even search Twitter. If you can’t narrow down a specific name, see if you can find the head of the department to which you are applying.

If all else fails and you have no name, it's ok to address your cover letter to the hiring manager of the department. Example: "[Department] Hiring Manager".

4. Address your letter to the person whom you are writing.

To begin your letter, you want to be formal and start with a proper address. Don't address it to "To Whomsoever it May Concern", as this is informal, generic, and gives the impression that you haven't researched the company.

- Once again, if you don't have the hiring manager's name, a simple "Dear [Department] Hiring Manager" will do.

Part 2. Writing Your Letter

1. Write an engaging first paragraph.

Employers read a lot of cover letters, and most of the time a hiring manager will scan them quickly deciding if your letter goes in the trash or the "keep" pile. Don't bury the lead, treat your application letter like a news article.^[2]

- Open with a strong, declarative statement that informs your reader that you are excited to be applying for [the position] at [company].
- Be short and specific with what attracted you to the job. What is it about the company that you like? Give an example, and don't be afraid to be a little conversational depending on how casual the company is.
- Show the manager that you are not only familiar with the company's work, but that you are a good fit by writing in a similar tone to the company.
- For example: if you are applying to a company that writes news articles, try to embody a tone that is similar to those articles. Are they serious, do they add humor? If it's a more formal company like a big marketing firm or financial institution, you might want to be more authoritative, but always be polite

2. State where you found the position to which you are applying.

Before applying, do some research and see if you know anyone at the company. It's always better to have an in and reference, and don't be afraid to name drop if you have the employee's permission.

- If you don't have a contact at the company, still be sure to include where you found the application, such as via a job site, the company's site, in a newspaper, etc.

3. Explain why hiring you will benefit the employer.

You don't want to tell them why getting hired will benefit you. There's a reason this position is open, there's a problem that needs solving. You're here to solve it.

- Look at your list of accomplishments and experience and find one or two examples that you can speak about. These should highlight why you will be great in the role.
- For example, if you see that the position needs someone who can lead a team and handle multiple projects at once, look at your accomplishments to see if you have any experience that solves that need. If you've led team members before, briefly speak to how your leadership skills increased productivity across multiple projects.
- Anytime that you can provide stats and numbers, do so. When describing why hiring you will benefit the employer, try to use stats like an increase in revenue or a cut down on costs under your leadership.

4. Briefly summarize your strengths, qualifications, and experience.

In your second paragraph, you want to mirror the job qualifications to two or three of your abilities and experiences that show why you're perfect for the role.

- Refer to your CV or resume, and your skills section from your outline for more explanations of your qualifications and skills.
- Look for quick anecdotes that highlight how you've been able to solve issues that the company you are applying for might have based on the requirements.
- Include the most relevant aspects of your career. While more recent accomplishments are a good place to start, you may have done something in the past that fits perfectly to the requirements; don't be afraid to dig deep.

5. Paint a picture of yourself that's not on your resume.

A hiring manager can read your CV or resume and see what you have done in your previous jobs. You want to show the hiring manager who the person behind the accomplishments is.^[3]

- In one or two sentences, express how the company has impacted you personally. If you are applying to your dream job, chances are this company has somehow shaped your life.

- Don't get too sappy, and keep it short. But by showing the human side of yourself with a story, you show that you're more than just facts on a piece of paper.

Part 3. Finishing Up Your Letter

1. Briefly summarize why you're the perfect candidate for the job in one sentence.

Ending your [letter of application](#) on the right note is a very important part of your letter as it can help you land the interview.^[4]

- When you explain how you can contribute to the company, remember that you want to put yourself in the shoes of the hiring manager. It's about how your contributions will help the company, not how the company will help you.
- Ask yourself what you would be looking for in a candidate if you were hiring.

2. Invite the hiring manager to contact you.

Inform your reader that you would love the opportunity to speak further about the position and provide your contact info again.^[5]

- You can conclude your letter by thanking the hiring manager and ending with a statement like *I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience*.
- Don't just ask the hiring manager to contact you if he feels you are a good fit. Show some confidence (without being cocky) by telling him that you look forward to speaking further.

3. Sign off

Signing off can seem like an afterthought, or become frustrating if you don't know what is appropriate. Use *Yours sincerely* or simply "Best".

- Being too formal can hurt you here as you may come off insincere, or it may not fit the style of the rest of your letter.
- By saying something like "Best" or "Best wishes", you show respect without sounding like you're writing a love letter.^[6] Alternatively, something like "Cheers" may be too informal and can come off as presumptuous.

4. Write your name underneath

After you sign off, write your full name on the last line, and consider including a signature.

- If you have set up a signature on your word processor, you can insert it under your name.
- Alternatively, you can print out your letter and sign your name by hand if you wish. Although with this method, you will have to scan your letter back into your computer.

- A signature is not always required.